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Satanized Verses: Terrorizing Islam in John Updike's *Terrorist*

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that John Updike's *Terrorist* – as also *The Coup*–, antagonizes and misrepresents Islam as a violent, anti-woman and fanciful religion, by selectively quoting Qur'anic verses out of context. The study classifies and contextualizes Updike's discriminately quoted Qur'anic verses according to the pre-mentioned three-fold pattern and recruits a postcolonial frame to situate Updike's anti-Islam ideology and style. It turns out that Updike's selective quoting from the Qur'an is a vicious strategy which ignores the context of the quoted verses and overlooks the many verses which refute his anti-Islam claims. That is, *Terrorist* belongs to Islamophobic literature and neo-colonialism and Updike is an extremist apostle of both.

Keywords: Islamophobia; John Updike; *Terrorist*; post-colonialism; neo-colonialism.

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1. Introduction

Clashes or conflicts between cultures or civilizations have occupied considerable space in literary writings. Colonial writers have worked hardest to image the colonized as irrational, savage and inferior. Islam, Muslims, East, Orient, Arabs, the Arab world and the Qur'an have been targets for colonial (mis)representations. Nonetheless, scholars noted that religion was at the heart of such a conflict. Bernard Lewis (1994), 44 in *Islam and the West* claimed that for a long period the relation between Islam and the West has been an everlasting conflict against Muslims who believe that the only "source of holy law is the Qur'an" which regulated human life, whereas Western societies considered the Holy Qur'an as an old fashion law that is inconsistent with modern life. Earlier in *Orientalism* (1979, 27-8), Edward Said argued that the West became more interested in the Eastern regions because they were rich with oil. As a result, the clash between East and West, according to Said, took three dimensions: first, the anti-Arab or Anti-Islam thoughts; second the clash between Arabs and Israeli Zionism and its effects upon American Jews; and thirdly the representation of Islam and Muslims and their culture as undeveloped, uncivilized, backward and irrational. Examining Updike's *Terrorist*, Fikret

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Guven and Bulent Guven (2018, 217) noted how post 9/11 novels and literature were built on the Orientalist binaries of Islam and West: "Islam is depicted as a backward and anti-modern religion, which hates the modern West". This ideological standpoint attempted to foreground the supremacy of western colonization to justify and achieve political and economic colonial aims.

The West linked Islam and Arabs with terrorism in order to get access to their oil. Elizabeth Poole (2002, 36) claimed that the neo-colonialism used media to misrepresent Islam in order to control the Middle Eastern countries and to gain access to and dominance over their natural resources. Poole (2002, 36) said "Islam would be seen as most threatening if it endangered Western interests in the Middle East. The loss of control over oil prices would lead to a loss of control and power for, in particular, the USA, and would threaten its image as the number one superpower". This issue that is evidently present in Updike's *Terrorist* when Ahmed and Charlie exchange ideas about the colonizing ideology; Charlie says "The Western powers steal our oil; they take our land" (188). Said in *Covering Islam* (2008, 28) argued that Western culture considered Arabs or Muslims "as oil [and gold] suppliers or as potential terrorists". Therefore, literature that promoted this notion belongs to a systematic justification of western colonial and exploitation ideologies, policies and agendas targeting the Muslim/Arab world.

Moreover, Samuel Huntington (2011, 210-12) argued that the clash between the East and the West was a clash between two religions, Islam and Christianity. Huntington claimed that in the twentieth century the clash between the West and Islam has increased for many factors; first, the increasing number of Muslims in the West because of migration and, second, Muslims became more aware of their culture, civilization and religion compared to those in the West. Besides, the collapse of communism, which was a common enemy for both cultures, led to the surrogate clash between the West and the Islam. Likewise, Bernard Lewis (2002, 26) claimed that the clash between the West and the East is based on the clash between Christianity and Islam: "This is no less than a clash of civilisations—the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both". Thus, the western ideology which depended on degrading Islam as a religion and the Muslims' resistance against this degradation created and nourished this clash between these cultures. In fact, as Said (2008, 13) pointed out in *Covering Islam*, "Islam has never been welcome in Europe" is evident in the long history of Western misrepresentation of Islam/Muslims. That is, Islamophobia pre-dated 9/11 and gained momentum afterwards.

Lately, the so-called 9/11 events fostered such colonial bias and hatred and sparked a wave of anti-Islam/Muslim sentiments which found their way in a bulk of works of literature, building on a long-established tradition of colonial antagonism. As Jaouad ElHabbouch (2019, 25) puts it, "The cultural politics of representing terror within western historiography, journalism, literature, and media in terms of historical antagonism, civilizational conflict, ethnic discontent, and religious hostility" have been "both inspiring contemporary terrorism and justifying its political goals". Indeed, strenuous efforts have been exerted to demonstrate a *terrorist* nature of Islam/Muslims to justify all sorts of anti-Islam/Muslims discourse and action. Lori Peek (2011) argued that the image of Islam and Muslims after 9/11 events became more aggressive and Americans' hatred toward Islam and Muslims mounted highest so that "Muslim children were bullied by their peers, and adults were fired from their jobs" (6; see also Jackson and Towle, 61).

As a matter of fact, many Western critics supported the opinion that Islam was a religion of chaos and hatred, and that the era of Islam has ended just because it was an old fashion "violent religion that commands the killing of Jews and Christians" (Esposito (2015, 1170); see also Esposito (2003, 26). In addition, Western administrations exerted huge effort to link violence to Islam and Muslims to justify their attack against Islamic countries. Likewise, James D. Chancellor saw Islam as a violent religion; he asked: "Is Islam more prone to violence? Or more precisely: Is religious violence more at home in Islam than in other religions... The simple answer to that question is "yes" (44; see also Cordesman, prg. 5). Such western ideology has been behind the so-called Islamophobia.

As Hatem Bazian (2018, 3) pointed out, the concept of Islamophobia became actively present after the collapse of the Soviet Union, whereby Islam became intensely thought of and represented as a violent religion that threatened the West: "Targeting Islam and Muslims is the way to define politics,

culture, economy, religion, and identity in the post-Cold War period". Islam (and Muslims), or the Middle East, came to replace the Soviet Union as an enemy. Hence, Islam for Daniel Pipes was a violent religion that threatened the West: "Americans know an opponent when they see him," and "like communism during the cold war, Islam is a threat to the West" (qtd. in Gerges, 24). It is however worth noting that, in an interview in 1988, Updike asserted that: "I am a product of nearly forty years of Cold War" (Miller, 1). A thinker like Recep Dogan (2018, 11) noted such provocation and highlighted that "Islam is derived from the Arabic word 'silm' which means peace, safety and protection". Dogan (2018, 5) pointed out that terrorizing Islam to justify western violent reactions and dominance necessarily lead to Muslims' reactionary sentiments and attitudes: "the portrayal of a negative image of Islam in the media and the governmental policies... have kept provoking the naive Muslim youth to be radicalized" (5).

Moreover, Homi Bhabha (1994, 225) noted that alongside the battle between East and West western politics worked hardest to misrepresent Islam, a misrepresentation that was considerably performed within literary writings, notwithstanding the media: "The conflict of cultures and community around The Satanic Verses has been mainly represented in spatial terms and binary geopolitical polarities – Islamic fundamentalists vs. Western literary modernists". Satinizing the Qur'an was mostly based on selective citation of Qur'anic verses that promoted violence and encouraged killing. As a crucial part of the media, sometimes literature played an influential promotional role in justifying Western colonizing purposes. Ian McEwen, Martin Amis, Don DeLillo, V. S. Naipaul, and John Updike were few examples of those Western writers who were part of the Western ideological state apparatus and who hence wrote according to a biased Western perception of the East. The most dangerous theme being promoted was John Updike's recurring propagation of Islam as a violent religion. Updike is not only a good example of the Western authors who attacked Islam in their literary works such as *Terrorist* and *The Coup*; he is also "considered a major figure in... influencing American society" (Miller, 7). He misrepresented Islam as a religion and misjudged Muslims. It is within this context that one may place John Updike's Islamophobic novels *Terrorist* and *The Coup*.

Mita Banerjee (2008, 15) focused on the racial point of view of Updike in *Terrorist* and asserted that "As the events following September 11, 2001, once again prove, for the US, it is race which becomes the pivot of social differentiation". James Wood (2006, prg.4) argued that Updike's *Terrorist* attacked Islam through the protagonist of the novel, Ahmed, who had anti-American thoughts that came from Shaikh Rashid, so that "we are thus offered no idea of what he was like before meeting the imam, what he was like as, say, a moderately Islamic fifteen-year-old.". In fact, Updike's fiction is a major example of how race and stereotyping are essential components in anti-Islam writings in the West. Mikbal Alosman, Raihanah M. and Ruzy Hashim (2018, 59) argued that Updike's novel adopts a western ideological standpoint that misrepresents Islam and Muslims in order to justify the so-called 'war against terrorism', especially after 9/11. They claimed that "Updike's *Terrorist* also demonstrated as a neo-Orientalist work with regard to its representation of the Muslim other". Moreover, in their article "Exploring John Updike's *Terrorist* as a Neo-Orientalist Narrative of the Arabo-Islamic World", Muhammad Arif and Ahmed Maqbool (2016) revealed that Updike's novel represented a neo-Orientalist ideology that is based on racial classification of the East as uncivilized and irrational, to justify invasion of the East. The dialogue between Ahmed and Charlie in the novel is a relevant case to consider; Ahmed says: "They take from Muslims their traditions and a sense of themselves, the pride in themselves that all men are entitled to" (188). As Arif and Maqbool (2016, 554) asserted, "Updike's *Terrorist*... echoes Neo-Orientalist ideology right from the beginning till end". In the same sense, Anna Hartnell (2011, 479) argued that Updike systematically used verses from the Holy Qur'an to represent Islam as a violent faith.

Mahmoud Zaidan (2009, 22) highlighted the strategy that the Western authors, mainly Updike, followed in their writings to give a false impression or misrepresentation of the image of Islam: "[a]s a result of all those events, Muslims were stigmatized as being terrorists and nothing else, and the places of their worship, mosques, were and are still considered as terrorist-breeding ground". Muhammad Awan (2010, 528) argued that Updike uses verses from Qur'an to show that Islam is a violent religion: "[m]ost of the verses that Updike has gathered are about the Divine fury and anger at the infidels and the sinful". Updike quoted particular verses from the Holy Qur'an in his novel to show that Islam is a religion of violence. Awan (2010, 521) revealed that Updike uses "thirty-three verses from the Holy

Qur'an". This use of the verses from the Holy Qur'an is aimed to give a false image about Islam and Muslims. In addition, Updike used two different translations of the quoted verses; as Zaidan (2009, 117) inquired: "Why does Updike use two translations of the Qur'an in the text: J. M. Rodwell's translation in 1861 and that of N. J. Dawood in 1956? It seems that Updike chose the translation that illustrated his point of view toward Islam. Rodwell's translation of Qur'an had many mistakes; these mistakes in translation are not allowed in Qur'an because they could change the meaning of the verses. Muhammad Sultan Shah (2019, 56) argued that there were two purposes for Rodwell's translation:

The obvious purpose was to give a confused view about the Qur'an and to show that it consisted only of fragments of disjointed truth derived from Judaism and Christianity. Another intention was to prove that Muhammad, peace and blessing of Allah be on him, was its author.

Moreover, Davut W. S. Peachy (2013, 35) argued that "All of these Western translations were done to expose and refute Islam and the Qur'an". As such, Updike's quoted Qur'anic verses are from translations that illustrate his assumptions against Islam.

As such, studies have mostly focused on Updike's portrayal of Islam as a violent religion and Muslims as irrational and uncivilized terrorists, overlooking a major aspect of misrepresentation Updike evidently highlighted in *Terrorist*; that is, Islam's treatment of women which will be closely read in this study.

2. Methodology

The study relies on a textual and contextual, along with historical, approach to cater for its close-analysis of the quoted Qur'anic verses. That is, it examines the quoted Qur'anic verses to uncover the authenticity of Updike's sources and highlight Updike's biased style of ignoring the essentially interlinked Qur'anic verses, textually speaking, and overlooking the importance of the circumstances, settings and backgrounds of the quoted Qur'anic verses, contextually speaking. Hence, this study will fill a gap in previous scholarship by providing contextual information about the quoted Qur'anic verses and Prophet's sayings to further refute Updike's malicious stereotypical neo-colonial misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims. Overall, this study will classify and contextualise those verses to uncover Updike's ideologically biased selective style.

3. The violent and merciless

In *Terrorist*, Updike quotes Qur'anic verses to show that Islam's God is merciless and violent, Islam's messenger, prophet Muhammad (PUH), adopted and promoted God's cruelty and the followers of Islam believed in, preached and performed that brutality. Ahlam Othman (2019, 11) argued that the "negative attitude toward the Holy Qur'an together with the incredulity surrounding Prophet Mohammed's miracles reinforce the anti-Islamic discourse in Updike's novel". Updike selectively quotes verses that validate his malicious misrepresentation.

Earliest in the novel, Updike cites Qur'anic to persuade the western reader that Islam's God has neither mercy nor forgiveness for non-Muslims:

*And who shall teach thee what the Crushing Fire is?
It is God's kindled fire,
Which shall mount above the hearts of the damned;
It shall verily rise over them like a vault,
On outstretched columns. (6)*

Updike underlines violence permeating the structural notion of burning by which the Islamic God punishes the non-Muslims, reinstating notions of damnation and cruelty. Muhammad Awan (2010, 523) claimed that "Such a violent image of Islam is not only reinforced by the popular films and television programmes but also by the post-9/11 novels written by some well-known American authors including Don DeLillo, John Updike and Sherman Alexie". Later in the novel Shaikh Rashid teaches Ahmed the following verse: "Let not the infidels deem that the length of days we give them is good for them! We only give them length of days that they may increase their sins! And a shameful chastisement shall be their lot" (76). As such, Updike structurally builds an image of Islam's God as being eager to viciously facilitate sinful behaviour and violently and mercilessly punish, which paves the way for legitimate inquiries about repentance and forgiveness. Ahmad inquires: "shouldn't God's purpose, as

enunciated by the prophet, be to convert the infidels? In any case, shouldn't He show them mercy, not gloat over their pain?" (76). Ahmad's inquiry is ignored and hence, as Awan (2010, 529) claimed, "the verses serve the aim of the writer", a biased stance, indeed.

Shaikh Rashid is to be held responsible for this violence because he teaches Ahmed these verses. James Wood (2006, prg.4) revealed that "Ahmad has been violently influenced by his imam at the local storefront mosque, one Shaikh Rashid" and he continued: "Ahmad is already boiling over with anti-American thoughts; we are thus offered no idea of what he was like before meeting the imam, what he was like as, say, a moderately Islamic fifteen-year-old. Abdul Haseeb (2017, 1088) claimed that "Shaikh Rashid has been shown referring to all non-Muslims as kafirs and in many instances he tells Ahmad that all the kafirs will be tormented in the furnace of Hell". Updike's assumption is unfair because he overlooks Ahmed's background before he met Shaikh Rashid. The dialogue between Ahmed and Jack Levy when they are together in the truck is a case in hand; Jack says: "So kill them now. That seems pretty severe" (294). Ahmed replies: "In the third sura of the Qur'an it says that not all the gold in the world can ransom those who once believed and now disbelieve, and that God will never accept their repentance" (294). While reinstating God's and Ahmad's violent attitudes Updike understates the role Shaikh Rashid plays in brainwashing Ahmad's mind to be a terrorist after he inquired about "God's purpose... to convert the infidels" and "show them mercy, not gloat over their pain?" (76). Instead, Updike underscores the enlightening role of the western, perhaps Jewish, citizen by presenting Jack Levy as "a guidance counselor" (17). Moreover, Updike overlooks a plenitude of verses and Prophet's sayings that promote mercy, repentance and forgiveness.

Updike's biased standpoint dominates as he selectively quotes verses that show Prophet Muhammad (PUH) as the violent messenger of God. When Charlie asks him "You are with jihad?" (183), Ahmed replies: "Mohammad is Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another" (183). Updike works on representing all Muslims to have violent mentalities under the influence of their God and messenger. He employs the relationship between Shaikh Rashid and Ahmed to underline that all Muslim preachers, like Shaikh Rashid, use the Qur'an and the Prophet's sayings to promote hatred against western communities and individuals amongst Muslim youngsters, like Ahmad. Hence, Shaikh Rashid systematically recruits selected Qur'anic verses to convince Ahmed to hate the Americans. Using the Elephant sura, Shaikh Rashid tells Ahmed the story of Abraha al-Habashi who attacked Mecca and how God saved Mecca from Abraha by birds. "*wa arsala alayhim tayaran ababil*" "*tarmihim b-hijaratin min sijil*" (103; translation: "And he sent against them birds, in flocks, Striking them with stones of Sijil (baked clay)", The Elephant, sura no. 105; Al-Hilali and Khan, 850. All subsequent translations are from this source). Shaikh Rashid tells Ahmed that the same attack happened when American armies conquered Iraq under the Bush administration, but instead of using elephants they used "Sherman M1 tanks" (103). Shaikh Rashid wants and encourages Ahmed to be God's weapon against those enemies, to kill the unbelievers in the shadow of the following verse: "Say not those who are slain on God's path they are Dead; nay, they are living!" (112), whereby such Muslim's holy fight will render him either victorious, if he wins, or martyr rewarded in paradise, if he loses/dies.

Working hard to select verses that promote an image of a violent Islam, Updike not only ignores the contexts of those verses but also unfairly overlooks abundant Qur'anic verses and Prophet's sayings that endorse forgiveness and peace. Unlike Updike, Dogan (2018, 1;2;5) asserted that Islam is a religion of peace: "Whoever claims that it is permissible to kill a human being –Muslim or non-Muslim" has necessarily ignored that "God has forbidden" such shameful atrocities, since Islam's God upheld the saving of lives, Muslim or otherwise, and permitted war as a last option with special rules and restrictions. Prophet Muhammad hence "encouraged believers to seek peace and end the war as long as it is possible. He allowed Muslims to fight enemy only when there is no any other alternative". Consequently, "the portrayal of a negative image of Islam in the media and the governmental policies against Muslims in many western countries have kept provoking the naive Muslim youth to be radicalized, causing them to be highly reactionary". Updike's selective strategy is therefore a biased misrepresentation of Islam. It proceeds with misrepresenting Muslims through mischievous images.

Ahmed and Shaikh Rashid are Muslims set against the Christian Teresa, Joryleen, Tylenol and Beth and the Jewish Jack Livy. Ahmed was raised by a single mother, Teresa Mulloy, since his father, Omar Ashmawy, deserted the family and returned to Egypt when Ahmed was three years old. Shaikh Rashid took the rule of Ahmed's father: "his exploration of his Islamic identity ends at the mosque. The

mosque took him in as a child of eleven; it let him be born again” (99). Ahmed’s decision to make living as a truck driver was dictated at the mosque: “My teacher thinks I should drive a truck” (41). The mosque becomes the school of hatred and terror which graduates fanatic terrorists who disregard non-Muslims; Tylenol, Joryleen’s boyfriend, says to Ahmed that “She [Joryleen] say you disrespect her religion” and Ahmed replies “Her religion is the wrong one” (15). Leaving school is situated within a clash of ideologies and religions; Ahmed tells Jack Livy that Shaikh Rashid tells “the college track exposed me to corrupting influences – bad philosophy and bad literature. Western culture is Godless” (38). Under the influence of Shaikh Rashid who “doesn’t like the American way” and “hates it”, Ahmed comes to believe that “America wants to take away my God” (39). Jack Levy reveals: “Somebody's putting pressure on Ahmad, for whatever reason. He can do better than be a trucker” (83). The overall context for Ahmad’s growth is placed within two conflicting systems: oriental and Islamic, on the one hand, and occidental/American and Christian, on the other.

Ahmad is torn between the two poles: “My teacher at the mosque says that all unbelievers are our enemies” (68). Shaikh Rashid wants Ahmed “to destroy them” because “they are vexing you with their uncleanness... They are manifestations of Satan” and assures Ahmad that “God will destroy them without mercy on the day of final reckoning. God will rejoice at their suffering. Do thou likewise, Ahmad.” (77). Shaikh Rashid works on gradually turning Ahmad into a suicide terrorist. He uses comparative images of paradise and hell to do so:

similarly, the enchanting youths, likened to scattered pearls, cited in the sura called 'Man' should be rendered 'chilled raisins'-referring to a cooling raisin drink served with elaborate courtesy in Paradise while the damned drink molten metal in Hell” (106).

Ahmed responds to this description: “Oh, no. I thirst for Paradise” (106). Consequently, Ahmad’s hatred and violent tendencies against Americans, or the non-Muslim other, is hence established. When Charlie asks him “Would you fight them, then? he replies “Yes” (188); “Would you fight give your life?” (189) “Of course” (189). To further encourage Ahmed to commit the bombing mission, Shaikh Rashid calls it “Your heroic sacrifice” (236) the result of which “You will already be in Jannah, in Paradise, confronting the delighted face of God. He will greet you as His son” (237). This is no more than a stereotypical representation.

Updike’s stereotyping and selective quoting are crystal clear. As Guven and Guven (2018, 217) put it: “The most striking aspect of Terrorist is its use of Orientalist binaries to delineate Islam and the West in opposition and creating the ‘Other’ through a vigorous use of othering and stereotyping”. Muhammad Farooq and Sajid Ali (2017, 32) also noted that “Shaikh Rashid by taking help from the verses of the Holy Qur’an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) succeeds in turning Ahmad to a terrorist”. Indeed, Updike adopts and fosters this type of stereotyping with regards to mosque education, a stigmatization that is inherently present in the American community: Beth tells sister Hermione about Imams like Shaikh Rashid: “They all preach terrible things against America, but some of them go beyond that. I mean, in advocating violence against the state” (134). Taken out of context, Updike quotes from the Holy Qur’an to associate the way Ahmed (and Shaikh Rashid) thinks with a violent notion of Islam. Shaikh Rashid teaches Ahmed: “wa la 'l-akhiratu khayrun laka mina l-ula.Wa la sawfa yu'tika rabbuka fa-tarda” (232; translation: “And indeed the hereafter is better for you than the present (life of this world), And verily, your Lord will give you (all good) so that you shall be well-pleased”, The Forenoon, sura no. 93; Al-Hilali and Khan, 840). These verses are messages from God to his messenger Muhammad (PUH) and not from God to all Muslims; they represent how God will compensate Prophet Muhammad (PUH) for his sacrifices of giving up earthly pleasures for the sake of spreading Islam and peace. As such, Updike overlooks the context of the quoted Qur’anic verses within his prejudiced misrepresentation of Islam/Muslims.

To complete his misrepresentation of Islam, Updike, in the last chapter of the novel, singles out Islam as the only violent religion and Muslims as terrorist believers in contrast to Christianity/Christians and Judaism/Jews where peace and forgiveness are the norms. Called by Hermione and her sister Beth, when Jack rides the truck with Ahmed to convince him that he is in the wrong path, Ahmed argues otherwise: “It would be a glorious victory for Islam” because “It would slay and inconvenience many unbelievers” (292). Jack tells Ahmad that “I can't believe you're seriously intending to kill hundreds of innocent people”, whereas Ahmad is haunted by Shaikh Rashid’s teachings:

Who says unbelief is innocent? Unbelievers say that. God says, in the Qur'an, Be ruthless to unbelievers. Burn them, crush them, because they have forgotten God. They think to be themselves is sufficient. They love this present life more than the next. (294)

Jack then succeeds in neutralizing Ahmad's terrorist thoughts and, finally, Ahmed recognizes that being devout does not require violence: "He [God] does not want us to desecrate His creation by willing death. He wills life" (306). As such, Jack Livy saves people and Ahmad altogether as he manages to convince Ahmad that "You're a victim, Ahmad-a fall guy" (309). This prejudiced stance continues in presenting Islam as being marred by extreme masculinity and fantasy.

4. The anti-woman, fanciful and imaginary

To set the context right, a brief account of Islam's perception of women and of Western readings of that perception will help better understand Updike's misrepresentation. Similar to their case in traditional patriarchal communities, Arab women experienced many inequalities and injustices in the pre-Islamic era, a case that is consistent with feminism's overall recognized stigmatized roles and images of women, such as sexual objects, inferior creatures, provided, weak and incompetent, notwithstanding deprivation from educational and inheritance rights. Worst, pre-Islam Arab men buried female infants alive to escape shame (Alsheha, 16). With the coming of Islam, women's rights have been recognized and unfair treatments of women condemned and rejected. In the Bee, sura no. 16, the Qur'an denounces pre-Islam burial of the female child and underscores the sacredness of the female soul and life:

And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonour or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision. (Al-Hilali and Khan, 355)

Besides, Islam secured a woman's inheritance rights and recognized the significance of her roles in the family and in the society, safeguarding women's dignity and welfare as human beings, daughters, wives, mothers, relatives and members of the society (Alsheha, 27).

In the Holy Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad hadiths there are many treaties that instate Islam's respectful consideration of the female and her rights. There is a whole sura in the Holy Qur'an titled An-Nissa (Women) that talks about women's rights and duties: "There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether the property be small or large – a legal share"; "And live with them honorably" (Al-Hilali and Khan, 107; 110), while appreciating their distinct nature as sensitive and emotional human beings. In addition, Prophet Muhammad (PUH) dictated and instated: "Verily, women are the twin halves of men" (qtd. in Al-Sheha, 9), and, once again, "Whosoever takes care of" his daughters and raises them up well "will have the reward of Paradise" (qtd. In Al-Sheha, 34). As Shaikh Ali Al-Timimi (2010, 5) claimed, the woman's rights that the West recently called for and which are taken "for granted now... were given by God to men and women some 1400 years ago". Likewise, AbulHasan Syed and Ali Nadwi asserted that "Islam has restored her [woman] rights as well as her dignity, assigned her a proper place in the society and protected her against not only the conceit of men but also from irrational and cruel customs" (42; see also Khan, 84)). There is no doubt that Islam has transformed the position of women from ignorance and injustice to appreciation and respect and given them rights that dignify their respectful position in the society. Men and women are equal according to the Islamic principles which, in the meantime, positively recognize the physical differences between both.

Western critics expressed different views toward Islam's perception and treatment of women, either acknowledging Islam's fairness to women or criticising Islam's degradation of women, in both cases using Qur'anic verses and Prophet's sayings. For example, Andreas Maurer (2011, n.p.) believed that "The Qur'an proclaims man's superiority over woman, who is required to obey him" so that women in Islam have a subordinate position" which he related to "to the allocation of traditional roles, which means that men are responsible for earning a living, while women are responsible for the household and children. Likewise, Todd H. Green (2019, 59) argued that "Christianity respects women by enabling people to channel their sexual impulses through proper marriage whereas Islam denigrates women by allowing these impulses to have free rein". Moreover, Richard von Krafft (2011, 45) asserted that, unlike Christianity, "Islamism excludes woman from public life and enterprise, and stifles her

intellectual and moral advancement". Christine Schirmacher (2008, 89) argued also that Islam "cements women's inferior legal status as divinely ordained" and that Islam unfairly gives men superior positions over women. Parvin Paydar (1997, 5) argued that Islam has been presented in the West as a faith which deals with women as slaves to men. Such arguments are rooted into the ideological conflict between Islam and Christianity.

On the other hand, many western scholars acknowledged how Islam granted women the rights they were denied in the pre-Islamic era and that the enlightened teachings of Islam freed and dignified women, and recognized each gender's responsibilities, rights and duties to complete each other. Marilyn Ann Friedman (2005, 173) asserted that "It was during this ten-year period that the Qur'an would make clear its mandate to eradicate discrimination against women". Moreover, Jane I. Smith (1979, 520) recognized "the most significant reforms Islam brought to the lot of women" including "the Qur'anic prohibition against the burying alive of infant females", along with inheritance and marriage regulations. Further, some scholars criticized Western mistreatments of Women. Meyer Abrahams and Geoffrey Harpham (2011, 93) argued that the West treated the woman as "the negative object, or 'Other,' to man as the dominating 'Subject' who is assumed to represent humanity in general". Such was a western racial classifying based on gender differences. Moreover, Mahmudul Hasan (2017, 7) argued that the Western societies marginalized and ignored the position of women: "in Europe she was regarded simply as a sexual being whose existence was thought to be necessary only to meet the emotional and carnal needs of men and to ensure the continuity of the human race". Later, the scope was changed from Western women to Eastern women. For example, Katherine Bullock (2002, 8-12) argued that the colonizers used the veil as a tool criticize and to influence Islamic communities by proclaiming that the veil is a symbol of suppression and by calling Muslim females to reject the veil.

Updike's *Terrorist* represents Islam as an anti-woman faith either by misrepresentative and out-of-context selective quoting from the Holy Qur'an and Prophet's sayings or through the Muslim characters attitudes. Updike negatively portrays the different women who belong to different religious backgrounds. The main female characters in the novel are Teresa Mulloy, Ahmed's mother, who is Irish-American, Beth, Jack's wife, and Joryleen, Tylenol's girlfriend. Teresa and Joryleen are Christians and Beth is Jewish. There are no Muslim female characters in the novel, but these women are, in a way or another, attached to Muslim males.

Joryleen says to Ahmed: "Tylenol says the Lord loves sporty woman. What does your Mr. Mohammed say?" and Ahmed replies: "He says good women for good men, and unclean women for unclean men" (67). Here Updike uses this verse from The Light sura out of context. Muslim scholars interpret this verse differently. As Abdul-Rahman (2011, 437) reported, Ibn Abbas explains this verse as follows: "Evil words are for evil men, and evil men are for evil words; good words are for good men and good men are for good words. This was revealed concerning A'ishah and the people of the slander"; that is:

He [Ibn Abbas] interpreted it to mean that evil speech is more suited to evil people, and good speech is more suited to good people. What the hypocrites attributed to A'ishah was more suited to them, and she was most suited to innocence and having nothing to do with them.

Hence, Updike's manipulation of this verse heads a stray away from the original context. Putting words into Ahmad's tongue, Updike continues: "That's from the same sura that advises women to cover their ornaments, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not even to stamp their feet so their hidden ankle bracelets can be heard" (71). Once again, Updike overlooks the context. Abdul-Rahman (2009, 102; 71; 104) reported, Ibn Kathir interpreted this verse as follows: "they should wear the outer garment in such a way as to cover their chests and ribs, so that they will be different from the women of the Jahiliyyah"; "and not even to stamp their feet so their hidden ankle bracelets can be heard", because "During Jahiliyyah, when women walked in the street wearing anklets... they would stamp their feet so that men could hear their anklets ringing", in some sort of a seductive attitude. As he uses the verse to associate Islam with restrictions on women's freedom, Updike ignores the original context which underscores Islam's respect for women and their dignified position, hailing them above seductive behaviour.

Upon Shaikh Rashid's request, Ahmed reads "Verse fourteen from the sixty-fourth sura": "*ya ayyuha lladhina amanu inna min azwdjikum wa awladikum 'aduwwan lakumfa 'hdharuhum, wa in ta'fu wa*

tasfahu wa taghfiru fa-inna 'llaha ghafurun rahim" (108; translation: "O you who believe! Verily, among your wives and your children there are enemies for (who may stop you from the obedience of Allah); therefor beware of them! but if you pardon (them) and overlook, and forgive (their faults), then verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful", Mutual Loss and Gain, sura no. 64; Al-Hilali and Khan, 765). Shocked by this, Ahmad replies: "But your wives and children! What is 'enemy' about them? Why would they need forgive-ness?" (108). Shaikh Rashid here justifies "well, maybe because they distract you from jihad, from the struggle to become holy and closer to God" (108). Like Shaikh Rashid who exploits this verse to manipulate Ahmad's mind, Updike here overlooks the original context of this verse within his vicious misrepresentation of Islam. Abdul Al-Rahman (2009, 205) reported that Ibn Abbas related this verse to a specific incident; when "men who embraced Islam in Makkah and wanted to migrate to Allah's Messenger... their wives and children refused to allow them" which could have denied them the chance to "have gained knowledge". In addition to being related to a specific incident, this verse does not describe all wives, women and children as enemies. It describes only those who stand as obstacle against virtuous conduct and good will. Besides, the sense of enmity it suggests is more figurative than literal and is far from warfare enmity.

Moreover, when Ahmed and Charlie are in the truck, Ahmed remembers the following verses: "Your wives are your field: go in, therefore, to your field as ye will; but do first some act for your souls' good: and fear ye God, and know that ye must meet Him" (156). Ahmed also reads the verse before that which says:

Women are a pollution. Separate yourselves therefore from women and approach them not, until they be cleansed. But when they are cleansed, go in unto them as God hath ordained for you. Verily God loveth those who turn to Him, and loveth those who seek to be clean. (156-57)

These two verses are from The Cow sura (verses no. 222-23); in the second verse God asks men to avoid intercourse with women during menstruation and to approach them when they become clean. The contextual details of this verse are extremely significant. There is a comparison between Judaism and Islam in this regard. Abdul-Rahman in Tafsir Ibn Kathir Juz' 2 (Part 2) (2009, 203) said that "Imam Ahmed recorded that Anas said that the Jews used to avoid their menstruating women, they would not eat, or even mingle with them in the house". To the contrary, when Prophet Muhammad (PUH) was asked about this he replied: "Do anything you wish, except having sexual intercourse". This distinction reveals crystal clear how Updike's misrepresentation of Islam is based on viciously manipulating Qur'anic verses out of context. The first verse about one's wife being his field is also rooted into essential distinctions between Jewish and Islamic perceptions; Jewish thoughts, as Abdul-Rahman (2009, 206) claimed, Tafsir Ibn Kathir Juz'2 (Part 2) acknowledged that "Al-Bukhari reported, Ibn Al-Munkadir said that he heard Jabir say that the Jews used to claim that if one has sex with his wife from behind (in the vagina) the offspring would become cross-eyed", but when Prophet Muhammad was asked about this verse he said that it is permitted "from the front or from behind, as long as that occurs in the farj (vagina)". Once again, Updike quotes Qur'anic verses out of their original context, leading to misconceptions about Islam and misrepresenting Muslims as barbarians who disrespect women.

It is, nonetheless, worth noting that while misrepresenting Islam as an anti-woman faith, Updike had an established anti-woman and anti-feminist stance which is evident in most of his writings. For example, in his story A and P Updike gives a superficial respectful image of women while hiding another disrespectful and misogynistic perception underneath. Nayef Al-Joulan (2007,17;20) argued that Updike has anti-woman thoughts by representing the female as an object of/for sexual desires and as a manifestation of the archetypal image of the female as the cause of Adam's fall: "There are two categories of the women portrayed in the "A and P": the modern, young, and sexy, and the traditional, old, and ugly. Both categories are sexist anti-woman" in a work where women "have no intellectual" nor "public significance". This same image of the female appears again in Updike's *Terrorist* but it is this time attributed to Islam. Alaa Al-Ghamdi (2015, 6) argued that "Despite the strength of the depictions of the three principal female characters, Joryleen, Terry and Beth, they are uniformly degraded or ineffectual –in most cases, both". Likewise, Azhar Noori Fejer (2015,142;141) reported and examined critiques of Updike's "misogyny and racism" due to his portrayal of woman as "sardonic and often brutal" within a tone that is "suspiciously puckish. While Fejer (2015, 155) relates Updike's misogyny to his fear of "free women's uncontrollable power", it might be also attributed to his anti-Islam attitudes.

Updike's characters reveal anti-woman thoughts not only against Muslim women but also against Christian and Jewish women. His main goal is to misrepresent Islam which he does in association with Christian and Jewish women. These anti-woman thoughts are embodied basically in Ahmed's relationships with the female characters. There are two relationships, the first one between Ahmed and his mother, Teresa, and the second one between Ahmad and Joryleen. The two are not Muslim women. Updike seems to be addressing western women regarding Muslim men's misogynistic traits and their degradation of women. It is to be noted however that between the lines there are so many signs that illustrate Updike's personal anti-woman thoughts. According to Fahd Hamad (2012,5;155), Updike embodied his own life in his writings; he had bad relationships with women: "many of Updike's other works are based on Updike's own family history". In *Couples*, he revealed sarcastic perceptions of women, women's bodies and Christianity: "In the western world, there are only two comical things; the Christian church and naked women". Hence, Judie Newman (1988, 61) wittily examined Updike's treatment of political, economic and religious conflicts within an "anal and libidinal" discourse of pleasure.

Two reasons may explain why the relationship between Ahmed and his mother is not as good as a normal mother-son relationship should be. First, Ahmad and his mother belong to two different religions and, second, Teresa's unexplained hiding of information about Ahmed's father. Ahmed tells Jack Levy:

I have only one or two photographs. My mother may have some she has hidden from me. When I was small and innocent, she refused to answer my many questions about my father. (36)

When Jack asks Ahmed "How would you like to be called?" (36), meaning Mulloy or Ashmawy, Ahmed answers: "My mother attached her name to me" and adds that "But when I am out of school and independent I will become Ahmed Ashmawy" (37). This reflects on Updike's relationship with his mother. Jack De Bellis (2000, 471) stated that when Updike was less than two years old, "Linda Updike went to work in Pomeroy's Department Store in Reading as a drapery saleswoman for fourteen dollars a week, leaving her son in the care of her mother, Katherine Kramer Hoyer", a situation that shadows the case of Ahmad. Besides, Updike himself suffered from a patriarchal and oppressive father of whom, in *The centaur*, he says "His upper half was hidden from me. I best knew his legs" (269). Nonetheless, Mary O'Connell (1996,39;2) asserted that "his loyalty to masculinity" made him keep "positive identification with his own father", while working on his "longest and most comprehensive representation of masculinity in American literature". Likewise, George Hunt (1980, 8) spoke of Updike's *always* "man-centered fiction" which "retains an ultimately masculine perspective".

Besides, Ahmad felt estranged by his mother's attitude since she used to reiterate that "Islam meant nothing to me" while reinstating her resentment of the principles of her Muslim husband: "A woman should serve a man, not try to own him, he'd say as if he [Omar] were quoting some kind of Holy Writ" (86). As such, Teresa's negative perceptions of Islam are built around her fallen relation with her husband whom she works hardest to dissociate from their son Ahmad, fearing that the son would follow his father's suit. Likewise, she feared the influence of Shaikh Rashid: "this imam of his almost never came out to say hello. He hated shaking my hand" and "never showed the slightest in converting me" (91). When Jack asks Teresa "How would you know if he has a girl?" (165), she replies "He's always hated my having male friends" (165). Teresa thinks that Shaikh Rashid, who believes that women are "Unclean meat" (166), is the person who plants these thoughts in Ahmed's mind. Jack knows that the relationship between Ahmed and his mother is not good enough. When he tells his wife Beth about this relationship he says: "He thinks he's Muslim because his deadbeat father was, at the same time ignoring this hardworking Irish-Catholic mother he lives with" (131). Consequently, when Ahmad becomes a follower of Shaikh Rashid, Teresa who resents Islam thinking it disrespects women and holds the female inferior, gives up caring about Ahmed: "If Ahmed believes in God so much, let God take care of him" (91). Teresa therefore reveals that she cannot help her son because of his faith, "I can't live Ahmed's life for him," (208), and Ahmed thinks that this relationship was destructed because "My father's absence stood between us, and then my faith" (212). As such, Updike uses Teresa's failed relationships with her Muslim husband, son and Imam to warn western women against relations with Muslims.

In fact, such an attitude is totally rejected in Islam, a matter which Updike neglects. Mothers are highly reckoned in Islam; respecting the mother is a milestone of any son's (and daughter's) faith and devotion and, in the Prophet's teachings, mothers' respect is a path to paradise. "Bukhari and others report that Abu-Hurairah narrated: 'A man came to the Prophet (PUH) and asked him: "O Prophet of Allah! Who is the most deserving and worthy of my good company?" Allah's Prophet (BUP) answered: "Your mother." The man asked: "Who comes next after her?" He said: "Your mother." The man asked again: "Who comes next after her?" He said: "Your mother." The man asked again: "Who comes next after her?" He said: "Your father".' (Al-Sheha, 63). Overall, parents have a sacred position and status in Islam; Al-Isra sura dictates: "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour" (Al-Hilali and Khan, 371). Therefore, Updike's presentation of Ahmad's disrespectful treatment of his mother should not be attributed to his Islamic background or influence.

Moreover, the relationship between Ahmed and Joryleen witnesses different stages in the novel. Ahmed from the beginning hates Joryleen's because of her religion, but his emotional reaction toward her later changes. Updike here seems to suggest a two-fold attack on Islam and Muslims; first, Islam teaches its followers to disrespect women and, second, Muslims may abandon their faith for the sake of sexual pleasure. Ahmed believes that "women are animals easily led" (10), and he therefore tries to keep himself away from them. In the first encounter between Ahmed and Joryleen, when she invites him to the church, she says "whether you might to come to the church this Sunday to hear me sing a solo in the choir" and he replies "I am not of your faith" (10). Tylenol, Joryleen's boyfriend, tells Ahmed "She say you disrespect her religion" and Ahmed responds that "Her religion is the wrong one" (15). Clearly, Ahmed finds it impossible to befriend non-Muslims whom he calls "All this Kafir friendliness" (51), including Joryleen; accordingly, "He hates Joryleen" (51). This impossible friendship turns the non-Muslims into enemies: "It is helpful, up to a point, to know the enemy", a clear influence of Shaikh Rashid because "My teacher at the mosque says that all unbelievers are our enemies" (68). Thus, Ahmed thinks that Joryleen has "a good heart, but [she is] heading straight for Hell" (73). Ahmad is then portrayed as someone who is denied any chance to think; he is a slave to his religious teacher and teachings: "It was not Ahmed's role to argue; it was his to learn, to submit to his own place in Islam's vast structure, visible and invisible" (77). Updike's misrepresentation of Islam in this regard is based on showing the impossibility of human accord between Muslims and non-Muslims, not even a dialogue. Muslims are portrayed like robots obediently performing the dictates of Hatred Islam imposes on them.

The turning point in Ahmed's relationship with Joryleen takes place when Charlie plans a date between them. Joryleen accepts her role as a suitor; she says "He [Charlie] paid me for the full deal, depending on how it suited you" (219). Joryleen knows that Ahmed likes her and she says: "You like me, I can see you do" (220). Perplexed and torn between the Islamic thoughts which Shaikh Rashid taught him and Joryleen's beauty and sexual attraction, Ahmad finally gives in to his feelings and sexual attraction towards Joryleen; Ahmed tells Joryleen "I like you too well to treat you like some whore" (221). As such, Updike seems to suggest that Islam exerts heavy restrictions on Muslims and that Muslim's sexual appeals might be the path towards freeing them from the constraints of their creed. Once again, Updike overlooks a major Islamic principle which while rejecting pre-marriage sexual relations, allows marriage between a Muslim male and a non-Muslim female. Updike here ignores puritanical and chastity principles in other monotheistic religions and misleadingly claims a feminist stance when, in fact, he clearly stated, in *Self-Confessions*, his discomfort with feminism as an anti-male attack by which "I must have felt challenged" (145). Nonetheless, Updike is known for his biased masculinity according to which women's value was never present to them but, rather, "is given to them by men" (Olster, 97, quoting *The Centaur*, 177). Further, Updike confessed that his fiction pursued "his life long journey into the bodies of women" (*Odd Jobs*, 870). He misleadingly assigns such notion to Islam and Muslims and further develops this along with his attack against Islam as a religion of fantasy and imagination.

Updike represents Islam as a religion of fantasy and imagination through quoting verses out of context and through the character's attitudes. He aims to show that Islam is more imaginative than realistic. The Holy Qur'an has many verses that promote imagination and call humans to think about the

universe. Updike exploits these verses to further his misrepresentation of Islam as being far removed from reality. The Holy Qur'an gives descriptive images of Paradise, and the gifts Muslims will get thereafter, to encourage Muslims to follow the teachings of Islam. Speaking of heaven, Ahmed cites Ar-Rahman sura as he tells Joryleen: "on couches with linings of brocade shall they recline, and the fruit of the two gardens shall be within easy reach" (221). Making use of Ahmad's miserable life, Shaikh Rashid convinces him that real comfort and luxury are relegated to afterlife: "referring to a cooling raisin drink served with elaborate courtesy in Paradise while the damned drink molten metal in Hell" (106). Ahmed interactively replies "Oh, no. I thirst for Paradise" (106). As such, Shaikh Rashid succeeds in his mission of brainwashing Ahmed to prepare him to be a *terrorist*. Updike uses the Quran's and Islam's portrayal of paradise through imagery to misrepresent Islam as a faith that controls its followers by magical and fanciful imagination along with sensual descriptions of the rewards men may get with regards to their desires of eating, drinking and sex. In fact, Updike's biased presentation attributes this imaginative discourse exclusively to Islam, overlooking the fact that, as Steven Maimes (2015, 4; 6) asserts, imagination is also inherent in the Holy Scriptures, which he calls "Holy Imagination" since "Our religious-spiritual path helps transform our inner imagination to holy imagination. This exploration challenges our thinking with new possibilities. We can glimpse mysteries". Speaking of enlarging the human mind to think beyond limits, Afshari Morteza (2016, 2806) spoke of 'mental imagery' in the Qur'an. Hence, Updike addresses the Western individual using Western conceptions, building on the West's emphasis on reality and reason as well as on the Western perception of the East (and of Islam) as a community of the magical world of fantasy like that of the *Thousand and one night*.

5. Conclusion

John Updike in his novel *Terrorist* represents Islam as a violent religion that calls for hatred and killing of non-Muslims, as a faith which disregards women as an inferior race and as a religion of magical fantasy. Updike's misrepresentation of Islam is based on selective quoting of Qur'anic verses while, in the meantime, ignoring the original contexts of the quoted verses and neglecting many verses that may refute his claims against Islam. Updike's disregard for the original context of his quoted Qur'anic verses belongs to what Thanaa Sarairoh (2009, 11) considered a trend in post 9/11 American literature (11). This cannot and should not be accepted from a writer who is known for his "remarkable mastery of language" (Uphaus, 2). Updike's selective quoting is hence unfair and biased; it is even false and antagonistic. He does also associate his critiqued notions and actions with Muslim characters he creates ignoring the fact that Islam as a faith, as well any other faith, is to be dissociated from the misbehaviour of any of its followers.

Nonetheless, Updike portrays Ahmed as a victim of an irresponsible Muslim father who deserted him when he was only three years old. Ahmad is also a victim of Shaikh Rashid, the Muslim preacher who represents an extremist Islamic theologian. Ahmad the victim becomes a victimiser when he decides to turn into a terrorist. In addition, Updike presents Islam as a religion of fantasy. Instead of appreciating imagination as a mechanism of hypothetical thought and intellectual inquiry, Updike associates Islam with false and deceptive imagination, associating Qur'anic images and descriptions of Paradise with Islam's suicidal terrorism. As such, Updike works to validate the anti-Islam image that widely spread after September, 11, which were heavily exploited by the media and literature to validate the political anti-Islamic discourse of the time. Muslims had to be presented as terrorists and Islam as a religion of radicalism. This was an act of brainwashing the American community, parallel to Shaikh Rashid's influence on Ahmad's mind.

On the other hand, Updike uses some Qur'anic verses to represent women as oppressed creatures in Islam, unlike their status in West. Once again, these verses are quoted and recruited in a viciously superficial way. He is not qualified to interpret the Holy Qur'an and ignores the specific contexts for those verses and, in the meantime, overlooks the many Qur'anic verses that are respectful of women and their position and their rights. Linking his selections with Ahmad's and Shaikh Rashid's misogynistic attitudes, Updike seems to be warning western women against having relations with Muslim men whose religion abhors women and relegates them to the status of animals.

Overall, Updike's antagonistic attitude is based on misrepresentation, falsehoods, stereotyping, partial presentation and overlooking of essential truths. This attitude validates neo-colonial

assumptions which have so far backed the West's exaggerated misrepresentations of the East, assumptions which Said (1979, 46), in *Orientalism*, related to the Western colonial ideology which is based on validating a binary opposition of a superior, civilized and powerful West entitled to control an inferior, barbaric and weak East. Updike's misrepresentation of Islam contributes to that effort which has long misused the media and literature as tools to achieve their aim of demonising the East and Islam. Updike's *Terrorist* (2006; and *The coup*, 1979) belong to that field, just like V. S. Naipaul's *A bend in the river* (1979) and the later G. Willow Wilson's *Alif the unseen* (2012). Instead of attacking Western Christianity and governments who, ever since the sixteenth century, oppressed Jews and Muslims, Updike, himself a Jew, joined the Western/Christian anti-Islam politics to gain Western and Christian political sympathy to the Jews. That is a Zionist attitude.

Hence, one explanation for Updike's anti-Islam attitudes is related to his Jewish politics which manipulated the West's so-called 'war on terror' to further Jewish supremacy and control. Such somewhat neo-colonial policy depends on colonizing the people's minds rather than lands and it further pursues colonial strategies of seeking to represent Eastern/Muslim societies by as irrational, uncivilized and terrorist to deepen the so-called 'Islamophobia', which has been used to justify Western military intervention in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Sudan and to control, in the meantime, other Gulf countries, thereby gaining direct access to oil and other natural reserves. It can be argued however that while Updike misrepresents Islam as a faith that controls its followers' minds, he himself is a master of such an attitude as he works on manipulating and controlling his readers' minds by falsified accounts about Islam and Muslims. Updike is western version of Shaikh Rashid and his *Terrorist* (as also *The Coup*) is viciously neo-colonially Islamophobic.

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