

**Tribhuvan University**

**Representation of Muslims as the Other: A Comparative Study of Updike's *Terrorist*  
and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist***

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Representation of Muslims as the Other: A Comparative Study of Updike's *Terrorist* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Pramanandra Joshi has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research Committee:

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Abstract

*This research is a study of representation of Muslims in post 9/11 fictions. Particularly, the study mainly focuses on the comparative study of John Updike's Terrorist and Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist. Both Updike and Hamid present Muslim characters as protagonists, but representation of Muslims is quite different. Updike as an American represents Muslim from the American discourse 'Muslim as the other'. Hamid represents the Muslims from the view of Migrant Muslim, who became the victim of American torture after the event of 9/11. Updike's Terrorist represents the Muslims as fundamentalist, terrorist and aggressive figures, who are not ready to accept to freedom, modernity and secularism. On the Contrary, Hamid reverses the stereotypical representation of Muslims and represents Muslims as much tolerate and modern as Westerners. This study analyzes both writer's representation of Muslim and concludes that in the conflict of religion and culture of Western and Muslim civilization innocent Muslim people have become victims after 9/11. Muslims are stereotypically represented in Updike's Terrorist while Hamid challenges this kind of representation and reestablishes Muslim identity.*

Key Words: Muslim, Terrorism, Westerners, Fundamentalism, Representation

This paper aims to figure out the representation of Muslim as other in relation to 9/11 incident, highlighting a comparative analysis over John Updike's *Terrorist* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Particularly, this study focuses on how Updike and Hamid represent Muslim characters in their respective novels as the stories of both novels are mainly about after-effect of 9/11 attack. Updike, as an American writer, presents Muslims in a quite negative way, representing Islam as a religion of the bunches of terrorist people and he represents Muslim as the other. In contrast, Hamid as a Muslim American writer challenges the stereotypes and gross-generalization about Muslim. After the traumatic attack of September 11, 2001, there was a drastic change in seeing the Muslim community in America. The attack was brutal and horrific which shocked the entire world and terrorized the people of the America by taking the lives of many hearts. After announcing that AL-Qaida is responsible for that attack, an Islamic extremist group led by Osama Bin Laden, hatred towards Muslim community spread all over the America. Media, critics, writer and even government create negative images of Islam as the religion of terrorist, intolerant, arrogant and fanatics. Media and writers began to represent Muslim as other in their writing; many American writers began to write fictional and non-fictional texts by representing Muslim 'as other'.

The religion of Muslim has been tagged in a stereotypical way by Western people from previous centuries. From 11th and 13th century, there was a kind of tension between Islam and Christianity in Europe, which gradually converted into the tension between middle-East and West. About this tension Md Abu Shahid Abdullah argues, "Western elites, mainly the governments and the churches, became highly involved in making sure that negative images about Islam were presented to their counter parts"(53). From the long time of history Christianity has been taking Islam as

the religion of barbarians, intolerant and religion of violent from its initiative phase. The attack of 9/11 was the part of this religious and cultural conflict. Especially after Second World War Islam was spreading all over the America because of migration. On the one hand, the American government have not treated Muslim migrant equally as its white citizen, they were taken as minorities. On the other hand, America directly or indirectly involved in Gulf war, Iraq war and tension between Palestine and Israel. For these many reasons, it is said that AL-Qaida attacked on the America's pride World Trade Center, which was terrible and shame for human civilization. As Samuel P. Huntington argues in his *Clash of Civilization* "The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations"(22). This statement of Huntington is applicable here because the attack of 9/11 was not for political and financial reasons rather it was supposed to preserve Muslim sovereignty that is related to cultural aspects.

After the attack of 9/11, hatred toward Muslim was spread all over the America, media depicted all Muslims as terrorist, President George W Bush administration announced 'war on terror', Bush on Sep. 20, 2001 announced, "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorist"(2001). This announcement of Bush was an official manifesto to treat Muslim as the other. After that time, there was a trend to write fictional and non-fictional text, American writer started express their hatred toward Muslim through writing. After attack of 9/11, dozens of books have written on Islam and Muslims, most of these post 9/11 fictions depicted Muslim as villain, terrorist, fanatics and sympathetic to terrorist. Muslim minorities have no access in media and no one listen

their voice, continuously American writers have been representing Muslim not as human being equal to Americans but as the other. More than Hundred fictions have been written on the discourse of terrorism by American writers but most of them depicted Muslim as by born terrorist, potential terrorist who always busy on terrorist activities. Among these novels John Updike's *Terrorist* is a popular novel which represents Muslims as home growing terrorist. In this discourse of post 9/11 literature, another discourse is added which is called Muslim discourse, Many Muslim migrant writers began to write to response those American discourse which made Muslim as the other. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is the one of these books which are written in the response to those American novels, which represents Muslim as other. This study compares these two novels on terrorism which represent Muslim in different way.

*Terrorist* was published in 2006, one of the best seller book on the issue of terrorism after 9/11 by American writer John Updike (1932- 2009). He is considered as an influential contemporary American writer who won more than twenty awards and medals in fiction and poetry. *Terrorist* was published five years after the event of 9/11, and it captures the post effects of the tragic World Trade Center attacks. During that time, more than one hundred American novels were published on the same tragic event; most of the American writers express their hatred toward whole Muslim community because of the horrific attack of 9/11. Americans suspect each Muslim as Bin Laden. Americans have deep hatred and suspicion for each Muslim from the grass root level to government and they see all Muslim as would- be terrorist. Edward Said argues regarding this perspective of American toward Islam in The United State, "So far as the United States seems to be concerned, it is only a slight overstatement to say that Moslems and Arabs are essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential

terrorists" (1). Exactly this is the existing stereotypical American view toward Muslims and same characterization of Muslim is done in this novel

In this context, Updike decided to give new perspectives about Muslim in quite different way and tries to cross and break the anti- Islamist sentiment in the America. But he became to choose anti-Islamist story of a Muslim boy Ahmad who is growing as would-be terrorist. Many critics argue that Updike's Americanism dragged him to write this novel. Updike has been widely criticized by many reviewers because of his biased characterization of Muslim characters and especially for the depiction of his protagonist Ahmad who is no more than innocent child. During launching *Terrorist*, Updike states in his interview with Geeta Sharma Jensen, which published in the *Journal Sentinel* on June 30, 2006, "it is important to understand these people and this *Terrorist* is my attempt to understand a homegrown terrorist, to explain it to the American public" (6). In this interview Updike Depicts Muslim as home-grown terrorist, for him Muslims are the main security challenge for American people.

In another Interview with Charles McGrath of the *New York Time*, Updike says "a young seminarian who sees everyone around him as a devil trying to take away his faith. The 21st century does look like that, I think, to a great many people in the Arab world. I think I felt I could understand the animosity and hatred which an Islamic believer would have for our system"(9). In these two statements there is contradiction in previous statement he stigmatized Muslim as homegrown terrorist but in next statement he says, "I could understand the animosity and hatred." Here Updike pretends that he has intimacy and affection to Muslim, but contrarily he presents Muslim characters unjustly as by born terrorist in this novel. This is the gross generalization of Islam. Anna Bernerson states that,"This is useful to an analysis of Terrorist because Ahmad does have a foreign appearance, and the fact that Updike has



chosen to make his protagonist an Arab Muslim who wishes to become a terrorist might reinforce the negative images that people have of Arab Americans, especially after 9/11" (8).

This statement is very relevant in the representation of Muslim in *Terrorist*. Updike chooses Arab American boy to show all Muslims are potential terrorist; such negative image is drawn all over the novel. This is not only the Updike's depiction of Muslim but representative view of all Americans toward Muslim.

*Terrorist* is the transformational journey of an innocent eighteen-year-old Arab-American high school boy into a suicide bomber. Updike's main protagonist Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy is son of Irish-American mother and Egyptian father, who has hatred to American hedonistic and materialistic life and blind devotion to Imam. From the age of eleven he adopted his father's religion Islam because of his hatred to American materialism and his mother's extra openness. Under the influence of imam, his guru Shaikh Rashid he becomes the blind follower of Islam which leads him toward terrorist, a suicide bomber.

Updike represents Muslim Characters stereotypically; he presents them as they are by-born terrorist. Protagonist Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy is main Muslim character who is under the deep influence of his Imam Shaikh Rashid. Updike represents Rashid as Fundamentalist Muslim religious leader who provokes and prepares Ahmad for suicidal explosion in Lincoln Tunnel. From the very beginning of novel Updike represents Ahmad as alienated, rude and orthodox who hates American education, culture and religion. Updike presents Ahmad as fanatic who has only blind devotion to his god Allah, except Allah and Quran all things are worthless for him. In the very first line of novel Updike portrays Ahmad's mentality, " Devils, Ahmed thinks. These devils seek to take away my God" (Updike 3). From this line he presents Ahmad as

America hater. Ahmad is the son of a Catholic Irish-American mother and an Egyptian father who grows up in New Jersey. Ahmad tries to grow up with his Irish Arab American hybridity and he is surrounded by various people, his Irish American mother, his high school counselor Jack Levy who is Jewish American, his African-American Christian girlfriend Joryleen, his Arab –American boss Charlie Chehab, owner of his Truck and he is also a CIA agent and the Yemeni Imam Shaik Rashid. These all characters have connectivity with Ahmad, but he is under the deep influence of Shaik Rashid.

Here, in *Terrorist* Updike doesn't have any empathy to the Ahmed and his difficulties to come up with the American way of life, he is not aware of American misbehave with him in his school but from the far Updike is pointing his finger toward Ahmed as terrorist. It is not only the story of American Muslim struggle-full journey in-between of different culture and religion. Ahmad's journey is the search of identity in so-called multiethnic society. In fact, Ahmad is in search of Muslim identity in American society, but he doesn't find it in American materialist society. He is in search of self-respect but he doesn't get more than humiliation and alienation. This crisis leads him no-where but to the destruction, depression and hatred, consequently he finally adopts the guidance of Shaik Rashid. Ahmad becomes intimate with Shaik, why? Walter Grunzweig argues in this way:

In *Terrorist*, however, Updike writes not so much about Islamic fundamentalism as an external threat but as a phenomenon related to the religious development of the United States more generally, fundamentalism in this case is not seen as something religious but rather related to the feeling of belonging in a post-modern world. Thus, the novel is actually not so much about the accurate depiction of Muslim-American identity but about what

makes a young man radical in 21st century America. (1)

Grunzwing argues that, *Terrorist* is more about belongingness than religious fundamentalism, because of belongingness Ahmad chooses Shaik as guru and follows his instruction in each path of life. Ahmad is searching for sameness that is like his father, which he finds in Shaik. As follower of Islam he is alienated in school, society and everywhere he couldn't feel secure and he couldn't feel affinity among his school friends. He becomes closer to Shaik because of religious belongingness and a teen age boy becomes radical under the guidance of Imam.

How American people treat Muslims is proved by Ahmad's school friends' treatment with him. Ahmad's school mate Tylenol Jones calls Ahmad, "Hey, Arab" he says "Don't you talk me of foolish you so foolish nobody gives you shit, Arab.... Black Muslims I don't diss, but you not black, you not anything but a poor shithead. You no rag head, you shit head" (Updike 16). This is the Americans' treatment to Arab boy, because of this behavior of his American fellows he becomes alienated and begins to think himself as the other. Ahmad hates American atheist and secular educations he doesn't see his future in this guidance of secular education, for him, "The only guidance, says the third sura, is the guidance of Allah"(Updike 18). Here Updike tries to show Muslim people have no believe in modern education, but they are intoxicated with Allah and Quran. Updike cites so many Quranic Suras and tries to make reliable his characterization of Muslim characters, Hajji Mohammad argues that, "Updike supports his image of Islam with forty-five Quranic quotes besides other Islamic information to claim objectivity. Nevertheless, Updike's presentation of Muslim characters is far from being objective or true" (Mohammad 13). In Maximum pages Updike cites the Quranic Sura but selected radical Suras are only cited in this sense Hajji rightly says Updike's presentation is biased. Updike tries his best to show

Islam as the religion of violence.

In the transformational journey of Ahmad, Updike sees Shaik Rashid has crucial role who prepared Ahmad for the suicidal explosion and who sow the seed of hatred and enmity in the innocent heart of Ahmad toward Americans and Christians. Ahmad says to Joryleen, "My teacher at the mosque says that all unbelievers are our enemies. The Prophet said that eventually all unbelievers must be destroyed" (Updike 68). For this kind of teaching Shaik Rashid is responsible and for this reason Shaik is fundamentalist for Updike, he depicts both characters in same line. Hajji Mohammad is not agrees with this depiction of Muslim characters he expresses his disagreement:

Actually, this ugly depiction is influenced by Updike's personal views and the wide-spread allegations against Islam and is not an outcome of an objective investigation as Updike claims. This intentional negative depiction aims at degrading Muslim characters and stimulating a negative reception by the reader. Updike's intention to cause the reader to condemn Muslim characters demonstrates itself through the narrator's intrusive, uncalled-for commentaries scattered throughout the narrative and through his demeaning depiction of Muslim characters. Yet condemning Muslim characters is not the ultimate aspiration of Updike. His aim is to cause the readers to denounce Islam in particular for its alleged responsibility for forming the intolerant way Muslim characters think and behave. (12)

After the attack of 9/11 the perspective of American toward Muslim was totally changed. They started to hate Muslim and they started demoralizing Muslim in the name of terrorism and fundamentalism. In this context Updike couldn't remain untouched and he depicts Muslim characters as fundamentalist and terrorist. Hajji's argument is right to some extent because Updike's characterization of Muslim

characters is stereotypical. Updike presents Ahmad and Saikh in such way they are terrorist only because they are Muslim. To show the hostility of both Muslim characters Updike uses an omniscient narrator. He reveals all dialogues and activities to the reader through the access of omniscient narrator, more than this he observes inner thoughts of Muslim characters. This is the matter of concern, why Updike uses third person narrator? It is only for his comfort, because he can lead story wherever he wants. Updike takes benefit from innocent eighteen years innocent boy as his puppet that's why he chooses this innocent boy. This is a kind of authorial commentary on character rather than narration.

In this novel, Updike expresses the Americans' attitude to the so-called Islamic terrorism. Almost part of the novel is revolving around conversations of Shaik Rashid and Ahmad. Updike represents major Muslim characters to show the Muslim as intolerant and hostile toward other religion. Updike presents his Muslim characters with vision of intolerant Islam and he shows Ahmad's and Shaikh Rashid's animosity to all unbelievers and non-Muslims. For Updike Muslims believe in the righteousness of destruction to all who don't believe in Allah. Further, Updike attempts to assure his reader that Muslims' animosity is guided and fueled by the command of the Prophet and Holy Quran. Updike tries to motivate his reader to believe that Shaik Rashid and Ahmad are the true representatives of all Muslims. Updike highlights the intolerance of Muslim characters in comparison with non-Muslims like, Jack Levy, Joryleen and Tylenol, here we see the real face of the writer and we came to know what the intention of writer is. Updike presents all western characters as tolerant, secular and flexible than hostile and intolerant fundamentalist Muslim characters.

Yes, Ahmad is heavily influenced by his Mosque Imam Shaik Rashid, from the very beginning of the novel Updike frequently focuses on this point but he does

not give any glimpse on how was Ahmad before met Shaik?. Omniscient narrator is not conscious about why adolescent Ahmad becomes alienated and frustrated? This issue remains untouched in narration; it means Updike is not searching the cause of Muslim alienation in American society. Here it should be understood why Ahmad is afraid of intimacy with American society, culture, religion and secular education? What is the root cause behind his hatred to American way of life is Shaik's guidance? or is there any other socio- political reason? Updike seems indifferent about these questions. David Walsh argues in his review on *Terrorist* regarding causes of his hatred to Americans and intimacy to Shaik Rashid:

Yes, he has taken to a strict version of Islam, and much in American life disgusts him, the imam has become something of a father figure to him, and, yes, he is psychically and sexually at odds with the world around him—but these elements, by themselves, cannot possibly account for such a potentially homicidal trajectory. (310)

When Ahmad meets Shaik, he becomes closer with him because of absence of his father in his life. Ahmad feel odd and unsecure in his surrounding, all American society is secular and materialist which is really disgusting for Ahmad.

Walsh's argument suggests that American society is not only unsuitable for Ahmad but for all religious people, consequently Ahmed searches shelter with his fatherly figure Shaik. Shaik gives him affection and teaches him Quran as Ahmad's wish, but Updike shows Shaik as villain because he provokes him to leave higher education which is secular and against their religion. Throughout the narrative, the narrator, Levy, and Terry blame Shaikh Rashid for poisoning Ahmad's way of thinking. Therefore, Shaikh Rashid is also responsible for the psychological distraction of Ahmad. Narrator, Terry and Jack has negative perception to see Shaik.

Terry, Ahmad's mother, sees him as "terrible" and "creepy". She discloses that even Ahmad "distrusts him". The narrator tells that Shaikh has a "dangerous slyness". To large extent Shaikh inspires Ahmad to read Quran and suggests it is the only true path of paradise. While they are talking in the Mosque Shaikh inspires Ahmad through the help of Quranic Sura for Jihad. He inspires Ahmad:

Do without these women of non- Heavenly flesh, this earthly baggage, these unclean hostages to fortune! Travel light, straight into Paradise! Tell me dear Ahmad, are you afraid of entering into Paradise... and he quoting sacred text: The unclean can appear to shine, and devils do good imitations of angels. Keep to the Straight Path... Beware of anyone, however pleasing, who distracts you from Allah's pure being. (Updike 108/109)

We know these dialogues of Shaikh Rashid and Ahmad through narrator, but we have to understand the take of narrator. In above line Shaikh teaches Ahmad about Jihad and Paradise through the help of Holy Quranic Sura. He prepares Ahmad in such a way; there is no way except Jihad to go to the Paradise. Here Updike tries to show how Ahmad parrots Shaikh's words and tries to follow his guru's guidance by defying any social norms and familial relations of secular society. Saikh finds a job for Ahmad as a truck driver in a furniture store owned by Lebanese Charlie's family. "Charlie is a man of the world, but Islam is solidly part of that world" (Updike 175). This paves the way of Jihad for Ahmad. This appointment of Ahmad as truck driver has great significance. It is symbolically connected with 9/11 event where aero planes were used in attack but here they are preparing to attack by suicidal truck explosion. Thus, this appointment of Ahmad as in truck driver is well planned.

Updike's narrator has negative perception about Ahmad and Muslims, not only narrator but all white characters have also negative understanding about Muslim

characters. In chapter three while Hermione and her friend Beth talking about Jack's attempt to convince Ahmad for higher education, Beth says, " he has been knocking himself out to get this boy out of the grip of his Mosque. They are like Baptist fundamentalists, only worse, because they don't care if they die" (Updike 131). This perception of Beth is the perception of whole west toward Muslim; they never see a Muslim except than fundamentalist. Omniscient narrator tells us each secret conversation of Ahmad and Shaik in Mosque, most of the time they talk about secular and materialist American society and Shaik Rashid teaches Ahmad how to come out from this secular and disgusting world. Saikh takes reference from Quran and teaches about Jihad. Jihad has great significance in Islam. But Hajji Mohammad argues that Updike misuses the term Jihad in *Terrorist*, he expresses his dissatisfaction:

It is clear to the reader that both Ahmad and Shaikh Rashid have vicious feelings against all non-Muslims. Updike relates their unappeasable animosity to an alleged Islamic order to wage war against all non-Muslims in the name of jihad. The issue of jihad in Islam definitely has brought and continues to bring deluges of misunderstandings regarding its actual meaning and application. (24)

Jihad has great religious significance in Islam but here this term jihad is used negatively, Hajji gives his counter argument to Updike about jihad. In Islam Jihad does not mean war against non-Muslim, it does not mean to kill all non believers of Islam but it is wrongly used by Updike. Most of the time novel revolves around dialogue between Ahmad and Shaik about Jihad and its religious significance but Updike highlighted only violent related Suras. Updike tries to give an answer to the question, why the so-called Islamic terrorists are ready to give up their lives Updike seeks to provide an answer to the question: why the so-called Islamic terrorists are



willing to sacrifice their lives? Answer provides by Updike himself and blames the Islamic religious conception. Updike believes that Ahmad accepts to carry out a suicidal truck and ready for Jihad because of provocation of Shaik and inspiration of Quran. Shaikh Rashid's task is preparing Ahmad to adopt a terrorist thinking with the help of Quranic Suras, he planted seeds of hatred in the heart of Ahmad. But here, Updike's attempt is to bring some Sura from Quran and mislead or twist the meaning of Quranic Suras. Updike tries to show that Islam's righteousness is lies in the rightfulness of killing non-Muslims.

Updike designs his narrative with some textual evidences that accuse all Muslims have carry the responsibility of 9/11. For example, he takes the reference of Charlie's father's statement, "They think Nine-Eleven was a great joke. It is war for them. It is Jihad" (149). Shaik says to Ahmad that, "the twin towers of capitalist oppression were triumphantly brought down" (233). Charlie says to Ahmad, "it is nice to see those towers gone" (187). Updike reinforces the misconception of Jihad by giving some exceptions and he stigmatized all Muslims because of some involved people in 9/11. Updike brings many references of terrorist attacks where some Muslims were involved like, attacks in Damascus, Karachi and Cairo.

When Saikh Rashid is in final counseling for Lincoln tunnel attack he says to Ahmad, "There are other many eager for a glorious name and the assurance of eternal bliss. The Jihad is overwhelmed by volunteers, even in this homeland of evil and irreligion" (237). Yes, it is the provocation in the name of Jihad, but like Updike blames Quran itself is not teaching to kill the people it is the person Saikh who may have personal vested interest. Thus, the question raise, is Jihad is murder of innocent people in the name of religion in Islam? Or it is only stereotypical portrayal of Islam by Updike? H. Pirnajmuddin says in his article on *The Journal of Teaching Language*

*Skills:*

By imparting this information to the reader Updike condemns the precepts of Islam rather than the wrong understanding of some Muslims of their religion. If some Muslims have misinterpreted some of the Quranic texts and committed violent attacks, the fault lies in those individual's misunderstanding of the right meanings of Islamic mandates and not within the texture of Islam. Updike implies that the peaceful and tolerant attitude of the other 1.5 billion Muslims is a result of their dispensation with the orders of the Holy Quran. Updike here twists facts, which results in a total misrepresentation of truths.

(15)

Yes it may be right; there are some Muslims who believe in murder and destruction of non-Muslims. But here whole Muslim race is represented as fanatics. If some Muslims have misinterpreted some of the Quranic texts and committed violent attacks, the fault lies in those individual's misunderstanding, not within the whole Islam. Updike stigmatized that the peaceful and tolerant attitude of entire Islam civilization. Being an American writer Updike has biasness and prejudice to Islam especially after 9/11, which he vomits in this novel and he twists the facts, that results in a total misrepresentation of truths. Thus, we can conclude that Updike intentionally assigns to Islam the responsibility for all terrorist attack, explosion and destruction of all non-Muslims.

Updike presents another set of characters in the counter of Muslim characters. Jack Levy, Teresa Mulloya, Hermione, Beth and other westerners. Unlike Muslim characters Ahmad and Shaik Rashid these western characters are liberal, secular, tolerant, modern and kind. Here, we clearly know what the position of Updike is? He presents western character in decent way they seem wise and developed. Among

western characters Jack Levy Ahmad's high school counselor plays major role in novel beginning to end. Jack is Jewish American who is secular, liberal and loving. To some extent Jack is not satisfied with American society but he is presented as great humanitarian and Updike presents him as a counter figure to Shaik Rashid. In high school Jack tries his best to prevent Ahmad from the door of Mosque but couldn't succeed. Toward the end of novel when Ahmad is going to Lincoln tunnel with bomb loaded truck for explosion Jack bravely prevents and convinces Ahmad not to explode. Amien Kacou says in his review in *Perspective on Terrorism*, "It allows Jack to preserve in dissuading the boy from his destructive path and therein lies the second ground of his heroism. Jack is successful not so much by trying to take ultimate control of his fate but rather by tying his fate to Ahmad's by literally stalking Ahmad all the way to his truck bomb and beyond." (11). Kacou takes Jack as the savior, not only Kacou but Updike presents Jewish character as a savior and great humanitarian who saves Muslim and rest human being. Here, writer tries to say we are the saviors and rescuers of all human kind, Updike shows Muslims and others as lower than them.

Thus, Updike presents Muslim characters as fanatics, fundamentalist, intolerant and short tempered who are not fit in American land because for Updike and other American they are trying to destroy their country like Ahmad and Shaik. Contrarily Updike presents Jack and other western characters as superior, decent and tolerant, symbolically Updike tries to show the superiority of west over east. Updike represents whole Islam as the other; being the son of catholic woman Teresa Mulloya he presents Ahmad as home-grown terrorist. Furthermore, Updike represents whole Islam and Quran as the source of terrorism and violence. He thinks Muslims were only responsible for attack of 9/11 and even after that event Muslim are preparing for

another attack. Updike doesn't consider the plight of Muslim in America after the attack of 9/11. In this scenario, Muslim migrant writer Mosin Hamid writes *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* to represent the Muslim self after the attack of 9/11. He explores the condition of Migrant in America after that event, Hamid focuses on how Muslim were tortured and represented as the other in American society.

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* was published in 2007. Hamid is a Pakistani writer who is also known as postcolonial writer. The Reluctant Fundamentalist is the second novel of his literary career which defines the relationship between the Islamic world and Western globe before and after the horrific terrorist attack of 9/11. This is also a post 9/11 novel by a Muslim writer, Hamid successfully bring out the disillusionment felt by the Muslim Immigrants in the America after that devastating event. Hamid discloses all kind of tortures, humiliations and misunderstanding of Muslims in the America. The novel is more significant than other post 9/11 novels because it represents contemporary political, cultural tension and clash of civilization between west and east. In this novel Hamid focusing on America's 'other' attitude toward Muslim and other non-western immigrants in the America. Hamid explores the voice of Muslim immigrants in America and he depicts how Muslims were treated in America after 9/11. Before the publication of this novel, no Muslim writer dared to come with the voice against stereotyping and social exclusion of Muslims. This novel is one of the very initial work by Hamid which contradicts the cultural hegemony and stereotyping by white Americans with Muslims and other Asians. This novel is the writing back to the white American writers, who always stigmatized the Islam community.

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is also a transformational journey of a Pakistani born young boy Changez, who migrates to America for quality education and better

future with American dream. Changez is the Princeton educated management consultant with handsome salary and well reputation. In this novel Hamid presents how a settled Pakistani youth who fully adopted the American lifestyle become alienated, frustrated and finally return to home as reluctant fundamentalist after terrorist attack in the America on 9/11. Hamid as a Muslim writer depicts Muslims' condition in America after the event of 9/11. The whole novel is narration of old Changez about young Changez in single voice to an unidentified American in evening during a meal in a cafe of Lahor. Changez narrates his sojourn in America, his struggle to establish as a Princeton topper and how he became the employee in a leading financial company Underwood Samson in New York. He further says how he was treated in America after 9/11 and how he returned to his home as reluctant fundamentalist.

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is the struggle of Muslim migrants in America to live dignified life and how they were smashed after 9/11. In this novel, Hamid tries to reshape the Muslim figure who is stigmatized as race of terrorist by Westerners. Changez the protagonist of the novel assures American guest that he is safe in the Country of beard people. The novel begins with the tone of suspicion, "Excuse me sir but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened of my beard. I am a lover of America" (Hamid 1). This very first line of novel suggests that the American listener was frightened with the bearded narrator. Here narrator's beard appearance is used as irony because in America it is believed that people with long beard are terrorists. Beard face highlights the existing tension between American and Muslim identity. For Changez, this tension is remarkable because how he was represented after 9/11 and how his appearance was constructed as a potential terrorist figure by American media. Here Hamid tries to show all beard people are not

terrorists, they also have courtesy and they also have good heart. Changez shows his decency to American and he shows his love to America. He says, "I am both a native of this city and a speaker of your language, I thought I might offer you my services"(Hamid 1). Changez expresses his duality in identity because he is native of Lahor and once he adopted American way of life. Changez narrates his topper status in college and his selection in Underwood Samsung it is because, Hamid wants to show Muslim are talent and smart than American, they are also intellectual people. Changez's appointment in the American company is the proof of this fact.

Hamid very tactfully uses the dramatic monologue as a narrative style which gives authoritative voice to the Muslim protagonist and avoiding the dominant western voice. Aldalala Nath comments in his review "the author presents the text as a form of 'writing back' to the dominant discourse. The character of Changez, in his monologue explores the parameters and contradictions of global politics and the conflicted voice of modernity" (3). Hamid uses his narrator as mouthpiece of Muslims which explores all the American domination, humiliation and other contradiction. Hamid valorizes Muslim in many ways either culturally or intellectually. This novel is writing back to those western writers who always depict Muslims as potential terrorist, intolerant, fanatics and fundamentalist. Critics Muhammad Safeer Awan in his article "Global Terror and the Rise of Xenophobia/ Islamophobia" takes this novel as counter challenge to those novels which are written by western writer on the issue of terrorism. He argues:

Negative projection in the media and literature has forced some Muslim writers to engage in a clarification campaign. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is one such example where he sought to counter the negative representation of Islam and at times went on to indulge in reverse-

stereotyping. (535)

Obviously, Hamid gives counter response to western novels which are written in terrorism by pointing finger toward Muslims as race of terrorist, this is the reverse of western stereotype. Hamid valorizes the Islam and Muslim community through the cultural, religious and socio-political aspect. Here, Hamid proves that what Western people think and write about Muslim is the means of dominate and stigmatized Muslim.

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* Hamid valorizes the Muslim culture, eastern civilization and social harmony. He valorizes eastern civilization over western civilization. In chapter two he says, "Four thousand year ago, we, the people of the Indus River basin, had cities...while the ancestors of those who would invade and colonize America were illiterate barbarians" (Hamid 34). He further says:

In the stories we tell of ourselves we were not the crazed and destitute radicals you see on your television channels but rather saint and poets and yes conquering kings. We built the Royal Mosque and the Shalimar Gardens in this city, and we built the Lahore Fort with its mighty walls and wide ramp for our battle-elephants. And we did these things when your country was still a collection of thirteen small colonies, gnawing away at the edge of a continent.

(35)

Changez compares eastern and western civilization many times in novel and valorizes eastern civilization over western, for him Pakistan is older and civilized country before America. He makes cultural comparison with the conversation with Erica his girlfriend and with his unanimous American listener. He presents Pakistani culture and tradition differently than what Americans think. Americans think that Pakistani society is rigid and conservative. In same Chapter the narrator shows to a group of

girls walking to the teashop in Lahore wearing jeans paint. Changez comments on, "how they are attractive in their jeans as much as the girls sitting at the table beside ours, in their traditional dress" (Hamid 16). This observation shows the diversity and cohesion in Pakistani society between modernism and tradition, whether the girls are in jeans or in their national dress, they are integrated within the socio-cultural environment. Here these scenes also challenge the misperceptions of the West. Western countries and media represent Muslim countries as back warded, rigid and conservative. So, this statement of Hamid responds such kinds of stereotypes through the blending of culture, dress and etc especially in case of Muslim women. Here Hamid proves that westerners' belief is wrong, Muslim women are not deprived from modernity.

The major concern of Hamid in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is response to western writers who portray all Muslim as terrorist. Here Hamid's attempt is centered in Muslims are not by-born terrorist, they are not rude, uncivilized and fundamentalist but it is the Western World who compels them to be terrorist. To prove this fact Hamid takes the story of Changez, a Pakistani teenager who settled in America, who has American dream and who adopts the American lifestyle. Changez narrates his whole story before and after 9/11, here he narrates his reputation and lifestyle before that terrorist attack and he narrates how his life suddenly changes in America after 9/11. Changez reveals American treatment with him and his fellow Muslims; in this novel he gives many textual evidences. Once when Changez goes to the Earica's home her father asks to Changez:

Economy's falling apart though, no? Corruption, dictatorship, the rich living like princes while everyone else suffers. Solid people, don't get me wrong. I like Pakistanis. But the elite has raped that place well and good, right? And



fundamentalism. You guys have got some serious problems with  
fundamentalism. (54/55)

This is the Americans' evaluation of Pakistan and Muslim people, here Erica's father is not only a person, but he is representative of American thoughts. They always see Eastern countries as third world countries, land of corruption and fundamentalism. This understanding is the gross generalization of Islam and all Muslim countries. This understanding about Pakistan is guided by stereotypical western view, they see Pakistan as the land of fundamentalism and patriarchal feudal society, where elite people exploit whole nation. When Changez returns to New York after attack of 9/11 from Manila, Philippines, he treated as would be terrorist. Changez is separated from his colleague as if he is terrorist and securities ask him many questions, Changez narrates that scene in this way:

When we arrived, I was separated from my team at immigration. They joined the queue for American citizens; I joined the one for foreigners. The officer who inspects my passport was a solidly built woman with a pistol at her hip and mastery of English inferior to mine; I attempted to disarm her with a smile. "What is the purpose of your trip to the United States?" she asked me. "I live here," I replied. "That is not what I asked you sir," she said. "What is the purpose of your trip to the United States? (Hamid 75)

Changez narrates how the American security force tortured him, there is no other cause but only one cause is that he is foreigner, he is Muslim, and he has bared on his face. The American officials think that they have purpose to visit America and that purpose is attack to Americans. Here Hamid tries to show the perception of Americans to see Muslim after 9/11; they see each Muslim character as terrorist. After event of 9/11 there is difficult to live in America for Muslims, there is torture,

humiliation and hatred everywhere for Muslims. Protagonist Changez says, "I overheard at the Pak-Punjab Deli: Pakistani cabdrivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI was raiding mosques, shops and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centers for questioning or worse" (Hamid 94). In these lines Changez narrates how Muslims were tortured in America after the terrorist attack. This was the reality of Muslims in America for no cause in fact, but all Muslims were tortured because they are belonging to the race of Bin Laden and other attackers.

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* Hamid criticizes the American policy of interference in the world politics. When Changez returns to home from America he sees American military camp in Pakistan in the name of 'war on terrorism'. Changez criticizes American war intervention all over the world with his unanimous American listener. He says:

I reflected that I had always resented the manner in which America conducted itself in the world; your country's constant interference in the affairs of others was insufferable. Vietnam, Korea, the straits of Taiwan, the Middle East and now Afghanistan: in each of the major conflicts and sanctions that ringed my mother continent of Asia, America played a central role. Moreover, I knew from my experience as a Pakistani of alternating periods of American aid and sanction that finance was a primary means by which the American empire exercised its power. (Hamid 156)

Changez shows American interference in world politics with many reference or evidences of American involvement in the politics of Asian countries. Changez criticizes the American policy of interference in the internal affair of the Asian Countries either in Korea, Vietnam or in Afghanistan. Hamid in this sense criticizes

the American policy of power exercising in the internal affair of the other countries, in the name of aid. Even in present days America provides aid to war on terrorism and exercise its military power in Iraq, Iran, and Syria and Afghanistan. Hamid criticizes this policy of intervention of America in his country and his neighboring countries.

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is written in the issue of terrorism from the perspective of an immigrant Muslim. As I mentioned above this novel is the counter response to the western writers who writes on terrorism by scolding the Muslims. In this novel, Hamid responds them by showing the American torture to Muslims in America through his protagonist, he logically shows that how Changez compelled to leave America and return to his home. Aldalala Nath comments in his article "The Re-territorialisation of the Encounter between America and its Muslim Other(s)" about *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* he says:

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* attends to these imbrications of history, politics and economics from an alternative viewpoint. As the novel charts the milieu of American wealth and privilege, of which Changez is a beneficiary, rather than the marginalized migrant suffering economic and racial discrimination, it complicates the relationship between the West and the Muslim world. Thus, an exploration of the competing ideologies and the social and political practices which impact on the inner life of individuals is effectively dramatized. Through this, Hamid's narrative seeks to privilege the Pakistani narrator, and his identity as a Princeton-educated graduate destabilizes the arguments that call on stereotyped invocations of Muslim people and culture.

(13)

Yes, Hamid gives alternative view point to see Pakistan and Muslim society through this novel and he seeks to deconstruct stereotypical representations of Pakistani

society by the western media and writers who presents Pakistan and Muslim in very narrow sense. Unlike American and European writers, he presents Muslim protagonist as very sophisticated and his identity as a Princeton educated graduate. Americans see Muslim as weak, uneducated and fanatics, but Hamid contrarily shows Changez smart than American students and he takes benefits from their country. In this sense this novel gives counter response and re-stabilized the Muslim identity, culture and rightfulness of Islam. Isam Shihada argues regarding this issue of novel, he says:

My argument is how Hamid's novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, offers a counter literary response not only to the public rhetoric, but also to the dominant literary discourses that prevailed after 9/11. It also marks a departure in 9/11 fiction and carries a sharp critical edge and offers one of the first meaningful representations of 'otherness in the canon of 9/11 fiction. (5)

After 9/11 there was the flooding of novels in the terrorism, but most of the novels were written by American and European writers. Shihada is rightly argues that Hamid's novel offers a counter literary response to those dominant novels, which were written on 9/11.

Trend of writing novels for scolding and stigmatizing Muslim is breached by Hamid in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Hamid gives very appropriate literary response in appropriate time to the western discourse about Muslims. Shihada further argues, "It also lies in rendering an alternative disruptive literary response to the neocolonial discourse, which has been the driving force behind the mistreatment of Muslims and the military invasion of Afghanistan" (Shihada 454). After the event of 9/11 the America became more aggressive to all Muslims and declares war on Afghanistan and other Muslim countries and American mistreated Muslim everywhere. In this regard Hamid gives the response to this tendency he doesn't only

give the response, rather he criticizes the American treatment to guest Muslims and he criticizes the American policy of interference to Asian and Muslim countries in the name of 'war on terror'.

Thus, Hamid as Muslim writer gives very kind warning message through Changez who transforms from American lover to reluctant fundamentalist because of Americans' treatment with him. Hamid is indirectly challenging American writers and other Americans if they don't change the perspective to see the Muslims and if their government doesn't change the policy to treat Muslims 1.5 billion Muslim may turn into Changez. Hamid demands American for equal treatment for Muslim migrants in America. He also suggests that American dominating policies and its blind War on terror will force many ordinary Muslims to abandon the American Dream, like Changez, and converts them into radicals. This study primarily finds out that this work of Hamid is the appropriate response to those literary works after the tragic event of 9/11 which are written by westerners canonical writers such as John Updike, Martin Amis and other writers. Furthermore, Hamid valorizes the Muslim culture and he tries to show Muslim people are not warmonger and terrorist rather they want to be peace maker in the world.

Through this comparative study of Updike's *Terrorist* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* it is proved that Updike represents Muslim as by-born terrorist or he sees potentiality of terrorist in each Muslim. Hamid as Muslim writer is not ready to accept this stigma and his response is all Muslims are not terrorists, for him America forcefully making them terrorist. Through his Muslim protagonist Ahmad and Shaik Rashid Updike shows that Muslims are not more than fundamentalist and terrorist who are uneducated, back warded, short tempered and bloodthirsty.

Updike in *Terrorist* tries to separate and symbolically banish Muslims from America which they call virgin land. Updike shows lack of tolerance, modernism and dynamic personality in his Muslim characters. Updike blames Muslims are traditionalists who are not fit in secular and modern American society. About this discriminatory perspective of Westerners Ziauddin Sardar argues:

In the western liberal framework, the individual is constantly at war with the community. The individual's main concern is to keep his/her identity intact, separate from all others, to preserve the boundaries at all cost, to enclose herself/himself within a protective wall. Whereas in non-western cultures, morality is defined by the community or society. (61-2)

As Sardar argues Updike as an American writer expresses his individualistic and modern thought toward Islam and he creates boundaries between Muslims and Westerners. In *Terrorist* Muslims are represented from the American individualistic perspective, because as Sardar argues they want to build wall between non-west and west. In this regard Updike forcefully drags Muslims and thinks they are responsible for all terrorist attack and for him Islam is the religion of violation, Jihad and destruction.

In this context Hamid does not only respond western writers including Updike; furthermore he valorizes Islam over materialist western society in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Hamid in this novel highlights the eastern communitarian values and his focus on togetherness. Updike insists on the separateness, he depicts Muslims as traditionalists and fundamentalist, but Hamid gives counter to him and says Muslim are not traditionalist rather they want to adopt their tradition and religion. As Sardar states Westerners take tradition as traditionalism, but for him tradition is different than traditionalism, he argues:

Tradition is the summation of the absolute frame of reference provided by the values and axioms of a civilization that remain enduringly relevant and the conventions that have been developed in history into its own distinctive gaze: patterns of organization, ideas, life way, techniques and products. (225)

As Sardar shows distinctions between traditionalism and tradition Hamid takes the side of tradition, he valorizes and highlights eastern civilization, religion and tradition. He shows the clear difference between terrorism and tradition and says that Muslims are not terrorist but they want to follow their religion and tradition and live together in America.

Both *Terrorist* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* are the post 9/11 fictions written on terrorism and post traumatic effect of attack of 9/11. Both writers chose Muslim protagonists, but present in quite opposite way. Updike in *Terrorist* presents Muslim protagonist as intolerant, fanatics and as growing terrorist, who hates materialistic American society, Christianity and modern technology. Updike's Muslim protagonist Ahmad is represented as villain who is preparing for suicidal explosion. In spite of adopting modern secular American education Ahmad leaves his higher study and becomes the true disciple of Yamani Imam Shaik Rashid who is presented as religious fundamentalist. In this representation of Muslim protagonist there is American vested interest and individualistic approach, which is the feature of modern western society. After the event of 9/11 American writers represent Islam and Muslim community as the progenitor of terrorism and they began to see Muslims as home-grown terrorist. In this context Updike represents Muslim as fundamentalist and terrorist who have a fear with secular and modern society. As Updike presents his Muslim characters, Samuel P. Huntington argues in his *Clash of Civilization* theory:

Muslims fear and resent Western power and the threat which this poses to

their society and beliefs. They see Western culture as materialistic, corrupt, decadent and immoral. They also see it as seductive, and hence stress all the more the need to resist its impact on their way of life. Increasingly, Muslims attack the West for not adhering to an imperfect, erroneous religion, which is nonetheless a "religion of the book", but not for adhering to any religion at all.

(213)

As Huntington argues that the cause of this tension between Muslim and west is the inability of Muslim to be modern and secular, Updike represents his Muslim is the same line. Updike also shows that Muslims have a fear with materialist modern world, secular society and they are not ready to adopt freedom. Fear of all these things encourages Muslim for terrorist attack.

Updike represents Muslims, from the American perspective, not from the real ground because he highlights all negative aspects of Islam to show them inferior, extremist and uncivilized. Updike brings the Quranic Sura which have negative connotation with violence and death. In this way we can say that Updike represents Muslims as the other who are inferior and back warded than white American and he presents Muslim as war monger, destroyer of peace and anti- modernist. In the response of this kind of representation Hamid represents his Muslim character Changez, a counter figure of Ahmad, who is Pakistani Muslim American a Princeton topper. Hamid represents his Muslim character as smarter than Americans, who topped the college and selected for job in the reputed American company. Hamid tries to clear that Muslims are not the anti-modernist; they also love technology like Changez.

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* Hamid develops new discourse about post 9/11 effect from the Muslim perspective. After 9/11 attack Muslim minorities



migrants were voiceless in America, but white American writers repeatedly represent Muslim as the other, who are the terrorist by their innate. In this context Hamid create Muslim discourse about the post effect of 9/11; Hamid represents the Muslims' plight in America after the terrorist attack. Muslims were physically, mentally and socially tortured in America, they become victims of violent backlash. People who appeared like Muslim and who has Arabic or Islamic sounding became the scapegoat of American revenge. *The Reluctant fundamentalist* is the story of those Muslim who became the scapegoat of American torture and revenge, Hamid as a Muslim migrant writer he himself is the bearer of that American torture. In this novel Hamid represents the effect of 9/11 in migrant Muslim community. He gives his literary response to those American writers, only Americans are not victim, but Muslims are more victims after 9/11 by American torture and sense of the others like Changez.

Hence, representation of Muslim in these two novels is different. Updike as an American writer represents Muslims as the other. He presents his Muslim protagonist as would be home grown terrorist, who may be the dangerous for American security in the future. Updike represents Muslim as fanatics, blood thirsty and savage, he indirectly indicates that these Muslim people were fully responsible for 9/11 attack and also in future they are potential danger for the America. Contrarily, Hamid as Muslim migrant writer represents Muslim self; he himself is the bearer and witness of post 9/11 effect. So, he presents how Muslims were depicted in American society after 9/11, how they presented as the other and how they compelled to leave America like Changez and engaged in anti-American group. Hamid through the story of Changez makes it clear that Muslims are not anti-modernist, they are not uneducated, not intolerant and back warded rather they are smart, talent and patient like Changez.

At last but not least, representation of Muslim in *Terrorist* is biased, unjust

and stereotypical which stigmatized whole Muslim community. Updike's perspective is much individualistic and he expresses his desire of separateness with Muslim community in the America. Whereas Hamid in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* represents Muslim self and he reestablishes the Muslim identity as tolerant, decent and modern. Hamid also urges for togetherness and he expresses the communitarian values which are the features of eastern tradition and religions. These two novels are the consequences of clash of civilization, where innocent Muslims are stereotyped and victim, in this context Hamid, to large extent, successful to challenge the representation of Muslim as the others and reestablished the Muslim self in the discourse of post 9/11. Hamid's novel gives justice to 1.5 billion Muslims who have been prey of American stereotype since 9/11. Finally, Hamid is right that Westerners' way of representing Muslims, their stereotypical view, biased treatment and individualism are responsible for increasing terrorism in the world.

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