STEREOTYPING IN POST-9/11 FICTION:
A CRITIQUE OF *TERRORIST* BY JOHN UPDIKE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MS in English

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents who have always supported me in my educational pursuits and have encouraged me to move forward in all kinds of circumstances. I honestly believe that it is all because of their prayers and the most sincere support that Allah's help remained with me throughout my educational career. I wish them a long and blessed life and pray that Almighty gives me the strength to always serve them and be obedient to them.

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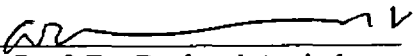
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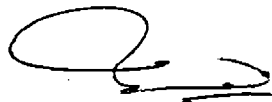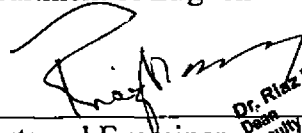
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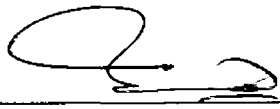
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ABSTRACT

Besides affecting the social and political scenarios around the world, the terror attacks of 9/11 also gave rise to newer forms of literary productions which exhibited distinct post-9/11 traits. Since most of the post-9/11 literary and political debate has focused on the fight between terror groups presumably based in Muslim world and the secular west led by USA, the practice of stereotyping and counter-stereotyping has been common in most of the post-9/11 popular fiction novels. This research has explored the elements of stereotyping in *Terrorist* by John Updike. After taking the detailed critical review of the related literature and surveying some other post-9/11 novels, the study carries a textual analysis of *Terrorist* and highlights various instances of stereotyping along the racial, religious, cultural and even geographical lines. It concludes that the stereotypical representation of religious minority communities has inflamed the inter-communal mistrust and finally eroded the social harmony in the post-9/11 US society. Finally, it is recommended that inter-faith dialogue and government level efforts should be made to control the menace of terrorism in a way that does not compromise the civil liberties of US citizens of any religion and creed.
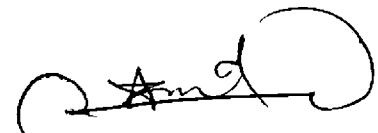
DECLARATION

I, <u>Hafiz Ahmad Yar</u> son of <u>Ghulam Rasool</u>, Registration No: <u>98-FLL/MSENG/ F08</u>, student of MS, in the discipline of English Literature, hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis "Stereotyping in Post-9/11 Fiction: A Critique of *Terrorist* by John Updike" submitted by me in partial fulfilment of MS degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

This work was carried out and completed at International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan.

Dated: 28/10/2011

Signatures of Deponent
HAFIZ AHMAD YAR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States turned the course of contemporary history in economic, social and political spheres of life all over the world. The tragedy triggered a global conflict between the western world led by the United States of America and the religious inspired terror network of Al Qaeda. As the responsibility of the attacks on the World Trade Centre was fixed on the Al Qaeda, an international coalition was formed under the leadership of the United States, to wage a war against Al Qaeda. As an immediate response to the 9/11 attacks, a regime change was forced in Afghanistan where the ruling Taliban government was considered to be patronizing Al Qaeda terrorist network worldwide. A bitter guerrilla resistance followed that continues till today with little signs to recede.

A lot of media and cultural productions emerged both in the West and in the Muslim world to represent the changed world of post-9/11 and all such literary and cultural productions were essentially aimed at advancing the political positions of the post-9/11 global conflict. Therefore, the opposing points of view when confronted in the arenas other than battlefield were marred by stereotyping and counter stereotyping. It is because that the focus in the news media and in literary production was not on art for art's sake, but it had a clear agenda to advance a political point of view. That is why the researcher found it interesting

to probe as to whether there has been objective depiction of the political and social phenomena of the contemporary world in fiction or there has been stereotyping and misrepresentation. The sweeping generalizations and stereotypical approach of some fiction writers and powerful media have shown the problems of militancy, fundamentalism, radicalization and terrorism as if they are unerringly associated with a certain communal group or faith community; i.e., Islam. Therefore, this study is aimed at exploring a distinctly representative text from the broader genre of post-9/11 fiction in order to uncover the political or ideological viewpoint of the writer. Moreover, since the literature offers critical insights into the social phenomena of its time, at attempt has been made in this study to reflect upon the contemporary phenomenon of terrorism that has plagued the modern day human civilization through the spectrum of post-9/11 popular fiction.

Looney (2010) has looked into the collective self analysis of some post-9/11 writers and the role of literature in modern society. He says "the confluence of terrorism and literature is, in and of itself, a fruitful position from which to contemplate issues surrounding" (p.206). Various writers of post-9/11 novels have used terrorism for structuring their self-reflexive examination of literature. The portrayal of the process of literary writings in the post 9/11 context, offers an excellent starting point for discussing not only the difference between thinking and acting, but also make for worthwhile first steps for examining how the writing process acts as an important tool of self-examination, that is, of examining one's own thoughts and concept of self.

1.1 Statement of Problem

In the aftermath of 9/11 attacks, the media and fiction writers resorted to reporting and portraying the political phenomena in biased and prejudiced ways in order to either defend the anti-terror war or criticize it by highlighting its repercussions in the ethnic, communal, racial or religious terms. The literary writings in post-9/11 years saw an increasing trend of stereotyping and counter-stereotyping mainly between the viewpoints floated by secular western writers and those who sought to defend Islam and Muslims against the accusations of inspiring, orchestrating, financing and committing violence and terrorism. In this study, the researcher has sought to find out how the fiction writers in the post 9/11 context have dealt with the question of representation of various religious and communal groups in general and the US Muslim community in specific. This study explores newer dimensions of discrimination that have arisen in the modern race and ethnicity relations of contemporary America through the panoramic prism of post-9/11 literary fiction. Thus, the study aimed at examining the patterns and roots of discrimination, the complex issues of minority, politics, power, and pluralism in the context of post-9/11 US society.

1.2 Research Questions

The hypothetical framework of this study is based on two categories of questions. The first category is a major question which has been further substantiated by three sub-questions that help prove or disprove the major question.

The main question broadly investigated in this study is that what evidence in the text of *Terrorist* supports the view that there has been stereotyping in racial, geographical, linguistic or religious terms? How the objective of stereotypical representation of various faith groups has been achieved?

The sub-questions that the study probed through a close reading analysis of *Terrorist* are as follows.

1. Which textual elements of *Terrorist* imply that the Muslims hold radical religious, political and social ideology which exhibits intolerance of other faith groups?

2. How the writer has propagated and supported the view that Muslims have an inherent tendency towards committing violence regardless of their nationality or geographic location.

3. How the author has proved that the violence attributed to Muslims is necessarily inspired by the injunctions of their faith and how he has dismissed the existence of other concerns like political disenfranchisement, social and economic marginalization etc?

These questions make the basic hypothetical framework that the researcher has attempted to prove or disprove with the help of textual evidence from the selected novel *Terrorist*. In other words, the study has looked at a representative post-9/11 text in order to see whether the religious or communal groups have been

objectively represented or they have been stereotyped on the basis of their faith, complexion, language or geographical origin etc.

1.3 Methodology

In order to conduct the study in a way to achieve its objectives, the researcher selected a corpus of extracts from *Terrorist* that were significant in throwing light on the transitional development of its central character of Ahmad Mulloy-Ashmawy, and the role of Islamic teachings by his mentor the imam Sheikh Rashid were closely read and textual data was qualitatively analyzed. While carrying out the analysis, the researcher benefited from Critical Theory, specifically the concepts of stereotyping and representation, racial profiling and the problem of identity crisis. In order to provide a fuller background, a number of studies about Muslim stereotyping in the US media and other official discourses have been reviewed in Chapter 2. In the light of that theorization, the researcher has attempted to develop a critique of Updike's text.

The term stereotyping, as applied in this study, refers to the widely held and socially popular beliefs that have no scientific or empirical evidence. This operational definition of stereotyping is rather broad and comprehensive, but it fits the situation because it can encompass the various forms and manifestations of stereotyping found in *Terrorist*. Based on the research questions of the study, stereotyping was assumed to have been done in the following cases.

A. If the author gives an arbitrary statement in the third person about a character in the novel and does not substantiate the same with logical and objective reasoning.

B. If the author portrays some behavioral habits of a character without logically elaborating as to why those particular habits could have been essentially developed in the personality of that very character and not the other characters.

C. If the action in the plot of the novel is advanced and connected through co-incidences and does not convincingly build a coherent story.

In order to explore the stereotyping in *Terrorist*, this study sheds light on the narrative techniques used by the author that include (1) an analysis of plot structure, (2) an analysis of character development, (3) an analysis into the link between violent tendencies exhibited by certain characters and their motivations from faith, was studied by having a close reading of frequent quotations from the Holy Quran. Such a broad analysis was essential to see how the author portrayed a typical Muslim youth evolving through transitional stages under the complete influence of his belief system and eventually transforming into a real life terrorist.

The researcher has studied stereotyping in *Terrorist* by having a close look at its carefully built plot structure through which its action moves into a certain direction and implicitly supports the point that the terrorism has some intrinsic link with the Islamic faith. Besides tracing the instances of stereotyping in terms of plot development, characterization is also one more focused area that this study

explores with regard to the characters of Ahmad Mulloy Ashmawy and his religious teacher Shaikh Rashid. Their dialogues merited specifically greater attention because that was the only window to their inner thinking and ideological approach. The application of stereotyping has also been traced by closely looking at the arbitrary and judgmental commentary by the author of *Terrorist*. This is because an omnipresent third person narrative form that this novel embodies, gives the author the full freedom to assign any attribute to any of his characters without feeling the need to logically substantiate the same. In fact such *form* of the text itself makes the credibility and objectivity of the text somewhat questionable. Furthermore, while delimiting the study of core literary work of post-9/11 fiction, the researcher deems it necessary to give a close look to the settings.

The study finally relates the entire discussion to the bigger question of representation of the global Muslim community not only in the form of literary art, but also in the news media and other forms of cultural productions. The attitude of sweeping generalizations regarding member-class relationships, individuals' links with terrorism were seen and interpreted as symbolic for implied association of their entire faith community with terrorism and radicalization.

1.4 Research Plan / Chapter Division

Chapter 1 of this study underscores the need and scope of probing the post 9/11 literature with a particular focus on popular fiction. It takes a brief snapshot of

what makes post-9/11 fiction; a question with potential of a separate and independent research in itself. This chapter deals with the situation that unfolded after 9/11 by sparking a conflict between religious extremism from certain groups in the Muslim world and the West. It also explains the rationale of choosing *Terrorist* as the core text for this study by highlighting its unique subject matter and diversity of focus that allows an in-depth analysis of the interplay between religious lobbies, terror groups, intelligence services and trust gap between the opposing religious communities in the contemporary American society. Chapter 1 also makes a case for the chosen methodology and explains why a close reading analysis could be the best way of looking into the matter.

Chapter 2 takes a brief overview of the key terms that essentially make a part of the post-9/11 discourse and critically examines their historical and contemporary use. After pointing to the encyclopedic meanings of the terms, it explores the real life implications of using various shades of the near similar terms in popular discourse of terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. Besides a survey of critical terms of the literary and political discourse, chapter 2 also includes a fuller review of the growing critique of post 9/11 fiction.

Chapter 3 carries a general survey of the wider body of post-9/11 fiction and gives a brief critical analysis of some 20 selected creative writings; in order to see if there have been any general trends of stereotyping and political mileage and if yes, then how such a mileage has been achieved? The politically motivated agenda are normally advanced through the literary techniques such as the development of action in the plot, settings, dialogues and characterization.

Overall, this chapter views the position and place of *Terrorist* in comparison with other post-9/11 novels.

Chapter 4 is a close reading analysis of the text in question; *Terrorist* by John Updike. The novel has been textually analyzed in the light of the existing critique on the subject. This chapter is a qualitative analysis that has uncovered the conscious or unconscious attempts by Updike to stereotype the character of Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy and his teacher at a local mosque Sheikh Rashid who are the representatives of Muslim community in America. It also explores the notion of religion-inspired terrorism that is leading to the erosion of US social and communal harmony and further aggravating the state of public security.

Chapter 5 of this study consists of findings and conclusions that are based on the discussions of the previous chapters. The textual evidence in support of the hypothesis of stereotyping has been related to the research questions and conclusions have been drawn on the basis of the definition of stereotyping as made operational earlier. This chapter also includes recommendations as policy guidelines for governments facing the problems of militancy and terrorism in the West as well as in the Muslim world.

1.5 Scope and Rationale of Study

Now as almost a decade has passed since the tragedy happened, the storm of its immediate aftermath has somewhat settled down and the world has started to reflect as to what transpired during the dreaded reign of terror that the Muslim community has experienced under the global war on terror (GWoT). It is time to

reflect on the question that how certain phenomena were created through media discourse, theatrical and TV productions and popular fiction to associate terrorism, religious fanaticism and radicalization with Islam as a faith and Muslims as a community. Various stereotypical Muslim youth characters appear in the fiction written in the backdrop of 9/11 attacks and subsequent anti-terror war.

The researcher hopes that the textual analysis as done in this study, will lead to greater understanding of the real life questions facing the world today. It has the potential to inspire future researches on similar questions of interfaith relations and ethnic harmony in the post-9/11 US society. For example, further research can be conducted on whether or not there is a co-relation between the plight of Muslim Diaspora in the US and latter's foreign policy actions in the Muslim World? Are the US military invasions of foreign countries merely the result of desperate quest for security against terrorism or an unbridled campaign of plundering mineral resources and advancing the agenda of political and military hegemony? Is there any middle ground between the rising anti-Americanism in most parts of the Muslim world and America's fear of and fight against the perceived Muslim fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism? What can be done to reduce the sense of alienation of Muslim Americans and address the threats of terrorism on the US soil without involving indiscriminate persecution of US minority Muslims?

This study has focused on the Post-9/11 literary fiction created in many parts of the world with a special focus on present day America's multi-cultural, multi-

racial and multi-religious society. The study has examined some of the major critical and creative works of post 9/11 authors who have dealt with the issue of terrorism, homeland security and interfaith communal relations of the American society in post-9/11 years. In the context of post-9/11 US society, it seeks to resolve the dilemma created by the question of ensuring public security by excessive police surveillance and safeguarding individual freedoms and privacy rights simultaneously. Moreover, it has dealt with the problem of inter-cultural relations in diverse societies that are marred by mutual mistrust specifically along religious lines. There is an immediate need to search for ways and means to bring about the cultural harmony in religiously diverse societies that have a broad cultural make up such as USA or many other Western countries most notably the Britain.

The work of fiction that has been examined in this study is almost ideal for the purpose because it covers wider issues of multiculturalism, inter-faith harmony, and politics of radicalization, extremism and intolerance demonstrated by the religious right both in the Muslim world and in the West. There has been a special focus on the situations being witnessed in Pakistan/Afghanistan and United States by engaging into an intellectual analysis of how terrorism has affected the relationships between states and how the lives of individuals have been affected by the incidents taking place thousands of miles away on the other side of the globe. Besides being a significant contribution to our understanding of the phenomena of terrorism, extremism and radicalization, this study is expected to develop a critiquing evaluation of the efforts aimed at reducing or eliminating the

threats of terrorism in the West and the destabilizing effects of these efforts as a byproduct. The paradox of increasing mistrust among various minority community groups under the fears of deliberate victimization and the government's increasing assertive attitude on seeking greater integration of immigrant groups into the mainstream has also been discussed.

The contemporary western societies are embroiled in the suspicion and fear of the alien that resides *within* them in the form of foreign immigrants. Similarly, the religious right in the Muslim world views the western citizens among them as *aliens* that are a potential threat to state security. A clear manifestation of this fact can be viewed in high vulnerability of foreigners in Pakistan/Afghanistan and continued exclusive monitoring of Arabs and other Muslim Americans by Homeland Security Department in the United States. Therefore, it is all the more necessary to find out the real cause of such deep rooted mistrust among these communities and how can this trust gap be bridged to make a peaceful co-existence possible in truly multi-cultural society that benefits from its religious, racial, linguistic and ethnic diversity.

The world is fighting against the menace of terrorism and a huge price has already been paid in terms of human lives and financial losses over the past many years. Unfortunately, no significant success has been achieved so far. The potential threats to the US in future are likely emanate from within the US society through the radicalization of some sections of its society by hardliner clique of clergy. Therefore, besides a physical war, the world needs to engage in an intellectual war for achieving the anti-terrorism objectives.

1.6 Delimitation of Study

An enormous amount of fiction has been written on the issues of post-9/11 situation. A list of selected creative works of post-9/11 fiction has been briefly surveyed in chapter 3, but this research study is mainly focused on the novel *Terrorist* by John Updike. This novel makes an ideal choice because it has very closely related contextual setting to allow for a critical overview of the subject of stereotyping and representation about 9/11 and its aftermath.

1.7 Significance of Study

This study may contribute towards an understanding of how a textual analysis can explore the political position of the author and his treatment of various individuals and communal groups. This study, therefore, is rather a novel exploration of post-9/11 world as it has been reflected through literary fiction. It has great degree of importance for Pakistan because the country is currently struggling against the rising tide of terror in large swaths of its territory, specifically in the western provinces bordering with Afghanistan. The researcher earnestly hopes that any insights into social, economic, political, ideological and religious causes that drive the otherwise ordinary folk into the fold of terror; will directly support the efforts aimed at containing this menace.

Therefore, an objective analysis of the socio-cultural aspects of the immigrant phenomena and cultural integration is necessary to see what a certain post-9/11 fiction author from the West may have specifically chosen to present in his writings and what may be the possible motives behind presenting a certain form

of content and eventually how that content may have been set in order to use the otherwise work of art as a vehicle of political ideology. Therefore, the study has helped understand how the post-9/11 fiction has complicated the immigration phenomenon by highlighting the excessively assertive demand of host societies of the west for greater integration and assimilation of foreign immigrants mainly from the Muslim countries.

It is important to dig the entire post-9/11 political, ideological, social and strategic landscape to uncover the root causes of ongoing crises such as the Global war on Terror, the subsequent war and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, widespread militancy across the Muslim world and continuing ethnic and racial strife in the western societies in general and the US in specific.

The situation demands special attention for the struggles aimed at group rights by those who are most beleaguered because of their status of social pariahs, and the response to a phenomenal increase in the influx of immigrants from Asia and Latin America, and last but not the least the rebirth of strict nativism among the Western population which actually feels threatened by *alien* forces of immigrant communities. The researcher views it necessary to explore the social, economic, political, ideological and religious causes that drive the otherwise ordinary folk into the fold of terror.

Popular fiction on the subject very clearly illustrates the issues of multiculturalism, inter-faith harmony, radicalization, extremism and intolerance demonstrated by the religious right and thus develops a better understanding of

the phenomenon of *homegrown terror* of USA and many other western societies. In order for achieving any success against the terrorism in the battlefield, the world needs to intellectually study and re-assess the ideological situation on the ground first. Therefore, this research is likely to have a direct bearing on World's ongoing efforts against terrorism, extremism and radicalization.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a review of the key terms that have been frequently used in this study and essentially make part of the post-9/11 discourse. The researcher views the utility of discussing these terms for giving a sound background of what was the big message given in the post-9/11 western discourse and what terms heavily featured in that discourse. In this way, the terms not only have their traditional semantic meanings, but have something additional especially in the context of post-9/11 literature wherein these terms collectively create a Meta narrative of the west.

The terms like stereotyping, representation, xenophobia, cultural integration and assimilation, ethnicity, pluralism and multi-culturalism form the core of post 9/11 fiction in general and therefore have been reviewed with reference to the published literature. Religious fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism and radicalization are the phenomena that provide the theoretical framework for exploring the underpinnings of racial and ethnic strife of modern day societies of diverse religious make up.

The second part of this chapter reviews the selected post 9/11 novels and makes an overview of how communal profiling and stereotypical representation has

increased the social inequality and native-immigrant rift in the West in general and in the United States in specific.

2.1 Key Terms Explained

The discussion below is a review of the major terms that have frequently been referred to in this study and they are widely used in the greater body of post-9/11 political and social discourse.

2.1.1 Stereotyping

Stereotyping is a standardized and simplified image or conception that has been associated with special and operational meaning which are commonly held by an entire group. Thus it is a generalization, quite often incorrect, oversimplified or grossly exaggerated and essentially has some offensive attributes to it. Stereotyping is used to describe or distinguish a religious, ethnic, geographical, linguistic or political group for the sole purpose of demonizing and humiliating it. The type of stereotyping and overgeneralizations that will come into discussion in later parts of this study is racial stereotyping in the US society. The disintegration of the social order and the rift in the entire communal landscape of America is probably the result of racial and religious stereotyping.

These points are perhaps not enough to encompass all the forms of stereotyping that can be traced in *Terrorist* because this novel can be studied in an unmanageably broad perspective. For example the high frequency of mentioning of skin colors of some characters can be questioned because the 'informative' purpose of such a thing would certainly have been adequately accomplished when

it was first discussed in the text. Secondly, the excessive quotations from the Holy Quran make it look more like a work of theology and not literary fiction. Thirdly, the selection and choice of Quranic excerpts is almost intriguing, since the verses are quoted so as to 'fit in' the novel without caring much about their original Quranic context. Fourthly, the setting of the novel also seems to have a clear purpose to raise 'alarm bells' about the menace posed by foreign immigrants specifically the Arabs. Without any attempt to hide his hatred for the immigrants; specifically the Muslims and Arabs, the obvious message conveyed through this novel is that sooner the society is purged of the Arab Muslims, the better.

2.1.2 Representation

It means to portray incorrectly, improperly, or falsely according to the dictionary. It is the central point in the entire issue and provides the very rationale for exploring post 9/11 fiction. The subsequent chapters of this study will look into the question whether the things as presented in *Terrorist* by John Updike are objectively true or on the contrary, the truth might have been falsified, distorted and belied.

The American government made an attempt and was successful to make people believe that the Islamic fundamentalists who were against the human freedom and enlightenment had attacked America. President Bush while addressing his nation on the day of 9/11 attacks said, "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world". The government authorities and in the mainstream media, terrorists were branded as *cowardly, evil*

and driven by a hatred of liberty in the days immediately after the attacks. Quite interestingly, the rhetoric did not at all hint that other motivations like grievances in the Middle East might have also existed to turn the Muslim youth into terrorists.

Pintak (2006) says that snubbing Muslims exclusively in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 was an example of strategic misrepresentation on the part of the United States and it was done by distortion of ground reality. This form of strategic misrepresentation is more likely to occur, when any single linguistic or cultural voice is accepted as dominant and all other voices are considered as *others*. The case of the US Muslim community after 9/11 was that it was singled out as the only *alien other* that was responsible for the erosion of cultural and social harmony in the pluralistic US society.

Thus the representation of certain religious communities by the powerful media and the government made them appear the obvious villains who had not accepted the American life style where according to the government rhetoric; opportunities existed. Thus the reality was created by strategically representing 'others' by dehumanizing them. The link was made between what was attacked and who was ideologically and historically against it. The obscurantist agenda is traditionally associated with the clergy in the Islamic world and the freedom and enlightenment had been attacked which were opposed by these clergy only. So the obvious conclusion is that these clergy or their followers must have perpetrated the acts.

Pickering (2001) while writing the preface of his book *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* says,

> What remains crucial to the critique of stereotyping is not only the question of who speaks for whom and with what consequences, but also the question of how stereotypes relate to the conception of what is held to be 'natural' or 'normal', how they create and sustain a common sense of the proper limits of what is accepted as legitimate and right. (p. 1)

He further discusses at length the phenomenon of stereotyping with its relation to the notions of xenophobia, patriarchy, othering, and post colonial critique.

Jackson (2007) argues in his article that terrorism and religion may possibly have a link in some fashion. But it should also be noted that the dominant narratives in the post-9/11context are essentially politicized in character. *Islamic* terrorism is mainly constructed deliberately and it is portrayed as an existential threat and in this way the broader discourse in the post-9/11 era functions to project a great number of projects which are political and discrete and they are aimed at enforcing and consolidating a certain form of social and political order. Exposure of political technologies and their ideological effects on the discourse can potentially open up some form of critical space to allow for alternative forms of knowledge and practice with the potential of emancipatory effects.

2.1.3 Xenophobia / Islamophobia

Xenophobia refers to an attitude of general hatred and feelings of unacceptability of foreigners in a society while Islamophobia is on the other hand religion-based and it refers to the general view of unacceptability of Muslims in non-Muslim societies. "Islamophobia may be defined as alienation, discrimination, harassment

and violence rooted in misinformed and stereotyped representations of Islam and its adherents" (Ghazali, 2008 p. 5). Post-9/11 era witnessed the unprecedented levels of anti-Muslim sentiments in the general public and the state policies. Commenting on the rising wave of anti-Muslim rhetoric in the US, Ghazali (2008) notes that the Americans' attitudes regarding the Muslim community and Islamic faith are fuelled largely by political statements of various military and civil leaders and reporting in the media that focuses mostly on projecting a negative image of Muslims and their faith. The vilification of Muslim community and their faith has been relentless among segments of the mainstream US media and almost all political parties since 9/11. Most of political leaders, media commentators and literary authors have been very focused in their campaign of demonizing Islamic faith and Muslim community.

> In the post 9/11 America attacking Islam and Muslims became the fashionable sport for the radio, television and print media. Unfortunately, the events of 9/11 were used as an excuse to greatly magnify the hostility toward Muslims and cloak it in pseudo-patriotism. Muslim-bashing has become socially acceptable in the United States. Is Islamophobia, a de facto state policy? (p. 19)

What is important about abrupt increase of xenophobic feelings among the native public of the US is that such hatred was essentially considered as patriotism. Salaita (2005) has pointed out that the most crucial feature of imperative patriotism is that it essentially has some relationship with xenophobia. The former has a kind of moral association with the colonial discourse; it is a little more dissociated from xenophobia in the sense that it does not fundamentally arise from it. Imperative patriotism makes the xenophobic practices and tendencies a part of

the nationalistic patriotism. Therefore, xenophobia is a somewhat less vicious strain of colonial discourse, and it results more often from a certain type of fear which is generated by the feelings of the members of the host community that their economic wellbeing is put at risk by the foreign aliens who have come to live alongside them. More than any thing else, xenophobia is a selfish pursuit of the members of the host society against those who might have immigrated there and sharing the economic resources.

In the novel *Terrorist*, there are very elaborate instances of almost xenophobic hatred against the Muslim immigrant community of the US and the author's indirect and underlying endorsement of such zealotry is worrying because it certainly does not augur well for communal harmony in American society.

2.1.4 Cultural Integration and Assimilation

The western right has become ever the most assertive in its demand of the immigrant communities to culturally *integrate* in the mainstream west. This amounts to demanding almost complete departure from the ancestral culture and language because the rightist forces in the west seem determined that they will not deem the immigrants *fit to live* in the west unless they completely surrender their ancestral languages and cultures. Such a demand is particularly made to the Muslim Arab community because they have become the most abhorred group of the society after 9/11.

This concept has been extensively employed in *Terrorist* because Updike frequently portrays Ahmad and his religious teacher so as to stand out as *odd-*

man-out of the society. Even the Arab neighborhoods of New Prospect (the fictitious city in New Jersy) are presented so as to stand out very clearly as the dens of crime and violence against the rest of very modern and progressive America.

The mastermind of 9/11 attacks Muhammad Atta was an Egyptian man, who in order to disguise himself as a progressive and fun-loving citizen of US society, drinks Scotch and later boasts to the bartender of being a pilot for American Airlines. That is an image of *pre-9/11* America which Updike seeks to encounter with a new *post-9/11* image that is entirely altered by the events of that historic day.

Colgan (2009) makes some very interesting observations about the immigrant phenomena while giving critical comments on Updike's *Terrorist*. He says that this novel actually redefines post-9/11 America because of the definitive imagination of its author. He sees the current American society's multicultural status as false and deceiving because foreign immigrants pose a feigned status of their being culturally assimilated into the mainstream. While the truth remains that Mohamed Atta and other hijackers of 9/11 achieve their goal of superficial assimilation into America by imitating what they otherwise regard as the worst characteristics of their host society of infidels. Their pragmatic indulgence in drunkenness, unclean food and a joyless pursuit of pleasure, grants them free entry to a squalid version of the American melting pot. Such feigned posture of integration aided by the leniency in America's state laws - allows them to

penetrate deep into the social and political landscape and eventually plot to strike at the heart of the same society.

The present day US is a highly multicultural society but the diversity of its cultural landscape is unfortunately being used to disadvantage the efforts of creating a coherent and integrated society. Therefore, some ethnicities in the contemporary Western societies in general and in US in particular, have far lesser tendency and willingness to integrate and assimilate them in the cultural bracket of the host society. The same may be true for the acceptance of the distinct religious and ethnic outlook of such groups by the host societies in general. American Muslims, for example, believe that their cultural identity does not enjoy a recognized status and therefore they are subjected to cultural stereotyping and social discrimination.

> An emphasis on *cultural* identity and distinctiveness obscures important distinctions between those who have experiences of racial disadvantage and abuse and those who can more readily luxuriate in their ethno-cultural difference. Research has shown that the delight many immigrants take in their identities - their pleasure in celebrating holidays in distinctively ethnic ways, cooking ethnic meals, remembering fragments of a foreign language - and the tenaciousness with which they hold on to their ethnic labels (Mary, 1990 p. 147).

People attach enormous importance to what they perceive as their ethnic identity, and yet in most cases, the identity comes with minimal costs attached. It does not, for the most part, limit choice of marriage partner. It does not determine for example as to where you will live, whom you will choose as friends, what job or profession you will have, or whether or not you will be subject to discrimination.

It means culture goes beyond the horizon that is attached to the mere distinctions between minority and majority, and is linked to legal or territorial claims.

Kymlicka (1995) at the very beginning of the *Multicultural Citizenship* notes a wide spectrum of differences between minority and majority groups of multicultural societies. The areas in which these groups increasingly clash are the issues such as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, education curriculum, land claims, immigration and naturalization policy, even national symbols, such as the choice of national anthem or public holiday.

Spielhaus (2009) in his article "Media making Muslims: the Construction of a Muslim community in Germany through Media Debate" presents an extended debate on the question of *integration* and *assimilation* of the Muslim immigrants in the western societies. The writer argues that the media's negative portrayal of the communal group has made many otherwise secular minded Muslims to follow certain Islamic practices that are associated with the radically distinctive trait of the religion. The writer concludes that such a secular group among Muslims is at least fully integrated if not *assimilated* in the society and the media should not cause them to return to the radical version of Islam.

2.1.5 Pluralism and Multiculturalism

Lauter (2009) in his essay "Multiculturalism and Immigration" notes that multiculturalism focuses on access and integration; but these are not the primary issues of globalization and the immigration it has generated. The real issue is legitimization: whether one is, and is seen and received as, legal, legitimate

citizen. It is about identity of the individual or of the group. While on the other hand, the issue of immigration is about the question of integration and separation of the immigrant with the host culture and society. It is not just about what constitutes an identity that needs to be respected, but what constitutes a political community which can sustain itself as a viable entity. Although what is generally understood of American multiculturalism is quite unusual and distinct, and it is, in a causative and genealogical way, linked with the versions of multiculturalism that were cultivated mostly in the European societies. This view has been corroborated by the participants of the cultural experience and many experts of cultural and political debate. Patterson (2009) says that multiculturalism is still tainted by the American ideal of political correctness and many European skeptics of both right and left sill see the origins of the American concept of consistently reluctant and self-imposed demands of multi-confessional and multiethnic pluralism.

A starting point for tracing the history of multiculturalism dispute is the genesis of modern citizenship in the context of the nation-state. The humanities and social theory have had a major role in this discourse about citizenship. Initially, they were the producers of the new, often conflicting identities. Historians, linguists, and philosophers developed the concepts instrumental in creating national identities. In that sense, the humanities contributed to social and political exclusion. Later, many historians and cultural scholars regretted the role their disciplines played in nation-building. In the wake of World Wars I and II, they

tried to set the humanities free from this legacy by helping to deconstruct nationalism.

2.1.6 Ethnicity

The term ethnicity, like terrorism is a relative term and attempts at precisely defining it are tricky. According to Gordon (1996) there are three reasons for such complication. Firstly, it is quite complex and has the problems of ascribing and classifying. Secondly, it is very dynamic with regard to changing terminology and interaction. Thirdly it is much contested for imposing artificial boundaries.

It is also argued that it is impossible to devise a meaningful set of categories and have pointed to problems arising from existing definitions - which people may define themselves in different ways at different times and in different contexts and that some categories may mean different things to different people.

Scanlan (2010) says about the post-9/11 racial profiling in the US that all levels of government and civil society indulged in creating and spreading ethnic hatred. The fiction writers, he says, achieved such an objective by telling the half-truth to their readers about the foreign immigrant communities and they represented only one side of the picture while dealing with the post-9/11 issues and thus presented in a very narrow context. He specifically notes that the US government and media luminaries strongly discouraged the questions about how Iraq was responsible for 9/11 attacks, or how the war tactics causing massive civilian deaths could win hearts and minds of the people in Iraq and Afghanistan. The objectivity and

rationality were defeated by the ethnic and religious hatred that was running too high in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

Some of these post-9/11 writers, DeLillo and Updike among them, have dealt the Islamic terrorist at least as a human being who may deserve some sympathy under the prevailing circumstances, but the rest of these writers have been mostly one sided and none have created a context large enough to include ordinary Muslims, who are the people with very diverse political and religious perspectives. The main factors that have contributed to the targeting of immigrant Muslims in the war on terror include political expediency, negative imagery and marginalization. Several scholars, legal experts, and policy organizations have explored the legal and constitutional ramifications of the war on terror; therefore, it is important to take a grassroots level view of how these policies have impacted single individuals and whole communities in America.

Nguyen (2005) has highlighted the plight of foreign immigrant communities by saying that these communities are required by the host governments to account for them and to fully disclose their socio-economic and political lifestyle in order to preempt any suspicion of being a fifth column. In case they are unable to do so, they are projected as dangerous elements of the society that are living as a potential risk. It becomes a great test for immigrants to prove if they are a grateful family working for the American dream or on the contrary an ideologically radicalized entity that is a risk for the American society. Thus there is a clear demarcation between good immigrants or bad criminal aliens and the same applies to moderate, peace-loving Muslims or Islamic fundamentalists. "These

anti-terrorism and immigration-enforcement policies have turned up scant terrorism leads and no arrests related to 9/11 attacks, and instead have netted thousands of people mostly for administrative violations and petty crimes" (p.165).

As a result of this scenario, the political line of thinking has completely shifted to the right; thereby making it necessary that the people with a particular social status and a certain profile need to prove that they deserve their place in the society. They should also explain as to why they may not be put under suspicion, arrested, jailed, and finally shipped away to secret detention centers without any access to legal process. The most fundamental principle in law 'innocent until proven guilty' applies to them as 'guilty until proven innocent'. Nguyen goes on further to draw an analogy between the patterns of policing and profiling of suspect communities that has become a post-9/11 practice in the name of War on Terror, and the one which had been practiced against African Americans in the name of War on Drugs.

Ethnicity is considered a central factor in fueling civil wars and communal strife in almost all the societies around the world. It is evident from the prevailing reality of various religiously homogeneous societies that are experiencing internal strife among various segments merely because of ethnic diversity. Thus ethnicity quite often becomes a very important factor in fueling civil wars. Although such a dimension of the phenomenon of ethnic civil wars can not be appropriately understood without identifying proper historical, political and economic context of the situation.

> Far from being a secretion of primitive societies, it is instead around the *power game* - that the political competition intensifies and where this triggers off the clashes between groups with different origins. Ethnic conflict is about the fight to gain control of state resources, power and possibilities. It is the result of political conflicts in which the struggle over distribution is fundamental. (Shultz & Dew, 2006 p. 43)

A lay person can simply put it as the leaders of various ethnic groups mobilize their energies to compete with other ethnic groups in order to gain control over scarce resources that they want to exploit for themselves. The bottom line for this argument seems as follows: under certain political conditions elites in divided societies make use of identity to employ violence to achieve political objectives that are framed in group terms. They do so out of self-interest, rather than the interests of the whole ethnic or religious group they pretend to represent and lead. The resultant violence is closely linked to repression and exclusion of that group from access to the resources of the political system.

2.1.7 Racism and Racial Profiling

Racial profiling in a broad sense is any use of religion, race, national origin, or ethnicity by state agencies as a tool for deciding as to who should be investigated for possible links to ordinary crimes or terrorism. The profiling of Muslims and Arabs in the US officially began when Attorney General Ashcroft announced in November 2001 that in connection with the 9/11 investigations, the government would target for around 5,000 men from Middle East and South Asia who had come the United States on non-immigrant visas two years immediately preceding the events of 9/11, even though they were not suspected of any criminal activity by the federal government. This brings to light the sad fact that after 9/11 the race,

ethnicity and religious faith are being considered as proxies for suspected association with terrorism. In the post-9/11 scenario, the US government had claimed that its anti-terrorism campaign was not aimed at profiling of any particular communal group or individuals, but the situation on the ground was quite the opposite of this claim. Ghazali (2008) says, "Singling out Muslims and Arabs for questioning and detention and selective application of the immigration laws to the nationals of Arab and Muslim countries, were practices that spoke louder than words" (p. 63).

Bahdi et al (n.d.), in their detailed article "A position paper on racial profiling" outline the justification given by those who see racial profiling of Muslims as a legitimate procedure for ensuring public security. The argument advanced in favor of profiling relies on analytical reasoning, as the proponents say that it is not only necessary but inevitable that race and religion will become a probative factor in investigations owing to the widely held perception that Muslim extremism has threatened the national security. In such a context, one cannot take Muslims out of the equation and therefore to focus on an individual of this community as an investigative target is justified while probing *Islamic* extremism. Some salient characteristics which would identify a certain individual as a potential risk and make him an investigative target are his ancestral origin as an Arab, his Islamic faith, knowledge of modern technologies, and travels to the countries that are perceived to have links to terrorism.

There are several instances of such type of profiling in *Terrorist* where a detailed discussion of personal gut-up, dressing and other attributes of appearance of some

characters to create certain clear and vivid *profiles* of those individual characters. This profiling in the context of this novel is so perfectly done that it almost seems a real life simulation in the suspicion-riddled post-9/11 US society.

2.1.8 Fundamentalism

It is a type of militantly conservative movement which is characterized essentially by an advocacy of strict conformity of sacred texts. It used to be exclusively employed to refer to American Protestants who insisted on the inerrancy of the Bible, the term fundamentalism later came to apply more broadly to a diverse range of religious movements in the late 20th century. Therefore, in the broader sense, most of the religions in the world today may be regarded as having fundamentalist movements.

In the modern times, the term has come to be used with reference to Islamic movements around the world that seek to establish a very kernel strand of Islamic belief systems that were mostly before the advent of modern inventions and current technological advancements. Such movements seek to outlaw all the scientific inventions of modern day communication systems that violate the Islamic laws regarding veil, education and lifestyles etc. It will come under discussion in the later chapters because the fundamentalism as represented in the core text of *Terrorist* and *The Last Night of a Damned Soul* has been constructed in a way to show as if it has stemmed from the Islamic faith of some characters of the novels.

2.1.9 Extremism

Extremism is a disposition or tendency to resort to the most dangerous option as a first choice or an attempt at drawing the most harmful result for the opponent by employing all the resources for scoring political mileage is called extremism. In this way, an extremist is person who advocates or resorts to the measures which are beyond the norm, especially in the matters of strategic or political interests. The extremism that will be discussed in the later chapters of this study is specific to the Islamic groups supposedly based in the USA and trying to go to all extremes in order to destroy America.

According to American Heritage dictionary, a moderate person is the one who holds or champions moderate views or opinions in the fields of religion and politics. However, these days the term is used purely in view of political expediency and apparently the title of *moderate Muslim* is reserved only for the people who do not dare question the American policies in the Muslim world and particularly its unqualified support to Israeli occupation of Arab lands. The Muslims who openly abandon their beliefs and practices and they agree to malign the divine scripture of Holy Quran would also be considered *moderate* by the western media. The core text chosen for this research has some characters like Ahmad Mulloy Ashmawy and his religious teacher Shaikh Rashid who manifest a certain degree of hard corer extremism in their views and actions. The study has focused on to see if the extremism thus associated with those characters is a mere incarnation of the author's mind or there is any logical need to attach extremist traits to those characters.

Ghazali (2008) notes in *Islam & Muslims in the Post 9/11 America* that the question of extremism or moderation of some one's views in the US society is judged on whether the views held by a particular individual are in conformity with the government policies or not. The political or ideological views of any individual will be deemed *moderate* if they conform to the government policies and if they differ with the official line of government then such views will be considered as *extreme*. He elaborates it by giving an example of the Middle East conflict and says that, "A person will be considered having *moderate* views if he condones all the injustices meted out to Palestinians" (p.100). In this situation, the terms of extremism and moderation are relative and they are employed in clear perspective of political expediency only.

2.1.10 Radicalization and Suicide Bombings

Radicalization as meant in this study is a sustained process of adopting and promoting a stubbornly extremist belief system with a purpose to facilitate the violence for advancing the ideologically inspired political, religious or social change. The term in modern days is used strictly within the context of violent reactions of young Muslims to the western policies in the Middle East and their own governments' complacency in injustices being meted to them. But this term can also be used to refer to the radicalization in the context of a great number of militant movements that possess a variety of ideologies.

The systematic use of violence or threat of violence against civilians and states for obtaining political concessions is terrorism and the grimmest form it has mutated

into during the first decade of 21st century is suicide missions of religious or ideological zealots. Tracing reasons behind the motivations of suicide squads may well be tricky. But what is commonly understood about the worst form of terrorism is the feeling of doing one's duty towards religion or state. The most frequently quoted reasons by the terror groups across the world are patriotism, hate of the infidel enemy or the foreign occupier force. The several violent militant groups in modern day conflicts of Iraq and Afghanistan justify their violence by their avowed resistance to the occupation of their lands by an outsider; the United States. They simply do not seem to buy the western argument of liberation from the oppressive regimes that had obtained no public mandate through a transparent ballot. Moreover, there are social and psychological pressures to engage in suicide missions.

Perry & Negrin (2008) says about suicide bombings that the willingness to sacrifice one's life is created by means of systematic indoctrination through religious institutions or orthodox conspirational circles. Ideological or religious indoctrination is to be rooted in some objective and tangible situation which obviously involves the rage and hatred against the enemy. But in certain cases, the personality cult of the leader has a decisive role to prepare individuals for committing extreme acts that are otherwise quite incomprehensible.

The process of radical indoctrination has been explored in several post-9/11 novels where the writers have attempted to explore the psychological mindset of the 9/11 hijackers or other protagonists in the fiction works. As for example John Updike goes deep into the mind of his protagonist Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy who

goes on a suicidal mission for a clear purpose of doing a religious duty and causing a blow to the infidels, he despises so much for their unclean way of life. A variety of other explanations i.e., psychological, analytical and orthodox psychiatry, have been adduced to explain suicide terrorism, including the concept of overvalued ideas. Such an obsessive belief in an idea, ideology or set of values can be a motivational factor behind the making of a potential suicide bomber. Initially, the religious radicalization was thought to be the prime factor behind the suicide missions, but the tactic was also excessively used by the Sri Lanka's former rebel group of Tamil Tigers against the state security forces and inflicted heavy casualties in a conflict that was purely political in nature and had no religious dimension whatsoever. This accounts for the fanaticism of willingness to sacrifice one's own life and the motivations of those who train and send the suicide bombers on their mission. It still remains doubtful whether the complex explanations offered about suicide bombings are apposite; the motives are almost invariably rooted in the general historical, cultural, and social context of the society in which the menace of this extreme form of violence grows.

2.1.11 Terrorism

The term terrorism may be defined as the systematic use of violence or threat of violence against civilians and/or states to obtain political concessions. The concept of terrorism has divided the world over its definition because some countries want to define it with regard to the objectives of the perpetrators and others want to define it in terms of its effects. Therefore it is important that the concept should be defined unanimously and the same should be clarified to the

whole world so that some tactics can be designed to counter it. The term '*La Terreur*' was first coined during the French Revolution and it meant the indiscriminate murder of ordinary civilians by the government of the day. The fact on the ground was that the then French authorities used mass executions to terrorize their own people and thus it became a form of state terrorism. Over the years, "the term has evolved from its initial use to imply that non-state actors, individuals or organizations may be the main perpetrators of terrorism" (Jackson, 2006 p.126).

The relation between terrorists, artists, fiction writers and literature has been aptly described by Looney (2010) in his PhD thesis. He is of the view that almost all of those authors who have written about terrorism and art or literature, essentially address a perceived connection between the two in the realm of the aesthetics. These critics do not see the modern terrorism merely a political phenomenon but consider it a broader practice which incorporates aspects of media, aesthetics, performance art, and symbolism.

> They argue that terrorists and artists are similar because they both understand how to create dramatic, symbolic events which have a profound effect on their audiences because both groups are adept at the use of media – a term which often goes problematically undefined in these studies – to transport their ideas and actions. (p. 40)

Apart from its question as to what extent there is a connection between terrorism and literature, the phenomenon of terrorism in modern times, encompasses all forms of overt and covert activities that are aimed at harming a state, a certain

community of its populace, or the attainment of some other strategic and political objective.

2.1.12 Militancy and *Jihad*

Militancy is an armed struggle against the state for a political objective including the secession of geographic territories as sovereign states. *Jihad* on the other hand, has religious connotations to it and therefore it is an Islamic equivalent of crusades in theological terms. Almost all movements across the globe whose supporters are Muslims call their subversive activities as *Jihad* with a primary objective to draw the Muslim public sympathies for their political causes. As the struggles to spread political influence around continue in modern days, the literary circles have reacted to the armed and violent movements with the power of pen. Such a response covers not only literary productions, but also journalistic and academic writings. Jackson (2007) says most of the rhetoric about post-911 conflict has turned out be one sided and politically motivated and has largely been controlled from the West. However, certain setbacks to the hegemony do provide the opportunities for engaging in objective and impartial critique of these issues. The war on terror has caused an enormous material and social destruction and therefore the possibility of coordinating and generating non-violent and constructive responses to frequently accruing acts of terrorism has an immense normative significance. It is matter of relief that the discourses are never completely hegemonic and thus there is always room for launching a counter-hegemonic struggle and creating subversive forms of knowledge. As to the specific situation of post-9/11 discourses, they are not only inherently unstable

and vulnerable to varied forms of critique, but they have been further weakened by other factors contributing to the emerging social and political reality. These factors are continual setbacks being faced by the occupation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, ongoing disclosures of torture and rendition and growing resistance to government efforts for restricting civil liberties. This situation suggests that we are at an opportune moment for engaging in deliberate and a sustained critique of what has been going unquestioned in the post-9/11 literature. In order to substantiate his point, Jackson cites the example of European Union's review of its lexicon of terms regarding *Islamic* or *jihadi* terrorism. He sees a responsibility on the part of the scholars in the field to challenge the articulation of the central labels and narratives of the dominant discourse for exploring alternative forms of language and knowledge. He suggests that instead of sticking to the oppressive confines of the discourse of *Islamic* terrorism, we should look for and reclaim more flexible and ethically responsible alternatives of the term. The labels and narratives of political violence, militants, revolutionaries, anti-imperialism, nationalism, insurgency, ideology self-determination and the like are more appropriate to describe the current conflict because they are not merely confined to the discourse of *Islamic* terrorism.

2.2 Critical Review of Literature

The following section covers some of the significant critical studies that have dealt with the social and political issues of post-9/11 world at the global and American national context.

2.2.1 Un-demarcated Contours of Global War on Terror

Besides engaging in an active conflict with Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan, the global War on Terror focused to net as many terror suspects as possible from around the world through the intelligence services of the coalition partners in the War on Terror. The world got further messed up when the US military intervention in Iraq forced a regime change there too and a bloody insurgency followed. As Afghanistan and Iraq were smoldering in the fire of insurgency with deadly suicide attacks, Pakistan also slipped into the fold of terror and the military regime in Islamabad used massive force to enforce its writ on its loosely administered autonomous border regions with Afghanistan. Thousands of people went missing and several hundreds of them were picked up by the intelligence services and extradited to the US as a part of the CIA's infamous rendition program. In the mean time, the US government forced several other countries mainly in the Arab World and the African continent to crack down on individuals and organizations that were considered sympathizers of Al Qaeda. Thus several hundred suspects were taken to US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba after passing through several other interrogation centers around the world. Nguyen (2005) in his book *We are All Suspects Now: Untold Stories from Immigrant Communities After 9/11* has provided detailed accounts of the plight of a number of people who were arrested from the United States after 9/11 on mere suspicion that was primarily based on their ethnic origin or religious orientation. Although, the 9/11 was a tragedy of huge magnitude, but its fallout

has turned out to be a far bigger tragedy than the 9/11 itself and nobody knows for how long the mankind will continue to suffer under the clash triggered by it.

Gilbert (2005) in *New Terror New Wars* has contributed to this growing debate about the Global War on Terror from the ethical perspective. He argues that the politics of *identity* should be discarded and in turn the focus should shift to politics of *role*. He has explored the ethical significance of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath. From the nationalistic violence to the amorphous transnational terrors, he examines the causes of contemporary wars as they are made manifest in the politics of identity, and lastly he questions when military force is justified in the pursuit of political goals. Besides exploring means of ending the wars, he also advocates to resolve the conflicts that gave rise to these wars in the first place.

Achcar (2002) in '*The Clash of Barbarians: 9/11 the Making of the New World Disorder*' has argued that the response to this historic terror attack has generated more terror and hardened the radicalization tendency across the Muslim World. The paradox of the War on Terror is that it is resulting in exactly the opposite of its intended objectives besides mass killings and human rights violations as collateral damage.

Honderich (2002) in *After the Terror* has condemned the terrorist killings of September 11 as hideous. He has argued that the killings were not rational means to an end that was partly defensible. The West's subsequent attack on Afghanistan is excused despite its colossal collateral damage. Honderich (2007) in *Humanity,*

Terrorism, Terrorist War: Palestine, 9/11, Iraq, 7/7... asks the question whether the analytic philosophy in considering large questions of right and wrong should proceed by embracing international law, human rights and the *just war* theory or the like. He argues that the political leaders of the West who have waged a war against terrorism are actually *friends* of terrorism because they become the main cause to fuel it. He quotes the injustices against Palestinians and occupation of their country beyond the pre-1967 borders as an example to support his point. He finally deplores the mass level civilian deaths and property losses are forgotten by thrashing them into the dustbin of *collateral damage.*

2.2.2 Suspected Loyalty and Politics of Religion

One very serious question that had arisen from the aftermath of 9/11 was the loyalty of US Muslims to the country they were living in. In fact American media, public and government in general started to doubt the loyalty of the Muslims living among them and mostly saw them as alien traitors who were all allied to terrorists. Such forms of mistrust and alienation brought a very severe wave of victimization of Muslims immigrants of the US society. Such a campaign of dehumanization of this beleaguered community was spearheaded by the state security and intelligence services.

According to Chang (2003), there have been very drastic changes in relationship of US citizens and their police in the backdrop of global terrorism in the post-9/11 years. Availability of advanced technology coupled with the globalization effects has affected the American society in legal, social, psychological and political

spheres. As a result, a re-assessment of the balance between the surveillance authority of police and the privacy rights of individuals has come about. The shifting balance between opposing interests of police surveillance and privacy safeguards is evident from the post-9/11 jurisprudence practices in USA.

This dilemma of the Western societies has been highlighted in several studies and it is just not limited to the post-9/11 situation. A study published in 1998 by UK-based Commission for Racial Equality under the title 'Stereotyping and Racism' sheds light on the issue of communal mistrust and the resulting predicament of the Muslim minority. The findings from the two surveys suggested that a number of individuals from the minority communities in England did not reveal their identity and ancestral origin because they feared racial prejudices. Similarly, some members also gave a sense of mixed identity in an apparent bid to conceal where their actual loyalties lied. The study eventually concludes that the prejudices and racial discrimination originally result from stereotyping and it suggests several remedial measures like strengthening the individual identities as opposed to the group or ethnic identities. As surveillance by police and other security agencies continues to increase after 9/11, its impact on civil liberties, safety, and civil lives should be reassessed in order to make sure that the democratic ideals of individual freedoms are not violated in the process of enabling police and other law enforcement agencies to keep public order and security of society.

Ibrahim (2007) views the competing struggles between the immigrant Muslims and the western secular states as a never-ending vicious circle. Islam's narrative faming as a terror-inspiring religion through the terror attacks of 9/11 and

crystallizing such post-9/11 image and memory will have implications for identity construction, sense of belonging, idealization, imagination and re-interpretation of Islam by the immigrant Muslim communities living in secular democracies of Europe and America. Such a negative projection of Islam is likely to inspire the younger Muslims to create and define new forms of belonging with the overwhelming focus of religion and a renewed struggle for preserving their ancestral culture by seeing it in the danger. Such a resurrection of the struggle for survival may again be perceived as a threat by the secular western nation-states.

Many people believe that the US response to the 9/11 was not based on the objective standards of 'common sense', and thus it had to be built on a narrative that was to be shared not only by the American government but also by the whole society. Bloss (2007) notes a general fear of the public that the overreaction of the US government and its agencies abroad to the perceived threats of terrorism will result into unforeseen effects on the quality of privacy and will severely erode the civil freedoms of citizens that have been constitutionally guaranteed.

> The narrative of terror quickly constructed for the war not only affects the government but many other social institutions of America. It was built on the strong foundational image by 'demoralization' of terror site as Ground Zero. (Croft, 2006 p. 12)

The ideological underpinnings and viewpoints of the authors become evident when we pay attention to the question of how the discourse has been created to link the phenomenon of radicalization with a certain communal group of society.

> Anthropologically speaking, terrorism has emerged as one of western society's strongest taboos; and the threatening terrorist is actually the cultural projection of the tabooed-wild man figure of the western imagination. This then, is the context for the discursive construction of the terrorist threat at the heart of the war on terrorism. (Jackson 2004, p. 6)

Since the popular fiction on the subject covers wide array of issues that include multiculturalism, inter-faith harmony, politics of radicalization, extremism and intolerance demonstrated by the religious right and Diaspora, one is compelled to believe that that the American authors were baffled by the new reality and could not just understand fully as to why America could be attacked. Their patriotism compelled them to invent a villainous enemy of their country and draw a very tangible portrayal of it so that the country and its people get united against the palpably evident enemy. Gray (2009) offers a very good analysis of the dilemma of modern American authors by highlighting their predicament of defining their country without the existence of a tangible *other*. He says that the end of Cold War has eliminated the communist *other* against whom most of the American intelligentsia used to identify themselves. So they are on a mission to create a new opposition whose villainous disposition and even character should become the defining basis of Western civilization. There is greater degree of strangeness to most of the post-9/11 texts, because they try to create a certain *other* from the western perspective. It is because of the fact that with the collapse of communism, a sinister *other* that enabled American and other westerners to self-define themselves; has disappeared leaving a void behind. Such a void has actually been filled by replacing Islam with the old wicked opposition of Communism.

> Facing the other, in all its difference and danger, is surely one
> of the challenges now for writers, not just because of obscene
> acts of terrorism committed by a small group of people, but
> because the US has become, more than ever, a border territory
> in which different cultures meet, collide, and in some
> instances collude with each other. There is the threat of the
> terrorist, but there is also the fact of a world that is liminal, a
> proliferating chain of borders, where familiar oppositions -
> civilized and savage, town and wilderness, *them* and *us* are
> continually being challenged, dissolved, and reconfigured.
> (Gray, 2009 p. 135)

The twin towers of New York have been going up in flames again and again in some of well-regarded prose analyses, films, documentaries and pop fiction. Therefore the literature, in political and socio-cultural spheres surrounding this very contentious issue is abundant. A huge bulk of fiction has also been created in different parts of the world. The volume of post-9/11 fiction as well as its highly charged critiques is still expanding and new issues are continuously being added to the debate. Different writers have presented different viewpoints through their writings. Therefore I believe it has a scope for research. *'Endless War? Hidden Functions of the War on Terror'* by Keen (2006) is an apt and scathing critique of the post-September 11 global power politics. David Keen says that winning the war is not an end in itself; rather war tends to be a part of the wider economic and political game. He sees the current war on terror an extension of the Cold War. Apart from such book-length critical studies, the internet as a free medium of expression is an immense source of critiques and an expanding public space where people from across geographical and cultural boundaries are contributing to this emerging discourse about global terror.

Davies & Sardar (2004) in *'American Dream, Global Nightmare'* outline how the contemporary American empire has been carried away by its neoconservative

ideology and has sought to make American tradition and history as universal narratives. They argue that the fallout of the American dream of asserting itself as a superpower has come with nightmarish consequences for the rest of the world. They find the dichotomist behavior of the US policy makers when they speak for universal democracy and human rights because these very ideals are ignored where the opposite policy serves the US interests. One such example is presented in a novel *Guantanamo Boy* by Pererra (2009) that describes the ordeal of an innocent teenager who suffers grave human rights abuses at the hands of US security agencies and eventually gets released from the Guantanamo detention centre after being found innocent. Similarly, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Hamid (2007) is a rather protesting voice of a Muslim author against what he seems to perceive as misrepresentation and mistreatment of Muslim community following 9/11 by the West in general and the US in particular. Another study under the title "How Terrorism News Reports Increase Prejudice against Out-groups: A Terror Management Account" by Das Enni et al (2009) clearly outline how terrorism reporting increases hatred and begets further violence among racial groups.

2.2.3 Prejudiced Media Coverage of Muslims

Nacos (2006) in *Fueling Our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans* takes account of how the American media and public zeroed in on Muslims at home and abroad to establish connection with terrorism. The book further explores the point of view of Muslim Americans and takes a very critical view of the anti-terror policies of the US government at home

and abroad. Previously, Aladdin Elaasar (2004) in "*Silent Victims: The Plight of Arab & Muslim Americans in Post 9/11 America*" had also highlighted the targeted campaign of victimizing the entire Muslim American community in the wake of 9/11. The writer in this book attempts to find out the originating source of hatred among communities in the American society and singles out the Muslims as the most troubled community because of the mistrust that was heightened by media stereotyping after the 9/11 happenings. It finally explains the phenomenon of stigmatizing the Muslim community and how their lives were affected by it. Another very important study about the relation of media with the public opinion during an active conflict is *'Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government and the Public* by Norris (2003). This book not only explores the important issues of mass media and political communication and behavior but also sheds light on the issue of threat perception and strategy of threat neutralization and its relationship with social order and communal harmony. Hussain (2009) in "Re presenting: Muslims on North American Television" concludes that Muslims do not get a recognition as legitimate citizens of America by American television and they are instead projected as dangerous aliens who have a wicked and violent religion. Moreover, the most strikingly presented feature of Islam on the television drama is its inherent violence and it seems that there is no other presentable practice embodying Islamic faith. This is a very similar situation to the one created in the Terrorist by John Updike. Violence breeding religious ideology is the single most prominent idea presented so

skillfully in the novel to show that *this and only this* is the real face of Islam and those who follow it.

2.2.4 Competing Struggles for Culture Preservation

The entire dilemma is centered on the struggle of preservation of cultural and religious traditions of the host and guest communities respectively. As the minority immigrants push for retaining their ancestral cultural roots in their new habitat, the host majority tries to keep its indigenous culture free of outside ingredients that are brought by the immigrant communities over the course of decades. The calls of several European governments on their citizens of Middle Eastern, African and Asian origins to properly integrate into the host society, by requiring them to attend national language classes, is one manifestation of the efforts at preserving the indigenous cultures of the West. This is clearly how the contemporary Western societies depict a tendency of not accepting the cultures and languages of immigrants by strictly demanding them to integrate by adopting the values of lifestyle and worldview.

Phillips (2007) in *Multiculturalism without Culture* writes that the European experience of flirtation with multiculturalism which in some cases developed into a very strong relationship seems to have caused a more strident insistence on national identity and belonging. Newspaper articles regularly call on foreign immigrants to make it clearer that they have unambiguously opted for the values and cultural norms of their host societies which are usually assumed to be more liberal and democratic than those of their ancestral societies they left. As a general

rule, most of the governments require citizenship applicants to take courses in their national language and what are said to be the values of the host country as a condition for their naturalization. Holding classes to promote the integration of new citizens might be regarded as a small sign of change and not intrinsically incompatible with multiculturalism.

> Citizenship tests and ceremonies have long been part of Canadian policy, and there is nothing inherently oppressive about making it easier for people to function in a new society by providing them with the necessary language tools. But the new language of integration and social or community *cohesion* is significant, as is the growing preoccupation in a number of European countries with identifying the core values said to characterize the nation. (p. 21-22)

The unacceptability of the existence of immigrant cultures in the indigenous Western societies seems to be the most prominent reason why members of such minority groups are stereotyped and prejudiced against. Such radical hawks that do not digest the idea of co-existence with a different religious and cultural group are common on both sides of the divide. One major question is how to challenge a disparaged identity without thereby reinforcing the stereotypes that surround it. Phillips cautions against sweeping generalizations because they lead to unintentional stereotyping based on sex, gender, culture, ethnicity or religion. Thus he advises to speak in terms of probability instead of absoluteness. As versions of what has come to be known as identity politics, both feminism and multiculturalism deal in stereotypes, dividing up the world through categories like sex, gender, culture, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion. When employed by others, these labels are readily recognizable as the kind of stereotype we would prefer to avoid. Most such statements prefaced by *all women, all black people*, or *all*

Muslims are likely to be incorrect and offensive. Yet even in criticizing the labels, we may apply them on occasion to ourselves; and thus say *as a woman, as a black person*, or *as a Muslim.* This is a little less sweeping generalization that at least allows for the possibility that some others in our category might think and act differently from us. Stereotyping seems to be unavoidable in modern times, but what can be an achievable objective is to minimize the discriminations or social hatred arising out of it.

2.2.5 Post-9/11 Communal Mistrust

The post-9/11 drama of social and religious struggles has unfolded in an atmosphere of social disenfranchisement and perceived religious bigotry and prejudice on one hand and America's almost obsessively desperate quest for public security on the other. There have been a lot of discussion over the question that who should be held responsible for the turmoil that the world finds itself in after 9/11 and some western media and intellectual circles simply did not feel the need to answer how precisely, Iraq bore responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. It is like inventing an enemy from nowhere because of the fact that the Americans could not find, locate or identify the *real* enemy. It is all stereotypical generalization and almost total denial of rationality to kill and maim people by using dirty military tactics and claim it as a mission of winning hearts and minds. This is exactly what that happened in Iraq and Afghanistan and the paradox was that the large scale civilian deaths were so easily ignored as *collateral damage* because that was the price that the people of Iraq and Afghanistan must pay for their emancipation from cruel Taliban and dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein.

Most of the media and literary response of the West to the global; war on terror has been almost one sided with no sympathy to the other side.

The point is that none of the western writers have created a context large enough to include ordinary Muslims, who are the people with diverse political and religious perspectives. Scanlan (2010) notes that after the 9/11 attacks, violent revolutionaries have created public terror that can be manipulated and multiplied by politicians, the press and literary writers. He says that the terms like Islamic terrorism and Islamic fascism were deliberately created and frequently repeated in the news media for the single objective of justifying many acts of discrimination against Muslims. Such a violent image of Islam is not only reinforced by the popular films and television programs but also by the post-9/11 novels written by the distinguished American authors including Don DeLillo, John Updike and Sherman Alexie.

Zindziuvienë (2008) has given a very positive image of *Terrorist* and its author Updike by saying that this novel is a member of the special genre namely *post-9/11 fiction* and the place of this era in the larger body of American literature is set to have a direct bearing on History. Therefore, the inter-disciplinary nature of literature at this important juncture is all the more evident.

> Having created a sensitive portrait of a terrorist, John Updike introduces a new character type in American fiction: a young inexperienced, but determined, terrorist. Focusing on the period after 9/11 events and discussing the aftermath of the tragedy, John Updike draws a marginal line in American literature and American history (p. 114).

There is awfulness, a material and spiritual poverty, affixed to so much of American life. "In the tone of anxiety, Updike discusses cultural and social issues, describes the contradictions and incommunicability between the certain groups of the society and analyses the challenges of the contemporary world" (p. 117).

2.2.6 Chapter Summary

As a conclusion of the literature review and critical discussion of various studies on the subject, we can fairly say that the US government's immediate response to the menace of terrorism was disproportionate and directed entirely at a single communal group at home and abroad. While any government's pursuit of security of its citizens' lives and properties is unquestionable, it is necessary that such a pursuit should not amount to the victimization of its own minority groups or the people abroad. The aggressive anti-terror campaign that was primarily launched against the terrorist network of Al Qaeda worldwide was coupled with excessive policing and surveillance of US Muslim immigrant community. The state policies aimed at being pre-emptive against the perceived threats at home and abroad, and for that purpose the government needed public support for the resulting massive security spendings, to make dehumanized innocent individuals seen as potential terrorists at home and abroad, and finally to silence the outcry of human rights groups. In order to rally the public support, government resorted to media and every now and then, new stories of terrorists plotting against America appeared in the press and flashed on TV screens. Media giants supported the government in this scare-mongering campaign and thus a huge amount of stereotypical media productions including films, regular TV shows and newspaper feature articles

constructed a certain image of the terrorists that was exactly those of Muslims. While all this was mainly achieved through the news media, fiction writers in the USA and other parts of the world contributed their own share of constructing an enemy villain and John Updike and other fiction writers were able to portray some communal groups perceived to have links with terrorism and they made it look quite convincing and objective.

CHAPTER 3

A SURVEY OF POST-9/11 CULTURAL PRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief survey of the western cultural production mainly from Europe, North America and Australia. Since the corpus of *post-9/11 fiction* is not yet fully developed and thus not appropriately defined, it has been rather difficult to decide as to which novels should be included and which others should be excluded for the purpose of this survey. Despite the confession that there have been no hard and fast criteria for choosing a few novels from a continuously growing body of post-9/11 fiction, it is note worthy that the selection is still not altogether arbitrary. Only those novels have been included that either had directly drawn their plot structure from the happenings of 9/11 or at least had made clear reference to the incidents of the day. It is a major problem with selection of novels that their degree of *Post-9/11*ness greatly varies; because some of them merely make a brief reference to the 9/11 terror attacks and others depend on the very events for their plot structure. Still most of them do deal with issues of racial profiling and stereotypical representation. In fact, the tragedy of 9/11 was of such a huge magnitude that it almost changed the world by clearly serving a line of demarcation between what was pre-9/11 and what is now post-9/11 world. In the face of the scale of the events and their impact on the socio-political reality of the world, writers almost rushed to compete in all forms of writings including journalism and literary fiction. Post-9/11 era in general was a crisis for the fiction

writers in the face of unfolding trauma and several works of arts quickly emerged to reflect on the changed realities of the physical world. A great number of prominent theorists including Jean Baudrillard, Slavoj Zizek, Paul Virilio, Noam Chomsky, Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida have written about the politico-philosophical implications of the terrorist attacks. They not only examined the overarching geopolitical implications of terrorism but also the US government's response to the new reality.

> The aftershocks of the attacks continue to structure American political and cultural discourse, and as the chronological distance from the terrorist attacks of 9/11 increases, the number of politico-philosophical and literary discourses surrounding the event continues to multiply. (Abel 2003, p. 2)

Since, this survey of the post-9/11 western cultural production is being done for having a closer look at the post-9/11 literary fiction, therefore, it has been limited only to the works of popular fiction created in the backdrop of 9/11 terror attacks and the subsequent Global War on Terror (GWoT). It should be noted that the other forms of cultural production including short story, theatrical performances and films may, however, be equally relevant to the theme of exploring post-9/11 stereotypes and profiling done on the basis of communal, cultural, linguistic or religious lines.

Besides briefly covering the critics' views on some of the fiction works included in this study, the researcher has partly relied on book reviews and synopses for the rest of them. As pointed out by Moonitz (2006), it was mainly because of two factors. Firstly, the list of 9/11 fiction is expanding phenomenally and is expected to develop even further in coming years, it was nearly impossible to read all of

those works for performing an in-depth content analysis. Moreover, owing to the relatively newer status of post-9/11 genre, no common trends or set formulas have been clearly established and this limitation translates into a practical shortcoming of clear guidelines for directing research in post-9/11 literary fiction. In order to generate a taxonomical framework of the modes in which the events of 9/11 had been used, it is deemed that examining book reviews and synopses of post-9/11 novels will suffice.

One major fault that the critics and book reviewers had pointed out in most of the Post-9/11 novels was that they mostly portrayed the people who were either directly affected by the tragedy or were somehow related to them. They did not give the point of view, or the thinking of terrorists. Dijk (n.d.) notes an interesting commonality of the criticism of post-9/11 fiction of diverse origins that none of post-9/11 writers offers any clear insights about the psychology of the perpetrators. That is to say the authors perhaps deliberately avoided a conscious attempt to analyze the evil *other* or pass a judgment on those villains. Nevertheless, some attempts that *were* made to dig deep into the mind of the suicide terrorist were not very successful. *Terrorist* by John Updike and *The Last Days of Muhammed Atta* by Martin Amis are quite rare exception to this blame of missing the psychological inroads but they have succeeded only partially.

3.1 Relation of Terrorism with Literature

The link between terrorism and literature is also a full-fledged dilemma. For the interpretive task of creating a link between terrorism and literature, all the old

grammatical structures have proved insufficient. Terrorism *with* literature or terrorism *in* literature implies that the term *terrorism* is merely a theme being depicted in a work of literary fiction, and any work of such nature is portraying some object which could very well be replaced with some other object and this exchange does not disturb the original connection that existed between form and content. Literature *on* terrorism, on the other hand means that a novel should function like a textbook with a primary objective of explaining some phenomenon in the real world. The preposition *on* has been used here to foreground a pedagogical application of literature for the purpose of turning the works of literary art into tools of scientific explication. Literature *against* terrorism is a third category which equals literature with a policing tool with ability and potential to combat and directly engage terrorism. Such categorization may look somewhat complex but one thing is obvious that literature certainly has been deeply affected by the terror prevailing in modern day societies.

Kubiak (2004) notes that there are three different types of terrorist narratives – (1) those written by the terrorists themselves, (2) those written for analyzing terrorism itself, (3) those defined as narrative terrorism, where the author attempts to destabilize narrativity itself   by incorporating terrorists and terrorism into the work. He then proceeds to argue that,

> The real interplay between fiction and terrorism is in the way
> that traditional narratives are able to construct belief in the
> world. The ability of narrative, fictional or otherwise, to
> construct a world that is fearful, uncertain and dangerous is its
> link to terror. (p. 298)

Many of the post- 9/11 novels had drawn their plots from the actual events of terror attacks of the day and thus their art value was questioned simply because of the fact that they gave a sense of being an exact reproduction of the real facts regarding 9/11 tragedy. For example, Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* largely received disapproving response by reviewers because they said that the 9/11 events were treated in way that they looked insensitive and misguided. Critics therefore accused Foer of consciously playing with reader's emotions by showing the sad story of a traumatized nine-year-old who is looking for some clues into the life of his dead father. Morley (n.d.) says that the novel actually seems to present a contrived juxtaposition of the *real* with the fantastically *unreal*, setting the simultaneous experience of reality and unreality before the reader in portraying the post-9/11 trauma and thus making it an altogether a blurred picture carrying the elements of reality and unreality both.

In order to have a general survey of the post 9/11 fiction, the researcher has chosen the following list of literary works for discussion.

1. *The Bookseller of Kabul* (2003) by Ingrid Christophersen

2. *The Last Night of a Damned Soul.* (2004) by Slimane Benaïssa

3. *The Last Days of Muhammed Atta* (2004) by Martin Amis

4. *Windows on the World* (2004) by Frédéric Beigbeder

5. *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004) by Art Spiegelman

6. *The Warlords Son* (2004) by Dan Fesperman

7. *At Risk* (2005) by Stella Rimington

8. *Saturday* (2005) by Ian McEvan

9. *Dear Zoe* (2005) by Philip Beard

10. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer

11. *Incendiary* (2005) by Chris Cleave

12. *The Scorpion's Gate* (2005)) by Richard A. Clarke

13. *Prayers for the Assassin* (2006) by Robert Ferrigno

14. *There Will Never Be Another You* (2006) by Carolyn See

15. *The Afghan* (2006) by Frederick Forsyth

16. *Underground* (2006) by Andrew Mc Gahan

17. *Once in Promised Land* (2007) by Laila Halaby

18. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid

19. *The Unknown Terrorist* (2007) by Richard Flanagan - Grove Press

20. *Guantanamo Boy* (2009) by Anna Perera

The Last Days of Muhammed Atta by Martin Amis is a short story and not a *novel*. It is however, a very important post-9/11 writing that sheds light on how opinion makers created their characters by partly imitating the real life characters associated with terrorism and thus made their writings more objective looking and appealing to their readership. Amis, in this story creates an imaginative account of the last few days from the life of Muhammad Atta just before he crashed a hijacked plane into World Trade Center towers. By outlining his conversation with Abdulaziz, his accomplice and representing the religious rituals like *holy water* and abstinence of love, the author attempts to depict the radicalized image of the terrorist and links it with his faith through his Sheikh, the *imam* (a prayer leader) and the venue of their interactions has been shown a camp near Kandahar in Afghanistan. It is quite stereotypical geographic setting because the venue has

been specifically and precisely *chosen* to reach the conclusion that terrorism has a certain geographic identity. Their venue of interaction could have been anywhere else too, but since the Afghanistan and the Pakistani territories on the Afghan border are generally believed in the west as *terrorist havens*, the writer finds it prudent to show that the terrorist characters of fiction also meet there. It seems to have been consciously done in order to convince the western reader. Besides, the setting of the story, the development of action in the plot also merits special attention. The action in the plot of this short story goes along a very predictable and familiar course that is typical of terrorism news stories flashed by the TV screens every now and then. Although Amis does attempt to explain that his treatment of Islam as a religion is not so inimical, but he sees Islam's transgressions as being *excessively tolerated* and wants the west to put some restriction on it. Perloff (2008) has noted that Amis actually criticizes *Islamism* and not Islam itself and sees the two terms clearly distinguished from each other. The larger message of Amis is that *excessive tolerance* of Islam in the West is a problem. Perloff quotes Amis, "Our best destiny, as planetary cohabitants, is the development of what has been called species consciousness, something over and above nationalism, blocs, religions, ethnicities". Applying such a consciousness and sensibility may bring some hope for humanity.

What is significant about *The Last Days of Muhammed Atta* is that the writer attempts to explore what is deep inside the mid of the would-be terrorist. His musings and soliloquies is the major achievement of the story. *The Last Days of Muhammed Atta* has an important analogy with *Terrorist* by John Updike in

showing that the acts of suicide terrorism committed by the protagonists are necessarily inspired by the teachings of imams of the mosques. Though, it may be considered a mere coincidence, but it does underscore a general trend in post-9/11 fiction works that portray a western position on the issue of terrorism and essentially see the phenomenon of terrorism associated with the doctrine of Islamic faith.

3.2 Effects of 9/11 Events on Literature

Most of the literary response to 9/11 emphasized the visual side of the tragedy. Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* are very important works of post-9/11 fiction. Almost all the post-9/11 writers, to varying degrees, are self-consciously operating in a textual landscape in which the boundaries of literary realism seem to have been altered. According to DeLillo, the real is now *unreal* or *too real* to be portrayed by straightforward realist narratives thereby necessitating and justifying a certain degree of falsification. The 9/11 attacks gave rise to a new form of narrative realism which was born because of a frustration with the failure of language as an effective and representative tool for narrating reality. This new realism merged the written and the visual sides of the picture of reality with a view to realize the new realities of post-9/11 social, personal and political landscapes that was characterized by grief, trauma and loss. Thus, the post-9/11 writers put a great emphasis on the visual image within their works of fiction (DeLillo focused on performance art and Foer's novel had the actual photographs inter-spliced with

the text), thereby creating an intensified version of realism in order to precisely depict the realities of post-9/11 cultural, social and personal life.

Baer (2002) in his collection *110 Stories: New York Writes after 9/11*, puts together 110 briefly written responses of New York writers thereby revealing the abiding nature of the issue. It actually is an attempt to bring out the impression that the tragedy of 9/11 was a common man's tragedy and therefore merited attention from all segments of society. There have been countless writers who describe the failure of their attempts to exactly understand the terror events or the trauma they caused. In fact the number of stories in the collection corresponds to the floors of World Trade Centre that was a 110-storeyed building. Moreover, the collection may have another purpose of developing a sense that the 9/11 tragedy was everybody's tragedy and it affected a great number of people.

In the fictional novel, *Falling Man*, DeLillo's foregrounds in his narrative the personal story of Keith and Lianne Neudecker, and the terrorist figure Hammad is set at the periphery. It seems as though the story of an ordinary marriage and its dissolution has been deliberately given centre stage and the terrorist has been placed to the sidelines of the narrative. This might be a pretension to avoid criticism of ethnic, communal and religious considerations. It is noteworthy here that the plot of this novel too necessarily involves a terrorist and his religious identity can be gauged from his Muslim name thus the association between terrorism and Islamic faith has been established.

3.3 Canonical Violations in Post-9/11 Fiction

Most of the post-9/11 novels received a negative response mainly because almost all such novels had to involve certain breaches of the standard conventions of fiction. Reviewer Magdalena Ball, for instance, wrote in her review of *The Unknown Terrorist* that one of her major objections to the novel was that it put the ideology first; thereby making a political point at the expense of the characters and the plot and it is heavily ridden by polemics. Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, Flanagan's *The Unknown Terrorist* and McGahan's *Underground* are very good novels, and merit attention not only for their content and form, but also as important instances of post-9/11 novels. Flanagan and McGahan do not see fault merely in the perceived sources of terrorism, outsider Muslim suicide bombers, rather they hinge the entire blame on their own government for being complacent and letting the menace of terror grow into an unmanageably monstrous size. The same line of thinking has been followed in other post-9/11 novels written in the western democratic countries.

> Flanagan and McGahan offer a view of western governments -
> *our* governments - not as defenders of freedom or protectors
> of the rule of law but as organizations that, to use Frow's
> phrasing, manifest 'contempt for the rule of law and for
> rational policy formation'. (Webb, 2010, p. 5)

One important aspect of *Underground* is that it extends the violent worldview and philosophy of terrorism to female gender also. Most of the 9/11 fiction works present male terrorists only. *Underground* in a clear aberration of the norm, presents a vicious young woman, a fanatical neo-Muslim namely Aisha. *Underground* is a satire about the politics of Australia in a geopolitical world. The

novel is narrated by Leo James, who has been presented as a twin brother of the then Australian Prime Minister John Howard. It opens on the Queensland coast in mid-cyclone - a cyclone that is named Yusef, suggesting in the satirical voice of this novel that even the weather in a violent mode is an embodiment Muslims and therefore represents a symbolic threat. Leo escapes a shoddily built hotel that is being torn apart by sea and wind, only to be kidnapped by the followers of New Islam. He is then rescued by the federal police who turn out to be an execution squad; and re-rescued by the Oz Underground. She tells Leo that she murdered her own middle class parents, and will unhesitatingly slaughter anyone else who crosses the path of the group New Islam. She is utterly devoted to the will of the Messiah Osama bin Laden, but fails to follow Muslim religious or cultural dictates, and will shoot down ordinary Muslims if they get in her way. The Melbourne Muslim ghetto comes under a savage assault, and a small army contingent guarding a group of Muslim refugees is killed. Oz Underground resistance movement has no hope of success. At the end, Aisha is killed by bin Laden, Harry by the troops guarding Canberra airport. Leo waits for the arrival of his execution squad. He is not shot down with his companions, but brought in for interrogation and imprisoned.

3.4 Distinctions of Australian Post-9/11 Fiction

Australian post-9/11 novels are somewhat different from others in the genre because of their explicit focus on domestic political situation of the country, and because they direct the accusations at the Australian political system instead indulging with religiously inspired terrorism of Muslims and it is assumed to have

been financially supported from the Middle East or South Asia. The Australian post-9/11 novels are set entirely in Australia unlike many of their western counterparts that are set either in the western Metropolitans or in the hinterlands of Pakistan or North Western Pakistan.

While the fiction in rest of the world in post-9/11 era focused on terrorists and urged the governments to expedite their counter-terrorism efforts, the fiction writers in Australia instead criticized the policies of their own government that were corroding the civil liberties of people. While exploring the Australian post-9/11 fiction, Bennet (2008) views deep rooted nationalism instead of any criticism of terror-oriented religious forces. 'There is an interesting nationalistic lament running through *Underground*. The writer implies that how a country like Australia could accept the systematic corroding of freedoms of its citizens?' This lament can equally be applied to other Australian novels like *The Unknown Terrorist*. But the difference is that the blame for this corrosion of civil freedoms has been apportioned differently in the two novels.

> In *The Unknown Terrorist*, Flanagan pays a lot more attention to the social and political context but this is because the novel is not about terrorism but about how the fear of terrorism is exploited by media personalities, law enforcement officers and politicians to manipulate the citizens (Pons 2009, p. 9).

Bennet (2008) says that in *The Unknown Terrorist*, every member of society has been shown as totally devoid of merit; and thus everyone is just shit. In *Underground*, there is considerable indifference and none of the characters are beyond redemption. Such an inference is based on the facts that like the Doll, Leo is forced to recognize his own complicity with the state of things, and his own

lack of compassion for others. The Australia of *Underground* is a society worth defending; the Australia of *The Unknown Terrorist* might just as well be washed into the sea. What these novels point out is the risk that the drive for security will be accompanied not only by secrecy, but also by blatant abuse.

The 9/11 Commission Report famously charged American intelligence analysts with deficient imagination when they failed to "connect the dots" that would have led to prediction and pre-empting of the attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001. Attempts to bureaucratize the imagination, as proposed by the Commission, may not however be the best way to freely imagine what could, might or probably will happen in the next few years as a result of those events and the forces that have been unleashed in response to them. Intelligence analysts, as well as a broader public, should be urged to read what we call fiction as well as traditional forms of reporting.

Bennet (2008) writes while critiquing the post-9/11 Australian novels that they reflect a wide range of literary techniques and imaginative responses which shows that their writers are deeply concerned over the Australia's involvement in *War on Terror* which is not only misnamed but also looks never-ending. They pass a message of alarm and urgency to their government by suggesting that the war on terror is being lost. Flanagan's *The Unknown Terrorist* is based on the assumption that West marginalizes the Muslim community as foreign *other* in order to draw justification for the war on terror in the Muslim World and usurp the civil liberties of the Muslim immigrant communities at home. Conspiracy theory thus remains the prime focus in most of the western literary production regarding the post-9/11

global scenario. While Mohsin Hamid digs out the reaction of the fundamentalist to American imperialism, Flanagan, on the other hand, looks into the pitfalls of a democracy's response to the environment that emerged on the political scene after 9/11. He argues the language and discourse is being shaped in a way to justify the curtailment of individual freedoms. Therefore, terrorism has evolved as blurred and tainted term that it keeps the general public away from the objective reality. Terrorism is heinous, despicable murder and its perpetrators like Al-Qaeda deserve severest condemnation and they should be treated as criminals. It seems as if the US saw the post-9/11 problem clearly a little more than mere terrorism. It viewed the tragedy as an assault on the national honor and responded to it in full madness and that disproportionate response slid the humanity on this planet into the quagmire we all find ourselves in today.

3.5 Link between Post-9/11 Spirituality and Death

In the context of post-9/11 literature, there exists an interesting but parallel relationship of the subject of morality and death to that of religion and spirituality.

Moonitz (2006) in his master's degree research thesis argues that if a character's attention to one (spirituality or death) increases, it necessarily has a similar effect on the other. He views the works from inspirational genre as exceptions to this generality and sees the trait of linking death with spirituality as common to most of post-9/11works of literary fiction. In these novels, the mention of God or the spiritual beliefs of a character was never discussed separate from the personal worries regarding death. One very obvious example of this can be found in

Windows on the World by Frederic Beigbeder. Although the major part of this novel is not about religion, but when the author foresees the potential risk of looming death, he notes

> In those moments of terror, prayer comes to us unbidden. Religion is reborn in us. In the minutes ahead the collapse of World Trade Center; a temple to atheism and to international lucre, will gradually become a makeshift church (p. 127).

Moonitz concludes that such manifestation of dualism points to a relatively more secularized dissociation in the post-9/11 American fiction where writers do not address spirituality as long as it does not pertain to some character's goals of life or his death. Discussing the issues of religion and spirituality in fiction without inviting the wrath of readers is an art that needs a lot of tactfulness and sensitivity. It is therefore not much surprising that a great number of authors have chosen to discuss these taboos together in the literature about 9/11 and its aftermath.

> Whether the threat is real or imaginary has no bearing on the way the finger is pointed at some people - in a nutshell, they are suspected of being terrorists because of their Middle-Eastern appearance or origin. In *The Unknown Terrorist*, Tariq is associated with possible terrorist attempts to detonate bombs simply because of his ethnicity, and while he is no saint he is not actually involved either in any terrorist activities (Pons 2009, p. 9).

Although, *Saturday* by McEvan (2005) does not directly contribute much to the point of discussing stereotyping and racial profiling and therefore may not have much relevance for this study; but this novel makes up a very important part of post-9/11 fiction and is being briefly reviewed as part of a general survey of *post-9/11* literature. It however, sheds much light on the spirituality and how it is affected from the death and destruction prevailing all around.

Saturday is the psychological account of a day's life of a medical surgeon named Henry Perowne, and the entire novel outlines his thoughts and actions on Saturday of the February 15, 2003, when the largest demonstration in British history was staged in London against the looming military invasion of Iraq. Early in the morning, a symbolic forward flash into the day is made when Perowne looks at a burning airplane flash in the sky above though there are no elaborate details in the novel about any plane crash incident that morning. Later in the day, he gets trapped in the anti-war protests being staged in the city and amidst the great rush of the protesters; he smashes into a car and the wing mirror of the car gets damaged. Perowne escapes the scene after a brief brawl with other driver because he notices symptoms of Huntington's disease in Baxter's behavior. Later in the day, Perowne contemplates on aeroplane incident, possibility of sabotage and terrorism, the horrors and destruction of forthcoming military intervention in Iraq, and the traffic mishap that led him into a spat with an unruly opponent. All along this *action*, he reflects over his relationships to the larger world around and tries to figure out his position in the cosmic world at large. Since, he had rejected religion and all its variants in the world, he found some solace in the Darwin theories about life according to which *all life* was a continuum with no differences or shades and Perowne views himself a part of the continuum of life. It may not be much convincing for him, but it appealed him because he was able to define himself as an existing entity in the entire drama the world of today is. Later on, Perowne goes to play a scheduled squash game and continues to reflect on the early events of the day, specially his encounter with the unruly taxi driver. He

happens to lose game after a long and close fought contest because of some technical point in the end. This again points out the meaninglessness of modern day life where there is death, destruction and strife everywhere. The plane crash incident, huge antiwar public demonstration and road accident leading to scuffle show an unhappy present while the threat of imminent deadly war in Iraq signals an unpromising and dismal future. The following evening, the driver of the car Baxter and an accomplice armed with knives, force their way into the house of Perowne. Eventually, Perowne succeeds to overpower the assailants who are knocked down and fall off the staircase.

The irony of the events is that Perowne goes to the hospital in response to an emergency call to perform operation on the same Baxter who had unsuccessfully attacked him for settling scores of the road accident. At end of the novel *Saturday* the surgeon comes back and shares light moments with his wife on the bed. This story of a day from the life of a morally conscious man is a metaphor to represent the sad state of humankind's life on this earth. It shows how unseen future unforeseeable events turn out to disturb and injure us, by not completely destroying but leaving in maimed state. The neurosurgeon Henry Perowne goes out on that fateful Saturday for his scheduled tasks and routine. He had all the hopes and peace in mind when he confronted with a post-9/11 world and got got bogged down by its aftermath for which one deadly prospect seemed the invasion of Iraq that would see millions perished and maimed with their habitat and food sources blown up with explosives.

3.6 More Examples of Post-9/11 Racial Stereotyping

One of the most striking examples of stereotyping in the post 9/11 fiction comes in the form of *The Last Night of a Damned Soul* written by Benaïssa (2004). It is the story of Raouf, a young American of Arab ancestry, who is facing the dilemma of solving the mystery his father's death and eventually gets martyred under the influence of his friend and boss who had descended from Palestine and Kuwait respectively. As the action in the novel moves, Raouf changes his American lifestyle and abandons his apartment, girlfriend, mother and a pet dog he loved so much and gets *Islamized*. He repents his past life that he had spent in sin and his newly gained faith and friends associated with the faith train him for a terrorist act. Raouf's gradual removal from the liberal life is followed by his deeper involvements with Islamic faith, its practices and its advocacy for jihad. This is a common trait of the terrorists depicted in the post-9/11 fiction that they are trained and guided by the religious forces to perpetrate acts of terrorism. The novel has a close focus on one individual Raouf who is guided by his practicing Muslim friends into terrorism, and thus the author seems to have stereotypically created a link between Islamic faith and Terrorism. Further into the novel, there are religious sermons that give a relatively detailed overview of Islamic beliefs that is complete worldview and highlight the Islamic injunctions regarding the fight against vices commonly known as *jihad* and is stereotypically *mis*represented as an order of indiscriminate killing of the members of other faith groups. According to a reviewer, Raouf's transformation from an engineer to a terrorist is more *staged* than *real*.

Raouf's transformational change from a young software engineer to a terrorist bears an important analogy with Ahmad of *Terrorist*; the main work being focused in this study. Both of these protagonists were otherwise normal individuals who later ended up in the middle of terror rackets solely because of their deep association with their Islamic faith. Another commonality between the would-be terrorist protagonists of these two post-9/11 novels is their relationship with their fathers and its impact on their psychological make up in later years of life. Raouf's father died and became a nostalgic problem for him but Ahmad's father had broken-up with his mother while he was just a child and thus had no active memory flashbacks but since his religious identity made him a social outcast and the strong sense of *alien-ness* made him miss his absent father too much.

Banita (2010) says that projecting a narcissistic worldview about the entire post-9/11 fiction, is like overlooking the relatively newer works which deal with *liminal* position of America and such a *liminal* position situates it between historical borders and cultures. These novels specifically focus on racial fear and anxiety which was created by the 9/11 attacks and governmental response to them. Such an anxiety has another possible explanation that lives and minds of American people so severely affected because they saw that the terror they used to hear as a distant affair in the TV news and press media had reached their very door steps.

One wonders why it is that Raouf of *The Last Night of a Damned Soul* is guided by a *Palestinian* friend and a *Kuwaiti* boss on the road to terrorism. Why not a

friend or a boss who belongs to somewhere other than the terror bastion of Middle East? Geography of terror-origins and sources has been a general trend through which most post-9/11 writers have achieved their objectives of stereotyping. The apparent reason is that writer's objective of creating the mentoring forces of terrorists is making a political point. That is to trace the origins of terrorism from a geographical region where the wider Islamic community is based. This is stereotypical profiling of geography even.

The same line of racially motivated and stereotypical thinking can be discovered in other works of post-9/11 fiction. The metaphor of internalized suspicion of being subjected to racial profiling makes up the point of view of Changez, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, who is a young Princeton educated privileged Pakistani, a member of the elite class business community in New York at the time of 9/11, later gets transformed into a diehard protester against American hegemony over his country and rest of the Muslim world, after being meted out a prejudiced racial treatment. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* becomes a sharp critique of the practice of racial profiling in the US since it explores the ways and means through which profiling is done. This novel gives a big message that is to say the practice of racial profiling a tool which is used purely according to the intent of the person who employs it. Whether the individual who applies the racial profiling happens to be *white* or *black*, he cannot ultimately achieve anything beyond some moral division which is less important because of content and more important because of *contrast*. 'I resolved to look about me', Changez remarks,

...

> With the analytical eyes of a product of Princeton and
> Underwood Samson, seen in this fashion I was struck by how
> traditional your empire appeared. Armed sentries manned the
> check post at which I sought entry; being of a *suspect race* I
> was quarantined and subjected to additional inspection
> (p.157).

When he is back in his native city Lahore, quite suspicious of the intensions of his

American guest who could possibly be following him, Changez views it prudent

to issue a warning to his pursuer: "It seems an obvious thing to say, but you

should not imagine that we Pakistanis are all potential terrorists, just as we should

not imagine that you Americans are all undercover assassins" (p.183).

> Suspicion can be turned on Americans just as easily as it is
> directed toward dangerous-looking foreigners, as it resides
> primarily in the eye of the beholder. Race, then, does not
> decisively inflect the discourse of suspicion, since guilt may
> be assigned to both camps. What matters is the awareness and
> management of risk, irrespective of its color. (Banita 2010 p.
> 249-250)

The Scorpion's Gate by Clarke (2005) is political and strategic fiction on the

pattern of 'Science Fiction'. It has turned out to be the most baffling prophecy of

the writer that what had been projected in *The Scorpion's Gate* for the Kingdom

of Saudi Arabia has turned out to be exactly true for whole Middle East and North

Africa. The older order has been shattered by the public awakening generally

being referred to as *Arab Spring* and the thrust for democratic rights and other

civil liberties is gaining ground. With regimes in Tunisia and Egypt already

toppled, Libyan government is desperately battling against the revolt and the

ripple effect of all this struggle is reverberating throughout the Middle East. The

decades old monarchs and autocratic rulers of Bahrain, Yemen, Oman, Jordan and

Saudi Arabia are battering mass movements pushing for democratic rights. What

would have otherwise been unthinkable a few years ago, has become a ground reality now. The unfolding situation across the Arab World today was so prophetically presented in Clarke's *The Scorpion's Gate* back in 2005. It is for this very reason that *The Scorpion's Gate* warrants a great deal of attention now since the context of the novel has greatly been changed. Generally, post-9/11 novels followed the real events of terror attacks and *The Scorpion's Gate* projected a future situation which later turned out to be real. Although, the ongoing revolt has not yet affected the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the country where *The Scorpion's Gate* is set, but sooner or later, the old order is set to change. The novel presents a future scenario when the Saud family is exiled in the result of a popular revolt and a new Islamic government is formed in Riyadh. It is struggling to establish its writ in the country while various sections of the Saudi polity are fighting as to what form of government they need for their country. There are democracy lovers on the one side and those seeking to establish a theocracy on the other side. Thus the country has been presented as a potential boiling point because of Islamic extremism that will unleash instability across Middle East with wide global implications. The traditional Iran-Saudi rift is also one of the obvious conclusions drawn in the novel.

The Bookseller of Kabul by Seierstad (2003) is one more example of the stereotyping individuals through portrayal of their faith and the practices that encompass it. *The Bookseller of Kabul* is a first person narrative of the writer about her experiences regarding politics, gender roles, religion, culture and education. She claimed credibility for her account because she had traveled and

lived in Afghanistan immediate after the Fall of Taliban regime in November 2001. The protagonist Sultan was shown as modern educated and forward looking man, whose opinions about women appeared liberal, and its manifestations were clear by his buying western clothes for his wife in Iran, and his views about the veil *burka* as a symbol of oppression. Quite paradoxically, his treatment of women, specifically the issue of his second marriage has been portrayed quite badly. Sultan was described as a monstrous and callous barbarian mistreating every member of his family and no body could ever resort to dissent and that is how the gender roles of the society are (*mis*)represented by generalizing Sultan for every male of the Afghan society. Moreover, the Taliban clique is the other group representing Islam and they have been described with Sultan's hatred towards them because they had burned books and were thus against the spread of knowledge. Another instance of intolerance comes from Sultan spending time in jail for doing some anti-Islamic act that was deemed sacrilegious by the clergy. The novel captures everyday life in war ravaged Afghanistan that is characterized by deep cultural conservatism. Since the character of Sultan was drawn from a real bookseller who hosted Seierstad for three months, and the plot of the novel seemed directly reflecting his domestic life, he felt offended and later sued the writer for defamation in a court of Norway. He took the stand in the court that his hospitality was betrayed, his privacy was violated and he was slandered for commercial gains. He claimed damages from the writer and publisher.

The Warlord's Son by Dan Fesperman is a tale of suspense which is set in Afghanistan and Pakistan shortly after 9/11. Stan Kelly, who is called Skelly in

the novel, is an American journalist who covers war and reports directly from conflict zones. He is aiming to write some big news story of his career. He gets the services of a local Najeeb, who is well versed with the local language and culture While both characters of Skelly and Najeeb are appropriately drawn, Najeeb specifically inspires greater interest mainly because he has been shown trapped between the nostalgia of his childhood life in Pakistan's semi-autonomous FATA territory along Afghan border and his adult life in a US college and his love relationship with a Muslim woman. The plot, settings and character development of the novel is so convincing that it looks very real and authentic account of what transpired in Afghanistan after the fall of Taliban regime in 2001. The character of Najeeb also highlights the problem of Diaspora by showing his strong affiliations with his ancestral land. Dan Fesperman has successfully illustrated the complex political and social situation in the territories on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan thereby helping his characters to convey the human emotions. He makes a convincing case for rethinking the opinions that were formed after 9/11 and events that followed.

At Risk is a typical thriller authored by Stella Rimington who was the first woman director general of Britain's MI5. The authoress had worked for thirty years in Britain's secret service and thus she knew a great deal about subversion, espionage, and counter-terrorism and she used this practical knowledge very skillfully to make her writing look credible and thrilling. The authoress presents her protagonist Liz Carlyle, who is like the authoress herself, an Intelligence Officer with remarkable qualities. The protagonist meticulously works with the

domestic and foreign units of British Intelligence to prevent possible terror attacks on the English soil. Besides giving the intricate information about the workings of various British intelligence organizations, Rimington delves into the minds of the terrorists and offers insights into their psychology thereby enjoying a greater degree of freedom for stereotypical representation of her characters. Rather than dismissing them as crazed and suicidal ideologues, she shows them to be troubled individuals whose agenda has as much to do swith deep emotional pain as it does with political and religious philosophy.

In *Prayers for the Assassin* Robert Ferrigno's portrayal of Islam shows his sheer lack of knowledge about the Sunni-Shia differences of the Muslim community. Moreover, he also stereotypes the Islamic injunction of veil for women and uses unfamiliar term *habib* instead of *hijab*. He presents a small faction of hardliners 'the Dark Robes' who are trying to impose a Taliban-style of society and the Hasan-i-Sabah which is pushing for the rebirth of the Caliphate; the governing system recommended by Muslim scholars and practiced by the immediate companions of Holy Prophet (PBUH) during the early years following his demise. *Prayers for the Assassin* is a story of a broken and demoralized America where the writer seems regretting over the degenerating state of affairs of spirituality in post-9/11 era. Americans are more interested in actors, athletes, singers than what is going on with their religion and the wider world around. Thus the *Prayers for the Assassin* is a world of negative trends and selfish pursuits where the celebrity and the popular culture matters too much. The author attempts to draw the conclusion that wherever in the US, the values of faith and family and tradition

are still strong, such places are either already independent Islamic Republics within the American empire or they will launch an Islam-inspired rebellion against America very soon. This novel not only portrays Islam as a potential danger to the public security because of terrorism, but also projects it as potent threat to America as a state. The objective of raising alarm bells against Islam is achieved through the discussion of possibilities of establishment of Caliphate and an independent Islamic Republic on the American soil.

Incendiary by Cleave is a lengthy discourse that mostly reflects on the life style, class divisions, cultural orientation, family system and individual freedoms in the Western world that is excessively entangled in the trap of a global anti-terror war. The structure of the novel is also strange because it is an extended letter addressed to Osama bin Laden by an anonymous, lower middle class housewife whose husband and four-year-old son were killed in a suicide bombing at an Arsenal football match. The novel that begins with an extended plea to Osama for stopping the terrorism; is mainly about loss, but this sense of loss is not merely the personal tragedy of losing a son and husband. It is in fact, the loss of hope, purposed, sanity, moral principles and above all the individual freedoms. All this comes as a result of terrorism the tragedy that befell humanity solely because some individuals around the world created it and rest of humanity collectively failed to stop them from it. In the London, as shown in *Incendiary*, is fraught with the images of terror and despair, where Muslim expatriates are getting disqualified for jobs as hospital workers, all the citizens are subject to midnight curfews, the main thoroughfares of the city including the famous Tower Bridge

remain closed and radio stations are frequently airing the pop song *England's Heart Is Bleeding* by Elton John. Cleave has achieved his objective of portrayal of the world by resorting to ambiguity and refusing to limit the post-9/11 global conflict merely to a simple fight between Osama and the western world. He portrays almost all the citizenry of London as flawed and tries to draw odd justification for retaliatory terror strikes from the viewpoint of the fundamentalists. Although the novel barely alludes to 9/11 attacks, but it can be considered the best work of literature on the subject. The novel is at its face, merely a narrative account of suicide attacks on the spectators while a soccer game is in progress at a London stadium. It is a broader reflection on the corrosive effects that generally characterize the situations immediately after acts of terrorism on the individuals as well as the society as a whole. The novel not only provides insights into tackling the trauma immediate after terrorism but also its long term implications.

Once in a Promised Land is the story of a young couple of Arab origin who is living in Tucson, Arizona. The couple otherwise living a happy marriage faces many personal tragedies one after the other and the greater part of their saga is contributed by what can be called as America's growing bigotry and hatred for any thing that is associated with Middle East. Jassim who is a scientist, doesn't believe much in religion is more of a secular lot, but he is often bewildered by the fact that people around see him associated with Islamic fanaticism. When his wife Salwa suffers a miscarriage of pregnancy which she had kept secret, Jassim meets an accident and a teenager is killed who was skateboarding at the time. Their

mutual relation plunges as they fail to communicate properly with each other mainly due to the effects of suspicious surroundings they were living in. Jassim has to face sudden hatred and discrimination from his colleagues and he also comes under scrutiny from the FBI surveillance personnel. The writer dispenses with Middle Eastern stereotypes and highlights the plight of Muslims in post-9/11 America.

The Afghan takes its story partly from the July 2005 blasts in London on sub-way trains but the central events of its plot take place in 2006 and 2007 as some *Islamist* terror groups are discovered preparing for some major terror strike. The novel sheds light on the functioning of intelligence organizations and their permanent struggle to outsmart terrorist planners. Such a dramatic event of this novel is that British and American intelligence services jointly intercept a laptop from suspected terrorists during a raid in Pakistani city of Peshawar. The data found in the Laptop obliquely refers to a soon-to-be-conducted major terrorist operation codenamed as *Al-Isra*. In order to spy and elicit the exact information about the plan, a dark-skinned intelligence official Colonel Mike Martin who is proficient in Arabic is sent to Taliban in the garb of a former commander of the Taliban. Al Qaeda will trust such a person implicitly, and he would have the access to their secret meetings. The intruding spy official assumes the name of Izmat Khan with whom he had worked during the Cold War years when American and Pakistani intelligence services had worked in close cooperation against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Besides detailing the operations of British and American intelligence services, the novel gives information on how Al

Qaeda and its related organization exchange and transfer funds, information and ideology across international borders completely evading the security systems being operated through modern technology and a sustained hunt by the military and other security forces of almost every nation in the world. This novel too, brings the story of terror to Pakistan and Afghanistan because the American and British spies capture the laptop of terrorists in Peshawar, Pakistan. The city is geographically located in the close proximity of the semi-autonomous territories of Pakistan on the country's border with Afghanistan. The western propaganda machinery has been projecting this region in the international media as the hub of terrorism. Therefore, the settings of the novel here and its extended exposition of money transfers to and from terror groups is too real to be considered objective in approach. It gives a sense that the writer is an *all-knowing* seer who *knows* everything supernaturally. Therefore, the definitive approach of the novel makes one believe that the author has been carried away by the media propaganda of about Pakistan, its north-western territories and how the terror groups manage their financial affairs and all this is nothing less than blind stereotyping.

Perera's *Guantanamo Boy* begins in Rochdale, UK shortly after the 9/11 attacks. It involves the story of a fifteen-year-old Khalid who is enjoying a typical boy's lifestyle; spending time with his mates, yearning for girls and loving football as a game. His parents take him to Karachi to visit some relatives, and Khlid is picked up by Pakistan's intelligence as a terror suspect. After being handed over to Americans, he is taken to Kandahar before finally reaching the Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba from where he is eventually released after serving a prison term of

two years and in the process being found innocent. The writer explores rights abuses by imagining the life of Khlid at Guantanamo Bay. She exposes the saga by revealing the mind of Khalid while he faces the boredom and loneliness in the prison cell and is helpless against the mighty power of the state that has captured and incarcerated him as mere *suspect*.

What is noteworthy here is that he would not face any such situation on his brief journeying and staying somewhere in the west, but the in Pakistan that would make the things as presented in the novel more credible. The writer has not clearly elaborated as to what the teenager had done so suspicious that led the intelligence service in Pakistan to husk him for interrogations and eventually handing him over to the American FBI. This novel, though very commendably highlights the appalling human rights situation, somehow stereotypically brings the business of terror to its perceived bastion Pakistan. Karachi which is Pakistan's largest city and commercial capital, also figures in *Terrorist* when the trainers of Ahmad discuss the possible effects of his suicide attack in the Linclon Tunnel and they talk about the expected jubilations that would follow throughout the Muslim world.

Chapter Summary

By concluding the discussion of this chapter, we can say that the phenomenon of racism and racial profiling in the existing and emerging post-9/11 texts has neither receded nor disappeared altogether. Stereotypical and racially focused tendencies have even transmuted from the hitherto explicit dimensions to a tacit form. Such a

situation not only bears implications of racial profiling for studying post-9/11 literature at a thematic level, but also for the literary and narrative form, for the vivid expression of ethics and aesthetics of taking a social risk in this conflict of the suspicion ridden world we are living in today. In their inter-textuality and revisionist formal choices, the newer works of fiction are no longer limited to the post-terror trauma that has remained the hallmark of earlier novels regarding 9/11 and this is an indication of the fact that the spectrum is broadening as we move chronologically away from 9/11 as an event of history. These relatively newer works in the genre of post-9/11 fiction essentially represent a broader ambiguity and unsubstantiated concerns of racial and communal fears because they are set in a world that is overshadowed by the generalized menace of terror. In these novels, the collapsing moral standards create an atmosphere where profiling across the lines of risk race, visual images and other faceless dangers interact to create an atmosphere of shock and awe. This is perhaps a reinforcement of the ambiguities in the global anti-terror war, which cannot be situated anywhere on either side of the dividing-line of moral ideals.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS OF STEREOTYPING IN

TERRORIST

This chapter is a close reading study and critical analysis of the core text selected for this thesis. Besides briefly discussing the theoretical components of Critical Theory that apply to the selected text, this chapter explores at length the political position taken by the author on a number of issues of the contemporary American society. These issues include American popular culture and place of Islam and Muslim immigrants in post-9/11 America. With reference to *Terrorist*, this chapter also discusses the politics of linguistic and cultural superiority, post-9/11 interplay of politics and literature, religion as tool of radical indoctrination of potential terrorists and the role of group identity as a motivational factor for suicide terror attacks. Moreover, the researcher has made a conscious attempt at exploring the possible motives of the author for excessive quotations from the Holy Quran and their operational purpose in the overall settings of the novel. The themes of stereotyping and misrepresentation have been explored in view of the schematic plot that not only shows extreme religiosity of the protagonist Ahmad Mulloy Ashmawy but also portrays him imitating the actions of original perpetrators of 9/11 terror attacks.

Terrorist was written in the context of September 11, attacks and makes specific references to its tragic events. Therefore, it deals with issues such as identity, ethnicity, color/racialism, hybridity, multiculturalism, acculturation, citizenship, social equality/inequality and cultural assimilation etc. This study has specifically focused on the transformation of Ahmad Mulloy-Ashmawy from *Terrorist*. Such a transformation of an otherwise normal youth into a radicalized terrorist takes place as the American-born Muslim boy develops a consciousness of the post-9/11 global scenario wherein he perceives a targeted campaign going on against the global Muslim community; *the Ummah*, to which he belongs. The plot of the novel *Terrorist* develops in such a way that it shows the systematic and gradual transformation of an otherwise normal youth into a potential terrorist.

4.1 Theoretical Framework for Textual Analysis of *Terrorist*

The literary notion of representation directly applies to this study in the sense that the characters of Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy and Sheikh Rashid 'stand in' for the radical ideology and violent tendencies which the author has presumably sought to associate with the faith of these character. Such an association seems to have been constructed through the way the action moves forward in the plot. The monologues of Ahmad wherein he disgusts the *infidel way of life* show how an intriguing skepticism of the society has been made a part of his very persona. With a hybrid parentage that is shared between Middle East (Egyptian father) and Europe (Irish mother), Ahmad is living on another continent that is North America. It is noteworthy that if Ahmad's foreign parentage and religious and racial identity were not of any well thought out political significance, he could

have been a native US citizen of Christian faith. Blesington (2008) has noted

some precise analogies between the terrorist character of *Terrorist* and the typical

terrorists that are produced by the excessive influence of religion on their lives

and parental neglect which normally follows the complications arising out of

international and interfaith failed marriages.

> The main character in the novel fits the type (of terrorist)
> precisely: Ahmad Ashmawy Molloy is obviously a
> hyphenated person - his Muslim father has long disappeared,
> and his Irish mother has little time for him. Like other
> terrorists he has a confidant and father substitute, Shaikh
> Rashid, who initiates him in the ways of the cause of radical
> Islam, and cultivates his anger against the sordid New Jersey
> town. The world that surrounds Ahmad is cheap, boring,
> spiritless, and hypersexual. In short, the world is that of
> Updike's other novels seen through the eyes of Islamic anger
> and judgment. (p.123)

4.2 Role of Pop Culture in Post-9/11 US Society

Updike seems to reflect on the post-9/11 American society, but at the same time,

he also links it to its nostalgic past. For scholars of popular culture, *Terrorist*

presents an interesting duality. Updike criticizes much of American pop culture,

from the pierced and tattooed high school students, to the mind-numbing dialogue

of soap operas and drivel offered up in commercials....Popular culture is,

however, used as a kind of anesthesia or poison, depending on the character

discussing the topic. For Ahmad, television is nothing more than an instrument

"using sex to sell you things you don't need" (p. 38). The teen contrasts his vision

of pure Islam with impure pop culture, resulting "in a world that mocks faith" (p.

69). Adding to the criticism of television and movies, he tells Joryleen, "it is all so

saturated in despair and unbelief as to repel my interest" (p. 70), even though his religion does not forbid either.

It is also note worthy that despite being young, smart and living right in the middle of the full-blown glamour of American popular culture; it is quite surprising that he could not develop any interest in girls, music or parties. Instead he suddenly found nostalgic love for his absent father and his faith without any logical reason except for the teachings of the imam Shaikh Rashid. It is as though the imam had put him to religion by means of coercion or he had some other magic to drive the poor child into the terrible world of terror. John Updike gives only one answer to these questions that the boy's great love for his absent father and his faith in God brought him closer to Shaikh Rashid. But where did this love originate from and how can we account for his zero interest in the popular culture? One possible explanation which sounds plausible also, is that writer consciously left these gaps because he was stereotyping and he hoped the reader to fill in these gaps with the obvious contextual framework, overall content and settings of the novel.

4.3 Politics of Cultural and Linguistic Superiority

A lot of questions about ethnic and cultural studies have emerged and the debate surrounding those questions has intensified after 9/11. These questions relate to the basic constituents of culture: Are some cultures superior or canonized? Whose culture should be accepted as the standard norm? Should one sever the link from one's native cultural roots and embrace the new cultural norms available in the

mainstream culture? Should identity be based on unicultural, bicultural or multicultural values? Is the pure-bred superior to or better than the hybrid? Furthermore, the questions about *us* and *them*, *minority* and *majority*, *marginal* and *mainstream* continue to be debated in a controversial atmosphere. Apart from the political position taken in his writings, Zindziuvienë (2008) pays rich tributes to John Updike by summing up the recurring themes in his writings. Although, most of the novels of Updike are an attempt at analyzing American reality from different perspectives and therefore, they can be regarded as various illustrations of not only the American lifestyle but also the cultural and political events. "Updike has analyzed the burdens of modern life and the torments of the soul, depicting the psychological trauma and a strange sense of unreality that individuals experience in the face of human cruelty, brutality and incomprehensible evil" (p. 113).

It is interesting to read the novel by looking at the way Updike uses language in order to present his themes and characters and the way he divides the reality in terms of binary oppositions such as white/black, faithful/unfaithful, civilized/uncivilized, superior/inferior, etc. Such divisions help the purpose of disowning what the writer presents as loathsome *other* and thus drawing justification for denying that *other* the rights and privileges that are available to all citizens irrespective of their faith or ethnic lineage. In this way, *Terrorist* uncovers the power structures of society at large; and seeks to present the nature of the interracial, inter-communal and intercultural relationships in post-9/11 America.

So much so, the writer has condemned the Arabic language in no uncertain terms. In order to bring out his hatred for the Arabic language and its speakers, he makes the Secretary as his mouth piece, "There's something weird about the language - it makes them feebleminded, somehow" (p. 259). In fact, Arabic is well known for its beautiful style of writing and eloquence, and then the question is why could the writer not have done without giving his opinion about Arabic? Such a harsh criticism simply shows that the xenophobic lobbies of the West consider the complete divorce of American Muslims from their ancestral faith, language and culture as a precondition for their social acceptance in the society. Updike perhaps has tried a balancing act by showing that Shaikh Rashid also harbors hatred for English, the language of the American society he lives in. Although Shaikh Rashid thinks it pragmatic to use English while teaching his pupil Ahmad, but he maintains an ironical distance from it. "Shaikh Rashid conducts the lessons in a fluent but rather formal English, speaking with some distaste, his violet lips framed in his neat beard and moustache, pursed as if to maintain an ironical remove" (p. 101). The writer views the linguistic bias as the major factor dividing the host society and its Muslim immigrants.

4.4 Stereotypical Portrayal of Mosque and Quran in *Terrorist*

One special point which merits a great deal of attention in this novel is that the author has portrayed the prominent symbols of Islamic faith such as mosque and the Holy Quran in a way to show them the sole reason of all the flaws of Ahmad's personality. The portrayal of such symbols in the negative light pushes forward the agenda of the author that the intolerance manifested by Ahmad and other

Muslim characters is inspired exclusively by the injunctions of their Islamic faith and the same faith is responsible for leading them to commit violence and terrorism. All the radical ideas of Ahmad are shown to have developed as a direct result of his association with the mosque and the imam who is running it.

Ahmad's limited vision of life has been made evident from the fact that he mostly remains confined to the environment of the mosque only. "Ahmad never ventures there (neighboring Arab localities); his exploration of his Islamic identity ends at the mosque. The mosque took him in as child of eleven; it let him be born again" (p. 99).

Such an explanation provided by Updike quickly preempts the possibility of the reader thinking of other possible causes that might have played a role in radicalization of Ahmad's mind and eventually led him to an act of terrorism. The night before the planned suicide attack, Ahmad spends the entire night with the Holy Quran, says his prayers and gets the last minute inspiration for the terrorist act from the religious sources. This very setting of the plot reinforces the underlying message that Islamic faith does indeed inspire violence. The Quranic verses quoted throughout the text set the discourse so precisely to link the action of the terror plot with the injunction of the Islamic faith.

Besides the theme of terrorism and inter-cultural differences, the novel discusses vices of the American society such as excessive consumerism, superficiality, and hypocrisy. Such form of the direct criticism of the national character of America has certain pragmatic purposes perhaps. The issues discussed in the novel point to

the overall ego-centricism of the American society, described in many ways and forms. The secretary remarks while trying to explain why the Islamic fundamentalist forces had taken on America.

> The enemy is obsessed with holy sites, and as convinced as the old Communist archenemies had been that the capitalism had a headquarters, a head that may be cut off, leaving flocks of the faithful to be gratefully herded into ascetic and dogmatic tyranny. (p. 47)

Then Updike goes on, in a rather ambivalent tone, to criticize the much celebrated achievements of the American society, which are democracy and enterprise. In secretary's words, "The enemy (Muslims/terrorist) cannot believe that democracy and consumerism are the fevers in the blood of Everyman, an outgrowth of each individual's instinctive optimism and desire for freedom" (p. 48).

Instead of accepting it as a necessity of the prevailing economic order, Updike suggests that *consumerism* of fashion and beauty industry is *instinctive* for mankind and thus implies that those who oppose the economic and political order practiced in America are actually denying themselves what is *instinctive* and unavoidable.

4.5 Racial Hatred and Politics of Skin Color

There is a lot of racialism to the writings of John Updike and *Terrorist* is not an exception. It puts an excessive focus on complexion of characters by highlighting various shades of colors. Updike's treatment of ethnicity and racialism is evident from the fact that the black characters of the novel are Muslims and they are treated as a second-class minority and they are shown as being obsessed with the nefarious intention of inflicting suffering and harm to their host society. When Ahmad asks the imam whether God wouldn't show mercy and convert non-believers to Islam instead of inflicting terror, Shaikh Rashid replies,

> The cockroaches that slither out from the baseboard and from beneath the sink - do you pity them. The flies that buzz around the food on the table, walking on it with the dirty feet that have just danced on feces and carrion - do you pity them? (p. 76).

That is the two-way process of hatred. The words like *cockroaches* and *flies* from the mouth of a Muslim clergy while describing the whole American nation is too much. In fact, the writer has attempted to paint such a grim picture of the inter-faith and inter-communal relations of America that it simply does not seem *repairable*. The only obvious solution of such a situation is what is suggested by Conrad (1902) in *Heart of Darkness* as "Exterminate all the brutes" (p. 50). In other words, immigrants from the African continent and Middle East are no more manageable, so they must either be told to 'correct' themselves or leave.

In the broader context, Updike focuses on the enmity and direct confrontation between the Arab/African immigrants and America's other communities. In an unveiled group-level racial profiling, the text of *Terrorist* assails Arab-Muslim communities for what John Updike views as their backwardness, lack of democracy, abrogation of women rights and their prejudiced views about Western civilization. Here again the same narrative technique has been employed by means of reverse profiling by Shaikh Rashid and his musings against America. Going by Shaikh Rashid's view, "women are animals easily led" (p. 10) Shaikh Rashid's views on women are implied as if representing those of the entire Muslim community, and such a broad generalization becomes stereotypical of Muslim-bashing. Another way through which the author has sought to associate Islamic faith with medievalism and away from enlightenment is that he depicts the representative Muslim characters of Ahmad and Shaikh Rashid against all

types of modern technological facilities that can bring them latest knowledge and awareness of the world around them. Both; the imam and Ahmad share the view that, "movies are sinful and stupid" (p. 144).

4.6 Religion Portrayed as a Vehicle of Radical Indoctrination

One interesting point from the plot of the novel which deserves a great deal of attention is that the settings of the plot has been constructed in such a way that the imam of the mosque along with other members of his terror racket seems to have manipulated Ahmad by capitalizing on his emotional love for God. Although, Ahmad is a die hard terrorist in the novel, but he has been presented as if to have been manipulated by others like Shaikh Rashid. Although, it is a fact that Ahmad agrees to destroy the Lincoln Tunnel when full of daily commuters, it should be noted that he does it only because he feared losing his own faith that was so precious to him. That is the purity of his passion that he is exploited by the likes of Shaikh Rashid. In this way, Updike creates a rather sympathetic image of Ahmad, the potential terrorist, whose innocence has been betrayed quite paradoxically by those he trusts the most. Thus he turns out to be the *loveliest* character of the novel.

There could be a tinge of stereotyping to such a portrayal also. Ahmad's lovable traits might have been attributed to him only to set the text in a way to achieve certain political point. The nefarious purpose here may be to outline the procedure of *genesis* of terrorism on the American soil by the very people who have been allowed to living there quite legally. In this backdrop, the sympathetic treatment

of Ahmad looks quite intriguing. Updike has been quoted saying that he intended to say it all from a terrorist's standpoint. This is certainly not about sympathizing with the ideology of terrorist or making Ahmad (the terrorist character of *Terrorist* novel) the nicest of all other characters. "Rather, what Updike was gesturing towards, is a distinctively *novelistic* kind of sympathy, capable of disclosing to us areas of experience inaccessible to journalists or pamphleteers" (Derbyshire 2006, p. 83).

The depiction of character of Ahmad in comparison with some outside real life phenomenon is meant to link this character with the traits embodying the outside reality. For instance, the writer implicitly draws parallels between his fictional character, Ahmad, and a 9/11 terrorist, Mohammad Atta, to verify that the two characters are alike,

> [Ahmad] shaves his face, though he knows that debate rages over how God prefers to see men face to face. The Chehabs preferred him to shave, since bearded Muslims, even teen-agers, alarmed the *kafir* customers. Mohammed Atta had shaved, and most of the eighteen other inspired martyrs. The anniversary of their feat was last Saturday, and the enemy will have relaxed his defenses. (p. 271)

The news covering the 9/11 events, had described Mohammad Atta as the leader of the World Trade Center hijackers. Thus, the excerpt given above mingles this work of fiction with an event which happened in the past. Mohammed Atta had shaved, and most of the eighteen other inspired martyrs too. It can be seen that both in 9/11 as well as in this novel, the terrorists are Arabs. Ahmad, the fictional character, is an Egyptian-American and Mohammad Atta, is an Egyptian as well. By this comparison between fiction and history, the novel consciously or

unconsciously asserts that terrorism and Arabs are two faces of the same coin. *Terrorist* also has elements of irony to oppose the absurdity of fanatic Muslims. Ahmad's esteem of the *hijab* leads him to maltreat his mother. She explains to Levy, "He wanted me to wear it. He said if there was one thing he wanted for his graduation, it was his mother not looking like a whore" (p. 114). Manqoush et al (2011) find Ahmad's insistence on his mother to wear *hijab* before attending his convocation at school mainly for two reasons. Firstly, his mother is not a Muslim and therefore Islamic injunctions about veiling do not apply to her. Secondly, Ahmad's thinking that by wearing the *hijab* his mother will not be looking like a whore shows that he is an extremist of a rather simple mind. "The *hijab* cannot preserve the purity of women because people behave according to their will, not according to their clothes" (p. 65).

4.7 Xenophobic Intolerance of Muslim Immigrants

Although, John Updike seems to engage in a well planned campaign for ringing alarm bells about the menace of *home-grown* terror in America in the form of its Muslim immigrant community, still he does offer some criticism of the American society itself by saying that it has degenerated to such levels that it fails to keep its teenagers innocent. Jack Levy tells Ahmad's mother,

> All I'm saying is that kids like Ahmad need to have something
> they don't get from society any more. Society doesn't let them
> be innocent any more. The crazy Arabs are right - hedonism,
> nihilism, that's all we offer (p. 205).

This can probably be interpreted as a tacit acceptance of the fact that the American youths are certainly prone to dangers from its own society. Here again

John Updike would take sides and never accept that a similar case of radicalization of a Christian white youth was also possible. After all, John Updike could not have presented a moderately religious Christian youth of white American parentage, doing some acts of violence against a minority group as part of the hate crimes. His protagonist essentially is, and was to be so, stereotypically a Muslim, of Arab origin and deeply religious with intense love for God and equally intense hatred for 'infidels'. Actually, post-9/11 brought about an overall realignment of Islam-West relations and created new definitions of their respective identities.

Ibrahim (2007) while giving his analysis of the post-9/11 identity struggle between the West and Islam say that trajectories of both the Islamic orient *other* and the Western self-identity were affixed to each other in an ambivalent double bind. The *orient* other is generally viewed as static, backward and mystical because of its unlimited power. In this background, the events of 9/11 not only reinforced the mystical force and might of the *orient* but also shattered the myth of American invincibility and its status of a superpower that was constructed on the hollow ground of a stereotypical belief. This double articulation of 9/11 has both subversive and reinforcing effect on the sociological and mythical imagination of both; the West and the *orient* other that is a synonymous to the global Muslim community.

The ultimate goal that post-9/11 narratives written from a western perspective seek to achieve is that they present Muslims living in their midst as the 'orient other' that poses a danger to the society and therefore has no right to live there.

The underlying message can be interpreted as either the society should be purged of these immigrants or their freedom should be curtailed by imposing certain restrictions on them.

This philosophy of non-acceptance of Muslims is not only limited to America. Several other European states have introduced new laws that restrict the free practice of faith of Muslims there. France, for example has recently imposed a ban on face-veiling by Muslim women and Belgium is in the process of creating a similar legislation. Switzerland has imposed a ban on constructing minarets of mosques. Minarets are just concrete structures and there is no reason for feeling scary of them. May be they look like missiles and send a message of terror to the Swiss people; but the point to note is that the overall impact of such a ban is that the Muslim architecture of mosque has been restricted from flourishing there. It seems that the once much celebrated pluralism and multiculturalism has died and the western societies are collectively moving towards xenophobic intolerance and hatred of their Muslim immigrants.

The place of Islam in the west is being re-imagined through media reporting and discourses of danger with an aim to re-mythologize it globally and create texts which constantly weave present events for gauging and locating Islam in the post-9/11 world. Present day digital media has become an alternative *liminal* space that serves as a buffer between the public and private, society and individual, global and local and it has resulted in a new, de-centered form of Islam created through the discourses of risk and destruction. This newer construction of Islamic faith and the community of its followers as an omnipotent risk will definitely have far

reaching implications for identity of Muslims and the status of their community both in Arab homelands and in secular Western states.

> Ahmad's faith in the Quran and his faith in God have been set comparatively alongside American patriotism, secularism, Christianity and Judaism. This alignment seems deliberately designed to highlight the comparative elements of the American and the Muslim *other*, to show us how closely aligned both really are. And by choosing a *jihadi* foot-soldier born and raised in New Jersey, Updike seeks to make his terrorist a knowable and recognizable entity, an enemy of the state conceived and bred within it and who is not so unlike his adversaries. (Morley, 2008 p. 90)

This is the underlying reality of *Terrorist* where the Muslim immigrants in the US and their fellow Muslims living in the native Middle East have been presented as a threat to the world because they carry the scourge of terrorism engendered in them by the radical ideology that their faith presumably promotes. All this is reinforced by repeated citations from the Holy Quran as to make a convincing case for the reader to believe that the entire malady of 'terror' does indeed stem from the religious doctrine of this faith. *My teacher at the mosque* says that all unbelievers are our enemies. The Prophet said that eventually all unbelievers must be destroyed" (p. 68).

This very phrase *"my teacher at the mosque says"* has been repeated several times with the purpose of showing that the Muslim clergymen are spreading hatred and violence through the teachings of the Holy Quran. The same expression is used in another example where Shaikh Rashid's tirade against American free life and popular culture is expressed through Ahmad,

My teacher at the mosque thinks that the dark eyed virgins are symbolic of a bliss one can not imagine without concrete images. It is typical of the sex-obsessed West that it has seized upon that image, and ridicules Islam because of it. (p. 71)

4.8 Post-9/11 Interplay of Politics and Literature

Literature is assumed to be essentially apolitical and the aims of literary writers are limited to just interpreting the world unlike those of terrorists who venture out seeking to change the political and social reality in the world around them. The literary act is inseparable from the political violence of its time and space. Thus the writer and terrorist become ultimately indistinguishable from each other. While the terrorist seeks the radical re-making of an entire world by the total negation of the old in favor of something entirely new, the negative labor of the writer also has death as its essence. "Literature's *ideal moment* is that when *life endures death and maintains itself in it* in order to gain from death the possibility of speaking and the truth of speech" (Thurschwell, 2007 p. 9).

The major difference of a terrorist from ordinary people is their indifference to their own deaths and of those whom they kill. In the words of DeLillo as quoted by Thurschwell, "We are rich, privileged and strong, but they are willing to die. This is the edge they *have*. But their other, complementary *edge* is their equal indifference to the deaths of their victims" (p. 15). Such a brute-like mentality associated with the character of Ahmad becomes evident when Levy tries to persuade him for realizing the value of life against destruction just before the planned attack; Ahmad initially remains unconvincing and unwavering in his devotion to the Islamic faith and seems resolute to blow him up in the tunnel. He is not only indifferent to the loss of his own life, but also to the lives of hundreds

of potential victims of his attacks. Such type of rigidity in the views of terrorists is undoubtedly the result of their radical indoctrination and it is focused on the single point agenda of controlling political power. These violent struggles between state security forces and terror groups have created a very complicated interplay between political violence and literature. Ahmad initially remained determined to carry out his planned attack and all the pleading and reasoning of Jack Levy to dissuade him remained fruitless. It is only after Ahmad looks at a happy family of black complexion driving in a car nearby, he thinks of the possibility of a member of minority group succeeding in America, he decides to backs off from the dreaded plan. It is the prospects of equality and social justice that convince him of his political repositioning and avert the attack.

The terror attacks on American soil symbolically ended the myth about the presumed distant location of the *orient* other as a static entity; and instead relocated the *other* in the proximity of the same temporal geography of the West. In this way, it shattered the long held view which placed the West and its *orient* other as clearly distinct separate entities distantly located from each other. Post-9/11 era is a new phase in global political landscape which has redefined the West's broader engagement with the *orient* other in the form of its direct confrontation with Islam.

Ibrahim (2007) views the post-9/11 era as the starting point of a new form of global political tension that is showed in the discourses of terrorism located in the metropolitan urban localities thereby engendering a new type of post-modem threat of Islamic terrorism wherein every body's life is at risk, any time and

anywhere. Such an omnipresent fear can be termed as the absent presence of Islam in the international discourses of oriental terrorism where it is perceived that Islam is wielding infinite and monumental powers and can affect the political stability anywhere in the world. In this view, Islam is a monster force that is holding the entire world as *hostage* simply because of its involvement in terrorism. Projecting the violent and terrifying image of Islam is perceived as a *strategic gain* in the ideological circles of the West.

Cavanaugh (2006) concludes that the West sees it comforting and strategically useful to project the religion as excessively violent in comparison with the secular phenomena. Thus a distinction is drawn between the violence committed by the Western secular states (quite possibly for advancing their imperialistic agenda, as it was the same in colonial era too) on the Muslims groups on the basis of rationality. In fact the myth of religion-inspired violence helps in drawing a blind justification for the similar violence committed by the modern and secular nation states of the west. The intelligentsia in the west, generally propagates the view that the modern secular state came into existence by enforcing peace among the warring religious factions in the Christian and the Muslim world where factional and sectarian strife has always been a bane for their respective societies.

> The myth of religious violence promotes a dichotomy between *us* in the secular West who are rational and peacemaking and *them*, the hoards of violent religious fanatics in the Muslim world. Their violence is religious, and therefore irrational and divisive. Our violence, on the other hand, is rational, peacemaking and necessary (Cavanaugh, 2006 p. 2).

4.9 *Terrorist* and Geo-political Reality of Middle East Conflict

By downplaying the popular belief of Muslims that the root cause of the confrontation between the US and its Muslim immigrant community is the American foreign policy in the Middle East, Updike, quite surprisingly, draws no connection between Ahmad's willingness to take part in the terror attack and his frustration with America's unqualified patronage of Israeli occupation of Arab lands in the Middle East. Such a major lapse could not have been inadvertent; therefore, it seems that the current Arab-American relations have not been addressed in an objective way.

The Arab Diaspora in USA can not be totally de-linked from the political developments in Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, when we talk about the religious tensions between Muslim community of the United States and Christian population, there is a necessary Jewish component of the equation that can not be ignored and its origin can be traced back to the situation in the Middle East. Following lines from *Terrorist* show how the inter-faith trust has been deteriorated not only by the terror attacks of 9/11 but also by the negative effects of history.

> Levy studies the *imam* - a slight impeccable man embodying a belief system that not many years ago managed the deaths of, among others, hundreds of commuters from northern New Jersey. When Levy thinks of embattled Israel and of Europe's pathetically few remaining synagogues needing to be guarded by police day and night: his initial goodwill for the imam dissolves. (p. 112)

Updike presents a rather limited view of the historical geo-political reality by just alluding to the plunder of *oil wealth* and a conflict of religion. That too is quite

paradoxical, because without the technical and financial assistance from the West based energy firms, the oil exploration could not have materialized and thus it would not have been an economic resource at all. Moreover, what the west rightly prides of, is knowledge and scientific advancement, is the result of a real hard work. However, the Arabs happen to possess the wealth of oil merely because they are fortunately located in a geographical region of rich minerals and they have not put in any human effort whatsoever.

4.10 Stereotyping and the Question of Arab Americans' Loyalty

Since Updidke basically seeks to advance political objectives through *Terrorist* and therefore he employs multiculturalism in a way to create and highlight a gap or a rupture among the ethnic and cultural groups he depicts in his novel. According to Edward Said (1973) West in its quest for dominating and restructuring the East, (Muslim World in this context) portrays the *Oriental* as primitive, irrational, depraved, child-like, different, and inferior in contrast with the advanced, rational, virtuous, mature, normal, sophisticated, and superior. It is a common observation that Said's concept of *Orientalism* is employed by a large number of individuals in the academic, literary, political, social and philosophical spheres to show a distinction between the Muslim world and the Western secular states. This is an important touchstone to the postcolonial critical approach that explores the discourses for stereotypical *othering* because of Western anxieties and preoccupations. Updike's *Terrorist* draws a completely disloyal picture of the Arabs living in the United States.

Yousef (2010) while commenting on Ahmad's identity dilemma says that his identity as an Arab-American makes him feel trapped between opposing designations. His dual identity status creates an ambivalence of overlapping belonging and allegiance demands. He must decide whether he is an Arab, or American or *both* and realign his political beliefs accordingly. In order to compensate him for the feelings of isolation from society and family, he makes Islam as an *alternative* identity which he chooses merely out of the need for social and political support. He has to bear the sense of alienation and exile in the country he was born and raised.

Another important issue is that as a general trend of stereotyping, writers do not portray Arab-Americans as if to have any strong bond of love with the country that may arouse the feelings of patriotism and thus show them as real *stakeholders* of the American dream. Same has been done by John Updike in *Terrorist*.

> Updike does not present the Arab-Muslim characters with any sense of belonging to the county they live in. This may well indicate that they are not entitled to a full American identity or American citizenship. Arabs are shown as seeking American citizenship for convenience or for personal and short-term interests without being devoted to the American nation. All that Ahmad's father cared about was to get an *American citizenship*. (Yousef, 2010 p. 213)

The questions of dual belonging and ambivalent identity have been very prominently raised by the writer with a possible intention of proving him as less loyal or disloyal citizen of America. The same logic quite stereotypically generalized while determining loyalty of the entire Arab or Muslim community and they are less likely to be considered loyal citizens if they have stronger links with their faith, ancestral culture or language. A negative projection in the media

and literature, has forced some Muslim writers to engage in a clarification
campaign. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid is one such example
where he sought to counter the negative representation of Islam and at times went
on to indulge in reverse-stereotyping. Edward Said calls it a re-representation and
a reactive counter-response.

> The narrative depiction of Islam through the acts of terrorism,
> wars, deaths, *fatwas*, jihads or bombings sustains a Western
> sociological imagination of Islam but at the same token, it
> thrusts the *Ummah*, or the global Muslim community, into a
> constant struggle to re-represent Islam. Inevitably for 'many
> Muslims articulations on Islam is a reactive counter-response,
> for anything said about Islam gets more or less forced into the
> apologetic form of a statement about Islam's humanism, its
> contribution to civilization, development and moral
> righteousness' (Said 1997: 55).

4.11 Evil and Villainy Portrayed as Synonymous to Arabs/Muslims

Throughout his novel, Updike seems to be working off stereotypes; his portrayal
of Ahmad and other Arab characters in general is stereotypical and lacks
psychological depth. As Arabs, Ahmad and the Yemeni Shaikh are depicted as
being brutes, primitive, unintelligent, murderers and suicide bombers. Ahmad
persistently views Americans as being materialistic, and never wavers from this
preordained opinion. Ahmad and his teacher, Shaikh Rashid have been showing
hatred for the mainstream American culture and both of them are against all
forms of American life and all ideas of progress and modern technology. Ahmad
tells Jack Levy that, "Shaikh Rashid said the college track exposed me to
corrupting influences - bad philosophy and bad literature. Western culture is
Godless" (p. 38) Levy then asks, "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?" (p. 38).

Updike never lets any opportunity go for expressing his patriotic love for America and that is achieved at the cost of almost xenophobic hatred and dehumanization of Arabs and Muslims. The expression *tolerant society like this* shows he is willing to completely ignore the hate crimes against immigrants reported so often in the US media. Shaikh Rashid's disdain for multiculturalism is shown by his quest for pure monolithic views on religion and culture.

> No, Sheikh Rashid did not suggest that, sir. He feels that such a relativistic approach trivializes religion, implying that it doesn't much matter. You believe this, I believe that, we all get along - that's the American way. Right! And he doesn't like the American way. He hates it (p. 38).

The underlining message is that multiculturalism and tolerant co-existence is the American way. Later when Levy asks Ahmad's own view on the hatred for America, although Updike does tone down indiscriminate hatred for America but stereotypes Ahmad for his religious indoctrination of hatred for 'infidels' and that obviously include 'every American' except Muslims. "I of course do not hate all Americans. But the American way is the way of infidels. It is headed for a terrible doom (p. 38)". Updike's patriotism is at the peak when he echoes through Habib Chehab,

> This is an honest and friendly country. In this country people have no fear of prison. Not like Old World. Not like Saudis, not like Iraq *before*. In this country, average man knows nothing about prisons. The average man has no fear (p. 147-148).

In order to inspire Ahmad on terrorist attack, he is told that his action will lead to massive media attention and there will be wide spread jubilation across the Muslim world. "It (suicide terrorist attack) will make headline all over the world. They'll be dancing in the streets of Damascus and Karachi, because of you, Madman." (p. 249) Later in the conversation Ahmad exchanges opinion about the long serving autocratic leaders in the Middle East like Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Moammar Gaddafi of Libya and they are condemned as *tools* and puppets in the hands of the United States. Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden are praised for their anti-American position. Osama is equated with late Palestinian freedom fighter leader Yasser Arafat because of his fox like ability of not getting caught at the hands of American enemies.

In order to indoctrinate his cruel philosophy of terror and murder, Sheikh Rashid tells Ahmad that a mighty blow can be delivered to the enemies of God. "Your heroic sacrifice - will send an effective message to the global Satan. The message will be, "We strike when we please" (p. 236).

> Sheikh Rashid provides Ahmad with a radical and fundamentalist view of the world with a purpose to isolate him, even from his own mother. He structures the lessons so that they plant seeds in Ahmad to help prepare him for the role (of a suicide terrorist) the organization has planned for him. Rashid carefully selects passages from the Quran that support his worldview of hatred for the West. (Suver, 2008 p. 47)

The portrayal of the other Arab characters, especially Charlie Chehab, is also very stereotypical. Charlie has been presented as hypocritical, deceptive and violence-prone. He joins Shaikh Rashid for insinuating Ahmad by means of Islamic teachings to commit a terrorist act. Thus the misguidance of Charlie, the

otherwise presumed best and closet friend, leads him to violence. All the Muslim characters of the novel are seen inassimilable in the US society and cannot adapt to the American way of life, thus being disoriented from their American identity. As a minority, Arabs are shown as *fanatics, uncivilized, hostile* and *dangerous* people who continuously pose a threat to American and Western civilization. The Yemeni *imam* who is Ahmad's teacher and is the primary source of his indoctrination of a radical terrorist, has been presented as treacherous, anti-American, violence prone and against any sort of progress or modernity. For the Secretary, all imams "preach terrible things against America, but some of them go beyond that. I mean, in advocating violence against the state!" (p. 134).

Yousef (2010) has found that the post-9/11 literary productions and media depict the Muslims and Arabs in utterly negative way even if they fall short of open hostility. Many of such works treat Islam and terrorism as almost synonymous terms because they project such an image of Muslims and Arabs as if they were inherently violence prone and harbored hatred for their host communities. The unfortunate thing is that a considerable number of Americans and Westerners give credence to such views because they accept the sporadic incidents of violence as true representative of a terror-sponsoring and fanatic culture that is bent on degenerating American values and harming other political interests. This is a clear example of stereotypical generalizations and image-building that has led to aggravating the inter-communal and ethnic relations after 9/11.

A reviewer of the novel in *CityJouranl* writes, "Terrorism is not a simple, direct response to, or result of, social injustice, poverty, or any other objectively

discernible human ill. It is not the personal that is political, but the political that is personal. Updike rightly sees Islamism in the West as culturally hybrid, rather than a pure product of Islam". The desire for a simple solution for al the existential problems of humanity, though very human on the face, could be very destructive in reality.

4.12 Faith and Group-Identity Shown as Motivations for Terrorism

It seems that there is no connection between a terrorist's own individual identity and the identity he gets from the organization he works for and subsequently the identity he gets from the public. This is evident from the fact that,

> Ahmad willingly submits to his imam's manipulations and surrenders his individual identity in exchange for membership in the terrorist organization. For Ahmad, the opportunity to send an unmistakable message to the weak Christians and nonobservant Jews corrupted by godless America seems only part of the attraction. The feeling of brotherhood and belonging that the group offers him is the true allure (Suver 2008, p. 46).

Another possible explanation for his getting the germs of radicalization and terrorism from local Muslim immigrant community is that the writer wanted to highlight the virulence of Arab Muslims living in the United States. Suver (2008) has noted that, "the setting of the novel in New Jersey, Updike tell his conviction that the cradle of *jihad* rests not in the faraway Middle East but in the crumbling, peripheral and immigrant-laden cities of the West" (p. 46).

Updike's dilemma centers on the idea of faith and lack of faith in the modern world. In Updike's view, "Consumerism and its consequences replace religion and people's beliefs in the American political and social system, ultimately

debasing the foundational ideas that built the nation" (Batchelor 2009, p. 58).
Ahmad remarks that, "I seek to walk the straight path. In this country it is not
easy. There are too many paths, too much selling of many useless things. They
brag of freedom, but freedom to no purpose becomes a kind of prison." (p. 148)
Ahmad's mixed heritage is also a constant reminder of race. He often juxtaposes
himself against his white, Irish-American mother, who he views as whorish,
stupid, and overly-American in her consumerist mentality. Updike's sense of race
seems to have transformed by September 11, beyond simply heightening
suspicion of Arabs and Arab-Americans.

4.13 Chapter Summary

By concluding the discussion of this chapter, we can say that the settings, tone,
language and the narrative techniques of the author are almost intriguing as they
reflect his attitude towards representation of his characters in a certain schematic
framework. The psychological transformation of the protagonist of *Terrorist*,
Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy into a potential suicide bomber sheds light on the
political position taken by the author and such an intriguing plot structures makes
his narrative more convincing to his American readers because of the sensitive
context of post-9/11 era, marred by a highly tense global atmosphere of fear and
suspicion of the 'alien' other.

The writer of *Terrorist* John Updike tried to prove that Americans were culturally
and linguistically superior to their Arab and African immigrants and the latter
represented a serious threat to the society because of the radical ideology of their

faith that promoted and encouraged terrorism. To prove such claims, the writer quoted several verses of the Holy Quran albeit without caring much for searching their original context and also demonized the main Muslim characters of Ahmad Mulloy Ashmawy and his religious teacher Shaikh Rashid who is the *imam* of a community mosque. He has shown his intolerance for Arab immigrants by portraying them as potential danger to American society and by questioning their loyalty as citizens of USA. He explores the interplay of literature and politics by touching upon the question of peace in Middle East but falls short of accepting that the main reason of widespread anti-Americanism across the Muslim world is America's unqualified support of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

Finally, by portraying an ultra-religious young Muslim boy ready to carry out a suicidal mission mainly because of inspirations from Quranic lessons of the *imam* of a mosque, the author has tried to associate the phenomenon of terrorism with the Islamic faith. The underlying message of the text implies that Islam as a faith endorses the indiscriminate violence against innocent citizens and Muslims as a people can be so callous to perpetrate such heinous acts with no remorse.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The textual analysis of *Terrorist* in the previous chapter brings out some very interesting findings about the US popular culture, the issues of ethnic, religious, racial and linguistic diversity and the perceived role of Islam as a threat to the secular pluralism of America. The Muslim community stands as the odd-man-out in the American social fabric, unwilling to integrate and assimilate in the mainstream and its struggle for preserving culture and language, eventually seems to have turned violent and produced radicalized suicide terrorists after 9/11. The US government in turn has resorted to tougher policing and surveillance for ensuring public security that inevitably resulted in the elimination of individual freedoms mainly affecting the Muslim community which considers such policing practices as deliberate victimization. Although, a legitimate desire for public security on the part of the United States government can not be disputed, but the steps that were taken to achieve this purpose turned into an organized campaign of scare-mongering potentially with the covert aim of persecution of the American Muslim immigrant community.

The portrayal of Muslims in the news media and popular fiction in the post-9/11 years has had a very direct impact on the state policies affecting their lives. Most of the American media coverage portrayed the post-9/11 issues as a confrontation between Islam as a religion and the West as a culture. The Muslims and Arabs did

not however view the things entirely from a religious point of view and their focus was primarily on political side of the after-effects of 9/11. The hostile coverage in the news media has had a major role in intensifying anti-Americanism in the Muslim World, because Muslims have developed the feeling that the United States views them as *enemy aliens*. The Muslims around the world and specifically their immigrant communities in the West feel that they became an undue focus of media after 9/11 and it projected them as breeding ground of violence and terrorism.

In such a scenario, the stereotyping and *mis*representation is not a mere literary phenomenon away from the real issues of contemporary life. It is quite complex and covers the often long sustained political struggles among various human groups for wielding and controlling more and more power in real life. Such practices on the part of journalists and literary writers become a propaganda component of the struggle that various ethnic, linguistic, national, religious or political groups wage against each other in various societies at global levels. Such struggles and prevailing scenarios are radically affected by the major political or social events that give birth to new challenges and new opportunities. The terror attacks of 9/11 were one such major event that changed the course of the history of contemporary world. A lot of literary and journalistic writings followed the attacks and the subsequent War on Terror. This massive volume of literary and non-literary discourses on the entire situation covered a broad range of issues including human rights, interstate political relations, law, religious militancy, radical nationalism etc.

5.1 Findings

Certain steady and common trends of presenting reality from a political perspective were traced among various post-9/11 fiction works, specifically those which have been written with a western point of view. Among other things, these common trends of post-9/11 fiction include the practice of stereotyping religious groups and profiling individuals on the basis of skin color, ethnic origin, religious faith and ideological line of thinking is quite common in post-9/11 literary productions. This study has explored all these issues with a special reference to *Terrorist* by John Updike and has found out that the author has done stereotyping and misrepresentation in portraying the members of US Muslim immigrant community. In order to achieve this purpose, the writer has depicted the Muslim characters as if they have stubbornly radical religious ideology, essentially have tendency towards committing indiscriminate violence against other faith groups and such ideology and violence have solely been inspired by the injunctions of their Islamic faith.

Some other recurring themes common to most of the post-9/11 fiction works are violence, trauma, public security, terrorism, preservation of constitutionally guaranteed individual freedoms, racial and ethnic hatred and cultural tensions. Such themes can be explored for looking at the angle which a particular writer may have used for communal representation and religious, ethnic, racial, linguistic or cultural stereotyping. Most of the post-9/11 writers seem to have taken certain clear political positions and tried to justify and defend such political stances through their literary creative writings.

The major part of the frustration of Muslims in general and Arabs in particular stems from the US policy in the Middles East which they consider is based on the unqualified support for Israel and severely prejudiced against Palestinians. Muslim grievances are also centered on the point that the world media has ignored the moderate voices, which constitute an overwhelming majority of the Muslim population irrespective of its geographical location. This view is generally based on the fact that the non-violent aspects of Islam have largely been ignored both in the news media and in literary, cinema/theatric, fine arts and other forms of cultural productions. For example the achievements in the scientific field or the Arabs and Muslims cultures worldwide get almost negligible place in the popular and influential media. Muslims believe that terrorism is not generically linked to Islam; rather it is result of a sense of deprivation caused by the political treatment by a technologically advanced and militarily powerful West which disenfranchises them from honor and development. Abdulla (2007) says that "this point is validated daily by the flagrant rise of violent acts in Iraq since the American intervention in 2003. This is a point that Arabs believe the American media refuse to acknowledge or even consider".

5.2 Conclusions

According to the textual analysis of *Terrorist* in chapter 4, all the three research questions were proved in the affirmative leading to the conclusion that John Updike has indulged in stereotyping while representing and portraying US Muslims as a communal group and Islam as a religious faith.

The textual evidence suggests that the writer of *Terrorist* has stereotyped his Muslim characters by setting the text in way to imply that

1. Most of the Muslims have a radical religious ideology
2. Most of the Muslims indulge in indiscriminate violence
3. Islam as a faith is the sole inspiration behind radical ideology/violence.

Let us now briefly revisit the textual evidence supporting the above points of conclusion one by one.

The first question is proved by the stubborn and inflexible views of Ahmad and his religious teacher Shaikh Rashid on the status of non-Muslims in general and Americans in particular. They exhibit excessive hatred towards the members of other faith groups by branding them as *infidels*. Their views about education, status of women and the popular culture which claims to carry the supra-religious equality and individual civil liberties, show the extreme degree radical nature of their ideology.

The second question is also proved by the fact that all the Muslim characters in the novel contribute to violence at various stages and in varying degrees. Ahmad goes for a suicidal mission, while his teacher and *imam* Shaikh Rashid radicalizes Ahmad from a bright promising college student to a terrorist. Chehabs and their Arab technicians do the engineering for explosive materials and finally provide Ahmad with technical know-how for detonating those explosives. Even some off-the scene Muslim characters who get no clear mentioning in the novel, have been shown as a mysterious source for financing terrorism. This is a reference to the

general masses in the Muslim countries paying donations to charity organizations for humanitarian causes, and as per the underlying message given in *Terrorist*, such funds end up in the hands of terror groups based in America. In this way, the menace of terrorism has been associated with even the Muslim masses living in their homelands in Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Far East.

The third question of religious faith as being the sole inspiration for violence is proved by the fact that Shaikh Rashid succeeds to convince Ahmad mainly through the teachings of Holy Quran, for blowing up a tunnel when full of commuters. He exploits the boy's love for God and presents the host American society as the *enemy* of God. Shaikh Rashid has been shown as giving a special focus on the verses either pertaining to the warnings for unbelievers or the rewards for the good practicing believers. Moreover, the Quranic verses about *jihad* which is the holy struggle against social vices; have been quoted in a context that is too narrow to reflect the real Quranic meaning. The Updikean sense of the term *jihad* limits its meaning to a *divine order to kill.*

By referring back to the operational definition of stereotyping, we can say that the writer has given Ahmad's affiliation with God as a third person narrative statement. Updike has not given any logical reason to account for Ahmad's intense attachment to the faith of his absent father. Similarly there is no convincing explanation of the fact that why a young and handsome boy like Ahmad could not find interest and enjoy the very enticing features of American pop culture and was driven away to the radical side of very hard and demanding religious practices. Such information gaps should not perhaps be considered mere

coincidences; they instead serve as strong clues leading to the conclusion that the author has been *stereotypical* and not very *objective* in his portrayal of Muslims as a communal and religious group. Filling-in the alternative explanation for these information gaps would either change the very scheme and settings of the novel or would eliminate the underlying message being communicated through the text.

Another important aspect to consider is that while one believes that the western literary writers are well justified in attempting to create awareness about terrorism among their public and urge their governments to ensure security in their cities, it is shockingly surprising to note that none of the post-9/11 novels surveyed in chapter 3 of this study (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* being an exception) portray a positive or condonable image of Islam and Muslims. Most of the writers view Muslims as terrorists and potentially dangerous threats for their societies. As a common trend, these novels have considered the few individuals, who indulge in acts of terror and violence for reasons that have limited and local context, as the legitimate representatives of 1.3 billion Muslim population of the world and then the sweeping generalization of such stereotypical image makes *all* the Muslims of the world as suspects.

One very revealing fact of the survey of post-9/11 novels is that not even a single individual belonging to any other faith group has been shown inciting, committing, collaborating, abetting or perpetrating violence and terrorism. In *Terrorist* it should be specifically noted that the non-Muslim characters have been shown trying to stop violence and discouraging terrorism which is a conscious attempt by the writer to highlight their positive contributions to the society. Jack

Levy for example, in contrast with Shaikh Rashid's attempts at promoting terrorism and fuelling racial and religious hatred, first tries to keep Ahmad on-track in college study and later takes the risk of being blown up in the explosives-laden truck for the elegant purpose of saving lives of other citizens who would be the potential victims if the terror plot were to succeed. Such a contrastive portrayal of the two teachers of the would-be terrorist, where both of them are representing their respective faiths by embodying the complete codes of conduct of their religions, seems to be based on a selective approach and stereotypical mindset which in this case is apparently the result of communal prejudice and racial intolerance on the part of the writer.

We can conclude by saying that post-9/11 era occupies a special place in the contemporary history and it has severely affected the global political landscape by bringing about a realignment of inter-state relations among the countries of diverse populations. America as a multicultural and multiracial country faced unprecedented upheavals of social disturbances because millions of American Muslim immigrants were viewed as a social threat because of their suspected links with terror groups. This led to excessive surveillance and policing by the American police and other security forces causing not only the encroachment of individual freedoms but also the erosion of harmony among various communal groups. As the focus of the Global War on Terror was mainly on Muslims and it involved the American invasion of two Muslim states that caused millions of deaths and massive destruction of civic infrastructures, the Muslims of the world generally felt that they were being indiscriminately targeted and victimized.

The ramifications of the War on Terror and US interventionism in two Muslim states were felt throughout Europe also. The massive protests across the Muslim World against the publication of blasphemous sketches of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) witnessed an increasingly tense wave of anti-Americanism and showed a general frustration with the West. The ban on building minarets of mosques in Switzerland and headscarf in France further increased the underlying religious and cultural tensions and raised the direct and simple question whether Muslim immigrant communities in the West should be allowed to exist or not. That is the point where all the media, films and popular fiction writers in the West engaged in a systematic campaign to paint the Muslims as a threat to the Western societies in general and America in specific.

The broader message being given through media and literary stereotyping seems to be that since the Muslim immigrants pose a security threat, they should either be compelled to completely surrender their language, culture and desirably their faith also (demand for greater integration and assimilation) or be deported back to their countries of origin. In the midst of the unfolding scenario of competing cultural and religious struggles, and in the face of the hawks and diehards on both sides of the divide, the dream of pluralism and multiculturalism is dying and ethnic tensions are set to increase even further. The peaceful coexistence of majority and minority communities is possible only when conflict-mongers and hawks both in the secular west and in the Muslim world are discouraged by the general public.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has highlighted some major fault lines in Islam's relations with the west in general and the United States in specific. Following action plan is recommended for all the stakeholders in order to bring about improvement in the situation not only at the international level but also within the societies of individual countries.

Firstly, the international disputes like the question of Palestinian statehood, which are the major cause of creating hostility along religious lines, should be resolved so that the wave of Anti-Americanism in the Muslim world may be contained.

Secondly, it should be realized that most of these problems have been caused by an atmosphere of mistrust among various communal groups in almost all the societies of the West; therefore, an interfaith dialogue should be promoted so that the trust-deficit is bridged as early as possible.

Thirdly, people should be educated about the strengths of diverse society so that they turn up to celebrate the presence of foreign immigrants amidst themselves, instead of repelling them as *outsiders* and *others*.

Fourthly, Muslim governments in the Middle East and in other regions of the world should urge their citizens living in the United States to respect the cultural norms of their host society so that these immigrants have better prospects of social acceptability and thus be able to reap the fruits of harmonious living.

Fifthly, the Muslim representative bodies of the United States should make a centralized curriculum for religious education throughout the country and the US government should be taken into full confidence in this matter so that the American fears of home-grown terror may be allayed.

Sixthly, the US government should also take steps to increase tolerance of Arabs and Muslims in the country and guide the mainstream media and state officials not to discriminate against these fellow citizens.

The researcher hopes that such measures, if implemented, can improve not only the inter-community relations in the United States but also the latter's diplomatic ties with the rest of the Islamic world.

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