



THE IMAGE OF COLONIALISM IN UPDIKE'S "TERRORISM"

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 4th March 2022 Accepted: 6th April 2022 Published: 17th May 2022</p>	<p>John Updike, is One of America's avant-garde novelists, and one of several who has fictionalized the aftermath of 9/11. Terrorist has depicted the Muslim other in the post-9/11 geopolitical setting of conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine by using a Muslim American adolescent as the main character. This research aims to address terrorists' exemplifications of these Muslim countries' geography and place them in post-9/11 geopolitical and colonial contexts. Colonial shadows are inferences and insinuations that justify, legitimize, and legitimize colonial activities and conditions, either through the narrative's image of Muslims or by displaying relevant geography. This study tries to comprehend and explicate the overt and covert colonial connotations and correlations between the narrative and colonized topographies by demonstrating the story's colonial shadows. Terrorist depicts Palestinians as being associated with violence and terrorism in comparison to nonviolent Israelis in order to justify Israel's colonial status in Palestine. Furthermore, the American colonial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are portrayed as benign and reasonable actions of self-defense.</p>

Keywords: Iraq, Palestine, colonialism, Afghanistan, terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Several American novelists, such as John Updike, Don DeLillo, Andre Dubus, Pearl Abraham, and Amy Waldman, have made historical and geopolitical circumstances of the 9/11 attacks part of their novels, which are now on the market, like Andre Dubus' III *The Garden of Last Days*, Pearl Abraham's *American Taliban*, and Kevin Powers' *The Yellow Birds* (2013). One of these stories makes reference to the American military's involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In these narratives, there was a kind of political awareness or unconsciousness that came into being by virtue of the interweaving of various types of clarifications, representations, and comparisons in which 'Islamic' terrorism was the central problem. Even though the 9/11 attacks and their ramifications were much discussed in American novels, such as the popular Updike novel *Terrorist*, this work of fiction has its own originality in incorporating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into the whole story, and including the issue of post-9/11 US wars on 'Islamic' terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan in the context of those conflicts.

Updike is one of the most prominent American writers, with accolades such as "a lengthy list of published books accompanied by many prizes and awards." Please open up to us. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Updike's 22nd novel, *Terrorist*, becomes the first to tackle terrorism in the post-9/11 era. The novel "Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy: An Egyptian American Story" chronicles the life of 18-year-old American Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, whose Egyptian exchange student father abandons him when he is just three years old. While he himself may live comfortably, his mother, a nurse's aide and one who is barely able to afford a middle-class lifestyle, is continuously occupied with her employment, amateur paintings, and countless relationships with men. Although Ahmad's father is away, he periodically sees an imam at a local mosque named Sheikh Rashid, a Yemeni cleric, who affects him with 'Islamic' beliefs for a few years due of the absentee dad. Ahmad is initially convinced to leave academia, and then he agrees to become a truck driver for the Chehab family's furniture company. Finally, he agrees to use explosives in an attack on the Lincoln Tunnel. Unlike his friend Ahmad, Jack Levy continues to advocate for Ahmad because



he feels that the latter's school grades will allow him to go into a good institution. Eventually, the Yemeni sheikh's influence proves to be more long-lasting than Levy's efforts to control Ahmad, who does not give up and continues to provide a stricter education to the youth. The end of the book has Ahmad driving a truck loaded with explosives through the Lincoln Tunnel in an attempt to detonate the device he has in place there. Although he had initially intended to go through with his terrorist plan, he reconsiders because of Levy's influence.

Even though the book is set in the United States, the Middle East is represented in subtle and overt ways. These two nations are used to depict the U.S. conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11. The American War on Terror has addressed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well. The focus of this research is on how Terrorist groups across the Middle East and North Africa portray Muslim geographical areas, especially Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan, as well as how they are situated in the context of post-9/11 geopolitical and colonial circumstances. This research will examine and explain the explicit and tacit colonial influences and connections found in Updike's work, all while shedding light on the ways in which colonized geographies relate to it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The terrorist from Updike's book *Terrorist* has been studied using a variety of methodologies and methods. The majority of these research have concentrated on the traumatic repercussions of the terrorist attacks seen in these tales, such as in *Terrorist* by Mansutti (2012). Studies of Updike's portrayals of Muslims have been conducted previously. Based on Updike's metatextuality, and other studies, researchers such as Riyadh Manqoush, Ruzy Suliza Hashim, and Noraini Md. Yusof (2014) determined that Updike's focus on transnational Muslim marriages has provoked Islamic people to reject the American way of life. Manqoush, Yusof, and Hashim (2011) critically analyzed allusion in *Terrorist* and Mohammad Ismail's *Desert of Death and Peace* as well as in portrayals of 9/11 and the U.S. occupation of Iraq. While they did not relate Updike's depictions of Islam and Muslims to the American war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Israeli occupation of Palestine, they did note Updike's failures to relate his representations of Islam and Muslims to the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The link between Orientalism and colonialism in post-9/11 American literature has been a topic of several papers. Three major themes are shown by previous postcolonial studies on *Terrorist*. Updike's work was first criticized as being orientalist, in that it

attempted to depict the Muslim "other" in the post-9/11 environment (Zaidan, 2009). Conventional and customary Orientalist binaries clashed with Terrorist's contention that the West was inseparable with the East (Gamal, 2011). The third key concept identified in *Terrorist* is the presentation of the Muslim other in the style of Orientalism (Arif & Ahmad, 2016; Mirzayee et al., 2017).

It was handled from a political standpoint as well, as may be seen in Updike's work. Maryam Salehnia (2012) sought to trace the political Zionist impact on Updike's *Terrorist*, which in turn influenced his representation of Muslims. Israel's colonial status in Palestine was depicted through Updike's usage of the Orient/Occident binary imagery. Although, in relation to Updike's portrayal of post-9/11 conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, these developments have not been proved."

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND IDEOLOGY

The traditional backdrop of Western knowledge of Islam has always been focused on politics (Said, 1979). There has always been a great deal of confusion when it comes to Islam (Said, 1979: 299). For Orientalists, "Islam is often used to stand for 'a society, a religion, a prototype, and an actuality'. In other words, Islam is linked to all aspects of society including culture, history, religion, and even politics. Following World War II, American interest in the Middle East has been increasing. The Middle East has been a valuable field for international conflict, oil, political and human resources, and as a result, American imperialist aspirations have flourished (Said, 1979; Kumar, 2007). Western politics and imperialism have been that which typically justifies Islamic governments for the West (Said, 1979; Žižek, 2002).

The Orientalism project also consists of the work of interpretation with the Orient, which consists of the civilizations, populations, and regions that exist within the region (Said, 1979). Furthermore, Orientalism is a man-made construction, and it is the product of several 'political entities and actions'. With its turn to administration, economics, and military, the Orient has evolved from being literary and meditative. The Orient has been Westernized and is hence a "alien colonial space". the theory of Orientalism serves as "the anchor for war," since it permits the U.S. to wage perpetual war in order to keep its adversaries at bay (Smith, 2006: 67). A clear statement is made, revealing the continuing function of Orientalism in supporting Western colonial interests in the East, and providing a cultural base from which future and ongoing colonial acts would be launched (Kalin, 2004; Maira, 2009).



Sophisticated geography professor Derek Gregory (in 2004) said that "the narratives that the West tells itself the most are in fact narratives of self-making". Western mythmaking is accomplished through the process of self-creation, because the lack of it would not have brought the rest of the world up to date (Gregory, 2004). WESTERN SELF-PRODUCTIONS INVOLVE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OTHER AND THESE ENDURINGLY FOCUS ON WESTERN CENTRALITY AND SUPERIORITY (Gregory, 2004; Semati, 2010). Western self-constructed geographies validate Western interests in the East. Sedimentations of sequential histories are in addition to actions of space (e.g. colonization). In order to promote the causes of the post-9/11 conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, Western civilisational missions such as those for Western dominance have been used to support Western colonial ambitions (Gregory, 2004; Gafaiti, 2008).

The American and Israeli administrations were able to combat their opponents by using three strategic maneuvers, which are known as 'identifying, opposing, and throwing out' (Gregory, 2004: 248). You can effectively locate someone if you reduce your opponents to abstract things, such as "the other". As seen in the related events in Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq, "the terrifyingly effective geographies on display following September 11, 2001, were tied to both place and time-based art performances (Gregory, 2004: 248).

The sacerdotal state of homo sacer is revealed at the point when the law is suspended, indicating a jurisdiction of exclusion and exception. Those on the fringes of society are referred to as outliers. The reason why homines sacri (plural of homo sacer) are objects of sovereign authority, but not subjects of that power, is because they are holy men. Homines sacri only have meaning in the context of their reduction; as no longer equal human beings, they become locations on a map or abstract concepts. Because of this, the number of Afghan, Iraqi, and Palestinian dead and casualties is incorrectly described or recognized. Everyone was able to identify the victims of 9/11, as well as a handful of their tales.

One hundred years ago, when American visitors toured the Holy Country, they claimed to understand the land better than the people who lived there, the Palestinians (Gregory, 2004). It has been imaginatively and ideologically 'American' for American travelers. The Arabs in the American consciousness play just a little role, but American travelers see this country as fundamental to "their collective gaze". Zionist goal of creating a Jewish state in Palestine has, by necessity, been a "colonial enterprise". This has happened in Western thought, where Palestine has been described

as "a space emptied of its native Arab population". Palestine has been colonized by supposing it to be an empty, Western-modernized place.

The Arab population of Palestine has been reduced to a silent, passive populace who, in the history books, are referred to just as Palestinians, as well as objects who never are mentioned as part of the peoples of Palestine (Said, 1985; Gregory, 2004). The Promised Land has been likened as a "desert" that will need to be planted to rejuvenate the soil so that it comes life once again with the aid of secular Zionists (Gregory, 2004: 79). As a result, Israelis have been viewed as the carriers of Western civilization and civilizing influence in Palestine, the desert. While Palestinians have been deprived of their land because they let it become a desert for hundreds of years, the colonisation of Palestine has been represented as a form of modernization (Churchill quoted in Gregory, 2004: 81).

Palestine is indisputably the product of imaginative geography; because of this, Western thought has allocated "waste" and "civilization" on one side of the spectrum, and "darkness" and "light" on the other. This ultimately results in the Israeli occupation of Palestine, because their occupation claims to improve the landscape through converting the land's waste to light (Gregory, 2004). To this, Palestinians can only reply with a "claim that violence is innate to their religion". Under the excuse of combatting "Islamic" terrorism, the frequency of Israeli incursions into the West Bank increased, within the first few days following the 9/11 attacks. Presenting themselves as victims under the same sort of peril as Americans, namely, "Islamic" terrorism (Gregory, 2004; Spivak, 2004).

The events on 9/11 have given the Israeli government new justification for greater military occupation of Palestinian land (Said, 2001; Gregory, 2004; Spivak, 2004). Both 9/11 and the Palestinian national resistance to the Israeli occupation have been considered terrorist acts since they were carried out by Muslims. A number of similarities exist that link America's use of creative geography in its attack on Afghanistan with the Israeli occupation of Palestine (Gregory, 2004: 117). These [Israeli attacks on Palestinians] have been associated with the U.S. fight against terrorism in Afghanistan, and thus with America as a whole. To these ends, the West Bank and Gaza have found themselves falling under elimination under the prevailing American and Israeli models. As a result, "[the Palestinians] deliberately deny the existential importance of the land while steadfastly upholding the same for the Israelis. (140). Thus, since the Western imaginary geographies of Palestine and Palestinians had already laid the



groundwork for the Israeli occupation of Palestine, it allowed Israeli troops to occupy the region and use it as a terrorist training ground for Palestinians.

A particular space where something, such as an occurrence or event, becomes more common, emphasized, and proclaimed is a 'spaces of visibility.' When events are overlooked, dismissed, and suppressed, they are zones of invisibility (Gregory, 2004). Visibility and invisibility on the horizontal and vertical axis imply simultaneous celebrations and concealing or ignoring specific locations (Gregory, 2004). terrorism in non-Western nations is unnoticed and unremarked in the media (Gregory, 2004; Kumar, 2012).

As a result, via the creation of several contemporary genocides, the "us vs. them" dichotomy is continuously in place. Gregory, 2004: 27. "Imaginative geographies" created the 9/11 assaults by arranging them into a set of "public cultures of assumption, disposition, and action" Consequently, this imaginary geography has reinforced the enmity networks that were exploited to foster the social divisions of "other" vs "self". In Western media, fear has been manufactured, collected, and triggered to display the "other face of the other" so that people may see it. However, coloniality may 'reflect' various 'shades of "the other"' since 'it oscillates between light and darkness, between the visible and the invisible' throughout colonial history.

Intelligence agencies have been prepared to build a "imaginative geography of al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan" after the first post-9/11 American War on Terror (Gregory, 2004: 52). We must keep images of the high civilian casualties in the Afghanistan conflict under wraps because the public's support for U.S. military involvement in that nation and in Iraq is at stake (Gregory, 2004). Some American news agencies have produced a visible space in which individuals or organizations that are suspected of being connected to the 9/11 attacks are identified as just "points on a map or nodes in a network" and presented this way: "Individuals or organizations that are suspected of being connected to the 9/11 attacks are identified as simply 'points on a map or nodes in a network.' There's no such thing as "truth on the ground" once the dreadful wrath of the "God trick" is put into action. Thus, it follows that people are seeing just what has been created for them to see on the ground, not what is really happening. Authority to narrate therefore gives those who have it the ability to dictate how an audience views the world, and, as a result, the ability to govern the universe.

According to Allen Feldman (2004), the fact that the US has taken on the role of "a new Orientalism, the perceptual apparatus through which we make the

eastern Other visible" in the Afghanistan war has been critical. Afghans are being held accountable for what has been assumed to be the missing histories and missing landscapes that have been believed to have attacked the United States on September 11. As Americans have tried to seek an explanation for the 9/11 attacks, the bomb sites and the scenes of total destruction in Afghanistan are evidence that they have been trying to obtain one. In order to make the adversary apparent, creative geography campaigns and cultural expressions have to be employed (Gregory, 2004).

Thus, using American creative geographies, the military in Iraq has been presented inside a cinematic environment that presents violence as a spectacle, rather than a ghastly act of war that caused the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians (Gregory, 2004: 198). (199). This example from the American invasion of Iraq shows that there are 'heroes' in America, as well as 'nameless masses' in Iraq. as a result, the misfortunes of those who undergo them are all but invisible to the Western world. As humans, Iraqis have been neglected, and they have also been placed in a situation where they cannot be seen. In a similar manner, American troops have been shown with their families and personal relationships; however, in the case of the Iraqi military, their families and relationships have been downplayed or ignored altogether.

Some colonial memories work through the act of disremembering some colonial activities, whereas other colonial memories rely on the act of remembering others (Gregory, 2004). But on the other hand, amnesia of colonial civilizations may be associated with the belief that others are odd, exotic, and alien. The cognitive impairment resulting from colonial amnesia covers the general tendency in the West to overlook the painful violence of colonialism. It is the yearning for the people and culture that colonialism has destroyed that we term colonial nostalgia. This yearning wishes for the exotic, eternal, and romanticized "other" to be re-created via Western means of "consumption" (Gregory, 2004: 10). However, the most concerning aspect of colonial nostalgia is an unexamined yearning for the privileged and powerful state of colonialism, which many fall prey to through their unthinking fascination with the magnifying "swagger of colonialism itself," along with their ethnocentric hypothesis of "Might and Right. Because of this, the post-9/11 War on Terror has functioned as a form of colonial nostalgia: a violent return to the colonial past with its stated spatial and geopolitical divisions of "us" and "them," good and evil, and growth and barbarism. During the colonial period, many memories of colonialism were also



significant. This was mostly done via recreating and inaugurating current acts of colonialism on the ground. Colonial products of space are vital and "axiomatic" for colonialism.

This research will focus on the Muslim characters and their surrounding locations, including colonized geographies, in which the American post-/11 War on Terror is involved. We are going to use Colonial Shadows to portray three war-torn regions. These include places like Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

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