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Exploration of Cultural Trauma and Politics of Memory in John Updike's *Terrorist*

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Letter of Recommendation

Smirt Sunder Sharma has completed his thesis, entitled “Exploration of Cultural Trauma and Politics of Memory in John Updike’s *Terrorist*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2072 B.S. (2015 A.D.) to 2073 B.S. (2016 A.D.). I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled “Exploration of Cultural Trauma and Politics of Memory in John Updike’s *Terrorist*” submitted to Central Department of English, T.U., Kirtipur by Smirt Sunder Sharma has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

The research paper is concerned with the traumatic experiences of powerless protagonist and some others characters in America projected in Updike's *Terrorist*. It examines the journey of a young Muslim from radical to liberal and who has poisoned his mind against the Christian. This research problematizes how Ahamad is adrift and in search of identity for himself. His attempt leads to commit suicide against Christian places. It is the way of expressing his traumatized experience in American society. This paper shows the way how of taking revenge in regards of the traumatic experiences to resolve their trauma. The researcher has applied cultural trauma as basic approach of analysis. Major critiques regarding his traumatic experience and their cultural aspects have been used in this research paper. Ahmad, at last part, is pushed along a path becoming a martyr by being a suicide bomber which represents his attempts of searching identity within traumatic experience.

Contents

Acknowledgement

Abstract

I. Depiction of Post 9/11 US Society 1-12

I. Exploration of Cultural Trauma and politics of Memory in *Terrorist* 13-32

III. Narrativization in Updike's *Terrorist* 33-35

Works Cited

I. Introduction to Post 9/11 US Society and John Updike's *Terrorist*

This research focuses the traumatic experience faced by Ahmad, Jack Levy, Charlie so on in John Hoyer Updike's *Terrorist* (2006). Updike's Novel has presented Afro-American Muslim character to make sure that Muslims are exactly same how American think them as a *Terrorist* or dangerous enemies for the world. The major characters of the novel are traumatized, from the ideology and theology of America. Moreover, they have lost their originality, identities with follow of globalization. Their culture are also repressed by the white ideology in the USA. Most of Afro-American characters are disenfranchised to identify American side by 'Other'. Updike's novel as presented cultural trauma by the major theorist Alexander, Eyreman and Jeny Edkin ideas are the major tools to examine the traumatic experiences is applied in this research. However, this paper is concerned with isolated and powerless young Muslim Ahmad travels from radicalism to fundamentalism.

In the novel, the main character Ahmad endures several miserable days in his childhood. It is because of his Egyptian father abandons his family when Ahmad was there years and his Irish American mother unable to pay an attention to his son as he needs and wants. He becomes a prey of family crises in American society after the *Terrorist* attack of 9/11 on twine towers. Ahmad heads towards the local mosque in order to search his absent father feeling as a root of his identity, which he has lost. He expands his minor round upon unfinished of suicidal bomb attack. He blames Christianity or infidelity and American materialism for his pathetic life. So, it is a story about young Muslim character and other minor characters who becomes the victim of cultural violence in different circumstances that cause physical and mental upheavals time and again. At the same prints some characters seem to be supportive to others who later are proved as betraying figures that brings frustration, anxiety and

traumatic sense in the characters Furthermore, the characters become the victim of historical memories of 9/11 that fills fear, horror, in personal life. In addition, the novel concentrates critical condition of a confused adolescent struggling to control his natural urges through submission to strict and ultimately distorting discipline in post modernist decaying city or New Jersey in America where the most characters suffers lot and are treated as 'Other' human beings. Socio-political, cultural critics seem to have realized that need after action against the perspective or thought towards the Muslim of America. Thus they are trying to empathy towards the victims and outrage towards the exploiter or agency of exploitation American society, after that the 9/11 attack, fails to know culture of Muslim people or their feelings and emotion in relation to their country. So Muslim characters are mostly victimized is the main focus of this novel.

Updike *Terrorist* present the major character Ahmad with his unstable ethnic identity. Ahmad's mother is American, while his absent father is Egyptian. His skin is repeatedly described as "dun colored" (34), which marks him as somewhat unique in his overwhelmingly African-American and Hispanic school (7). His whiteness marks him as closer to his mother than his father, who makes him closer to being an American and yet an outside in his own school, which paradoxically makes him less American. This even represents trauma of race and place. His dual identity makes him as being traumatized in American white dominated Christian society. So there are such references that recall different traumatic memories in the novel.

Terrorist, written in the aftermath of 9/11 using the attacks of the day as a backdrop, endeavors to make sense of an America that has been disrupted by the violent intrusion of an outside present. The novel has augmented trauma of social tensions and racial hatred and its impact on individual. On the one hand, mainstream

white America appears self-absorbed and depressed, unable to open up fully to the unfit or the different. On the other hand, radicalized individuals are depicted in an ambivalent light and are in the end doomed because of their blind and staunch faith, regardless whether it is pinned on Islam or the American dream. It seeks to represent the viewpoint of a self-identified Muslim radical and would be *Terrorist*. Updike makes an attempt to radically harmonize the Muslim *Terrorist* by making his cause and actions explicable on the grounds of psychology. Specifically this is a story of a young man who has grown up with an absent father, and whose subsequent search for a father figure leads him into a tunnel with an armed truck, ready to detonate it is rush hour traffic. However, the crisis is averted through an intervention by perhaps the only possible party, another father figure, an elderly (secular) Jewish school counselor.

The main purpose of this research is to project the traumatic situation of Ahmad's life where he is hunted by the memories of his early stage of life and his attempts to escape away from such dangerous 'evil' using the trauma theory. For analysis of the plot of Updike's *Terrorist* are divided in two parts. Firstly, Ahmad whose role is to complete the plot with his ultimate act of self scarifying as a product of his psychological predisposition, family background. Without denying his any humanism or responsibility but unexpectedly he fails to fulfill his mission to be 'martyrdom'. The next part of the novel deals the role of Jack Levy, a school guidance counselor who helps to disrupt the plot it means Ahmad's mission. Ahmad begins to go twice a week in mosque in new prospect. N.J. Imam never misses an opportunity to discuss with Ahmad. He misguides the meaning of Islam instead of love and peace. He says, "Muslim dying out of their own will in suicide bombing are labeled as martyr, the believer who keeps detached from opposite gender and die pure and

virgin, are gifted with black eyed virgins who wait upon them in the heaven. In this way, his teenaged mind is made blind and Imam suggests him to learn truck driver. Then, he is hired by Charlie Chehab, a Labnanes furniture owner as a truck driver. There is also his mind washed and prepared for suicide attack on the occasion of anniversary 9/11. Here Updike portrays Muslim characters as narrow minded, extremist, irrational because to show difference between America.

Updike's other figures as a journalist and critic, one can presume that his thoughts on the *Terrorist* attacks would have been printed in journal whether or not he actually saw the destruction, but his on the scene reporting gave his words added impact. Updike's description of the horror and personal response provided readers with an additional tool to process the events. He captured the heartache Americans felt at the moment, explaining, "We knew we had just witnessed many deaths; we clung to each other as if we ourselves were falling" (117). Updike also summarized the immediate post-September 11 mood, saying, "The nightmare is still on. The bodies are beneath the rubble, the last-minute phone calls—remarkably calm and long, many of them—are still being reported, the sound of an airplane overhead still bears an unfamiliar menace, the thought of boarding an airplane with our old blasé blitheness keeps receding into the past" (117-18). America's "man of letters" plays an important role in helping people mentally and emotionally process the dangerously attacks trauma of fear. However, *Terrorist* depicts trauma of horror and disaster. It is cultural response to traumatic lives after the event of 9/11. It even represents the impact of such event in people of different religion and race like Muslims, Jews and so on living in societies of United States of America.

In his *New York Times* review of John Updike's *Terrorist*, a novel written in the aftermath of 9/11, Robert Stone argues that Updike uses the main character in the

novel, Ahmad, the titular "*Terrorist*," to show someone distinctly outside of the American value system examining contemporary America exposed to the passions of the non-American world. Stone claims, "Updike uses certain kinds of Americans and non-Americans in the novel in order to illuminate how Americans have "struggle[d] to maintain a viable center for our inner life and the way people in America have sought to find some equilibrium against the background of headlong change"(1). Stone's argument is that Updike uses the outsider 's perspective in *Terrorist* in order to shine a light on what is really happening , somewhere beneath the surface, in a modern America afflicted by unrestrained economy and now dealing with being connected to the rest of the world in a new age of globalization and international *Terrorist*. While on its surface *Terrorist* appears to be a novel about the mindset of a radical Islamic *Terrorist*. Stone further expresses:

The novel's focus turned on America rather than on Islam. Updike is realistically portraying an authentic Muslim's perspective and that this allows Updike to access a deeper truth about America, something that is perhaps invisible to average Americans and that requires a mediator, in this case an antagonistic outsider, to see properly. The purpose of *Terrorist* is not to gain insight into the mind of an Islamic *Terrorist*, but rather to use the Muslim character as a means to understand America. (2)

Updike's portrayal of the outsider's view as authentic, and in turn accepts Updike's view of America through this perspective as revealing of deeper truths about the American condition. A "real" Muslim reflecting a 'real' America, but warrants deeper examination is how Updike does not as much describe America as he creates an America as it reacts to the events of 9/11 and how he constructs his Muslim characters

in order to do that. Stone pays some attention to the former, but almost no attention to the latter and in each case assumes that there is a pre-existing truth for Updike to discover about America or Islam.

In making Ahmad's fundamental admirable for being so pure amidst the pathetic cultural surroundings – until the imam and his *Terroristic* network drive his belief to violence, Updike implicitly reinforces the novel's underlying assumption about the US dearth of public commitment and subservience to the material religion of cultural-economy. In this way, the novel paradoxically sets Ahmad above the herd through exemplary conduct (attending the mosque, working weekend shifts, loving his job, etc.). Ahmad says to a schoolmate, "All America wants of its citizens, your president has said, is for us to buy – to spend money we cannot afford and thus propel the economy forward for himself and other rich men" (72). Even though for most of the novel we do not share Ahmad's language, attitudes or path, we endorse his perception of America and get in touch deep down with his religious candor and lucidity of judgment, aspects that the narrative exalts and finds disconcerting at the same time.

Updike confesses in the Mudge interview, "I thought it was important to show how much Ahmad needed to make his own philosophy, as it were, because the environment wasn't coming up with any" (26). Also, Updike reverses the stereotype that makes kamikazes heartless, as Gregory Orfalea points out when he writes that, throughout the novel, "we hope that Updike's humanity will not desert us" (190), and indeed Ahmad does not kill anyone in the end. The author's strategies of inversion and moral displacement are ironic, yet the overall tone of the novel is not, as it configures a bitter indictment of America's historical amnesia and materialism that 9/11 has once again uncovered. As Richard Gray observes, "the threat here is not in

Ahmad but in the world that seems to challenge and imprison him. Updike captures this: the sense, not merely of not belonging but of not feeling safe, of fearing that the world he inhabits is eating away at the very core of his belief and his self (135-6).

Likewise, as Peter Bailey explains, faith has always been an issue that Updike himself and his protagonists were grappling with. Examining Updike's literary output, Bailey observes:

A streak of nihilism progressively grows throughout Updike's fiction: from the Rabbit tetralogy up to *In the Beauty of the Lilies* and *Villages*, characters abandon faith and withdraw from God, becoming secular individuals whose spirituality remains inscrutable . . . comes to a deadlock. The chronic unresponsiveness of God has cumulatively darkened Updike's vision and he detects in his fiction what he calls "the reluctantly expanding secularism of Updike's aesthetic. (243)

However, if Bailey is accurate in detecting Updike's progressive challenge to his own Christian beliefs and poetics, *Terrorist* comes as a coup against the grain of such critical evidence. Ahmad Mulloy's story is the swansong by a spiritually disenchanted author. Indeed, while Updike as a white middle-class, middle-aged male allegedly "identifies" with Jack Levy's faithless acquiescence to the earthly existence author's moral and religious fascination stays with the believer Ahmad.

The boy, with his white, well-ironed shirt, his sexual abstinence and his respect for God and his job ("[h]e is pleased to find in the trucking regulations a concern with purity almost religious in quality" (Updike 75) represents the experience of spiritual totality and fullness of life that the West, Updike and his promiscuous fictional world have missed or at worst never experienced. The dangerous side of Ahmad's choices appears merely a detail that can be worked through in the end. In

this way, Jorg Richter argues, “Updike omits any clear-cut judgment of the moral rights and wrongs of terrorism but instead accentuates the paradoxical nature of religious experience within a secular and technologically dominated world” (483). Of course, in this way Updike’s literary operation situates itself outside of history, refusing to unravel the specific political implications of 9/11 and blaming them on the hollowness of American “population” for which he expresses “disgust”. Interestingly though, despite the Manichean and stereotypical organization of the plot, *Terrorist* avoids ethical rigidity, equally distributes strengths and weaknesses among its characters and even finds in the spiritless and cynical Jack Levy the “saviour” who in the end, against all odds, prevents the catastrophe from happening. Levy’s gesture disavows the violent ramifications of Ahmad’s religion but it also reasserts the boy’s spiritual innocence.

Likewise, James Wood writing an essay in *The New Republic*, found similar challenges with *Terrorist*. For Wood:

Updike did not provide enough background to convincingly show how young Ahmad Mulloy developed from fatherless youth to potential *Terrorist*. Ahmad is neither Islamic enough nor American enough. Much of the review, then, charts a path Updike might have taken to make the novel better. The author should have made Ahmad sound like other American teens, such a character would then be interesting in proportion to his resistance to a pressure—the great pressurizing blandishments of American post modernity. (25)

There is no specific set of physical manifestations identifying trauma. However it almost invariably produces repeated, uncontrollable, and incalculable effects that endure long after its ostensible 'precipitating cause'. Therefore, it presents a unique set

of challenges to understanding. Trauma has an inherently political, cultural, psychological and ethnical dimension. Emotional trauma is not confined to the single shock that comes with an assault. Some people suffer from continuing attacks on their emotional stability. Of course, physical and emotional wounds may be products of the same experience.

William Cote and Roger Simpson in *Covering Violence: A Guide to Ethical Reporting About Victim and Trauma* remark:

Political prisoners and torture victims suffer trauma not from single acts but from months or years of having their sense of safety destroyed. A woman continually abused by a violent spouse and a child repeatedly exploited sexually will be trauma victims as well. The form of trauma, emotional injury is sometimes sudden and unexpected sometimes takes place during a prolonged assault (22).

Although all these above mentions critics and reviewers examined this story collection from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, none of them notice the issue of post-colonial issue Although all these above mentions critics and reviewers examined this story from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, none of them notice the issue of post-colonial issue in the novel.

However, there are different types of traumas on the basis of events, condition of victim and way of living with it. Previously cultural, social, political traumas were focused dimensions of trauma. But now political terrorism is even new dimension of trauma studies.

Caruth in her introductory essay to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* shows be fully determined by, or located in. She proposes that trauma compels us to imagine

that traumatic events do not simply occur in time. Rather, they fracture the very experience of time for the person to whom they "happen". She expresses:

The pathology cannot be defined either by the event itself-which may or may not be catastrophic, and may not traumatize everyone equally - nor can it be defined in terms of a distortion of the event achieving its haunting power as a result of distorting personal significances attached to it. The pathology consists, rather, solely, in the structure of experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belated, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. (4-5)

Caruth describes that the parts of who falls victim to traumatic pathology does so precisely to the extent that he or she fails to be present to the event in the moment of its occurrence. Her insights about trauma are that to the extent that trauma opens up a breach in experience and understanding.

Traumatic events refer to extreme stress that overwhelms a person's ability to cope. There are no clear divisions between stress, trauma, and adaptation. In this topic of my thesis, I am writing about psychological trauma which is focused approach for analyzing. It is also important to keep in mind that stress reactions are clearly physiological as well. Different experts in the field define cultural trauma in different ways. The main focus of all is that cultural trauma is the unique individual experience of an event or enduring conditions in which the individual's ability to integrate his/her emotional experience is overwhelmed or the individual experiences (subjectively) a threat to life, bodily integrity or sanity.

Thus race relations as well as the loss of the American dream are at the centre of Updike's novel. *Terrorist* shares this preoccupation with an earlier American novel that uses a young protagonist who, at odds with family and society, turns to terrorism. The novel written in the aftermath of 9/11 using the attacks of the day as a backdrop endeavors to make sense of an America that has been disrupted by the violent intrusion of an outside presence. By juxtaposing the lives of an Islam fanatic, self marginalized eighteen year old Arab American student, Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy and middle aged Jewish but atheist school counselor Jack Levy, Updike effectively crystallizes post 9/11 American stereotypes about religious and racial identity. Through this, the novelist shows traumatic experiences of marginalization and identity.

The word 'trauma' is used to describe the experience or situation that are uncomfortable, panic and distressing and that overwhelm the people's ability to cope and leaving them powerless.

The trauma has been defined in reference to circumstances that show the clear normal experiences. But this definition cannot carry total truth because trauma can occur frequently and becomes the part of common human experience for some people. Moreover, this research has shown the traumatic experience of characters which have been given unbearable suffering in their life. In this regard, traumatic events are those which victimize or threat to victimization. Regarding trauma as a social construct, in *Trauma and politics of memory*, says, "It is within a social context that we can remember in the first place" (32). Indeed trauma is discursive. Events such as witnessing violence, rape, physical attack physical, mental and sexual abuse so on are considered to be traumatic. So, to analyze trauma of loss and fear of post

disaster America, the researcher is applying cultural Trauma and politics of memory as reading approach.

The thesis is divided into three chapters where the first chapter gives general introduction with some critics' views on the text. Similarly, the second chapter Textual Analysis merges both theoretical aspects and textual aspects. It attempts to examine the causes of trauma from cultural perspectives. It focuses on the effects of trauma of the characters and how the characters embrace Western ways which they manifest consciously or unconsciously. Finally, the third chapter is conclusion that provides summary of the research and closes the thesis.

II. Exploration of Cultural Trauma and Politics of memory in *Terrorist*

This present research explores the John Updike's *Terrorist* in order to study cultural trauma of Ahmad, Jack Levy, Charlie, and other minor characters too. It has augmented trauma of social and racial hatred and its impact on individual. The main character Ahmad who lives in a society where they have few rights, little control over their own lives, misguided and capitalized humanism and no choice other than to endure such committed against them. In particular this work unfolds the traumatic situation of the characters.

The research is centralized on the traumatic lives of confused adolescent Muslim Character in the Christian dominant society in America. Updikes' *Terrorist* is a story of young Muslim, named Ahmad, son of absent Egyptian father and Irish American mother whose subsequent search for a father figures leads him into a tunnel with an armed truck being as a suicide - raises question about his past pathetic life. He has grown up with an absent father and inadequate mother's care. Ahmad tries to keep distance from his schoolmate showing his dual identity and personality not on the basis of racialism. By the cause of family environment as well his modernity like, he commits intensely to Islam which hints Ahmad's predisposition towards stereotypes for separateness from American cultures. He falls under the tutelage of Shaikh Rasid tutelage and starts to learn driving by rejecting his formal education. In the course of his journey, meeting with Charlie makes him easy to find out the way to please his ineffable God. However, this crisis is averted through an intervention by perhaps the only possible party, another father figure, an elderly secular Jewish school counselor. The present research paper explores the characters enlightenment and psychoanalytic trauma experiences that powers the action that has a sense of relief as soon as counselor Jack Levy succeeds to deviate terrible disaster of explosion of the armed

truck in rush our traffic. Given the culminating scene and its outcome, there can be little doubt that both Ahmad's fall and his ultimate reconciliation, having drives through the tunnel without detonating the explosive, raise the various question in related to cultural trauma of character .Enlightenment of thinking tries to give rational responses to abrupt change. Enlightenment project tries to rationalize irrational traumatic experiences or responses of sudden catastrophic and intrusion phenomena. The objects or events that trigger trauma are perceived clearly by actors, their response are lucid, and effects of these responses are problem solving and progressive. In this way, as well as through his cast of carefully selected multicultural characters, Updike strives and perhaps succeeds in creating a sense of understanding and sympathy for the young would be *Terrorists*.

His subsequent search for his father paves him to local mosque where Imam, Shaik Rasid, forms his mind as extremist. "Ahmad is prepared for suicide bomber. For Jihad he drives into a tunnel with an armed truck ready to detonate in rush hour traffic. However, the crisis is averted through an intervention by another father figure character Jack Levy. However, Ahmad's desire of suicide being looks as if he is guided by unconscious that is 'id'. He does not think about the future consequences of it. But his 'id' can't release forcedly because of presence of 'ego'. Jack levy even looks as being unsatisfied from American values and norms but he stops Ahmad from blowing up in a suicide attack. At that time, he is guided by consciousness that is ego. Levy is fully conscious from the consequence. Ahmad's strong desire of jihad' i.e. 'id' does not success not only by the persuasion or levy but also the sight of innocent children waving to him in the tunnel. The practice of being suicide bomber is the reflection of traumatized self of Ahmad.

Furthermore Jack Levy's enlightenment project powers the action to calm down the ongoing disaster by Ahmad. Ahmad's hunger of paradise created by Shaikh Rasid and capitalized by Charlie has created horror to the characters. When Ahmad is going ahead with explosive laden truck to Lincoln tunnel Levy enters into the truck and convincing him with the cultural views. Levy says, "Race, sex- they spoke us. Once you run out of steam, America doesn't give you much. It doesn't let you die, What with the hospital sucking all the money they can out of Medicare. The drug companies have turned doctors into crook" (304).

In the above mentioned extracts, Jack levy tries to convince a Ahmad who is ready to blast bomb in Lincolon Tunnel. It also shows the trauma if jack in relation to exploitation of American culture. Levy says to Ahmad that America is good only if you follow the rule and regulation law and order of it. Otherwise it is more dangerous from the all angels. More over he explains how does America exploit or treat the people of out stream of America. Here the phrase it doesn't even let you die, refers the nature of American exploitation in American culture or doctor and hospitals also become the means of earning money forgetting their humanism. Through these enlightenment thinking levy tries to control of sudden catastrophy . where as Ahmed is a heading for Jihad in the occasion of anniversary of 9/11.

John Hoyer Updike's novel in twenty first ages, *Terrorist* explores the socio-cultural together with traumatic experience of main characters. This research has examined the trauma of crises of characters as Ahmed. In the same context *Lay Trauma Theory* says Traumas are naturally occurring events that shatter on individual or collective actor's sense of well being .Traumatizing events interacts with human natures. Human beings need security order love and connection. If something

happens that undermines these human needs and hence people starts being traumatized. The narrator writes:

She is saying, "It's hard to say. He never talked much about it. Poor little guy, he used to look so frail and scared when I'd drop him off at the Mosque, going up those stairs all by himself. When I'd ask him afterwards how it had gone, he'd say Great and calm up. He'd even blush. It was something he couldn't share. . . . (165)

The extract shows Ahmad traumatic of feelings of insecure and frightened due to his absent father and careless mother. When he was three year his father leaves them then his mother Teresa does not hold responsibility as a mother. A child Ahmad deprives from his basic human need security. Love affection care on his childhood. According to the extract the phrase poor little guys reflects the very weak, helpless, powerless or deserted life of Ahmad . after some time Ahmad's frail and scared changes into great and calm through the knowledge from the Mosque or Muslim ideology. Again extract line makes clear his great and calm isn't natural rather it is constructed by Imam, Shaikh Rasid. Ahmad's facial shows how much traumatized of character moreover he can't says what is going on him, or where he is heading and how he is capitalized from the culture.

Re-experiencing symptoms are a sign that the body and mind are actively struggling to cope with the traumatic experience. Triggers and cues out as reminders of trauma and can cause violence and other associated emotions. Often the person can be completely unaware of what these triggers can. In many cases, this may lead a person suffering from traumatic disorders to engage in disruptive or self-destructive coping mechanism, often without being fully aware of his own action panic attacks are an example of a cultural response to such emotional triggers.

In the novel, Updike has become successful to show that how his facial experience reveals his strong disagreement and fears. The characters body language and their facial experiences reflect their hidden meaning which novel does not unfold in the text. In this regard traumatic expert Felman has an idea to subject as a Remnants of Auschwitz as Giorgio Agamben puts his view on body language to find out the actual meaning of words. The speech only does not depend on words phrase but act of speech 'body posture'. The actual meaning never can be imitated. There is gap between word imitation original stand points. (Testimony, 15-20). In the same context novel's narrator says, "Ahmad could always sense his teacher's doubt, since it was important to him that there not be any. Now fear invades Ahmad. His face feels, swollen. A course has been laid on this peaceful place, which had been his favorite spot in the world, a waterless oasis" (279). This extract shows his disagreement with his pre occupied Muslim ideology which detaches him from other moreover from ladies before some days ago Charlie manages him to get worldly pleasure with Joyleen. Ahmad's expression towards she shows his hidden desire from his speech as: "I like you too well to treat you like some whore" (221). His Muslim master always teaches as girls, sex, worldly pleasure are 'Devils' and they spoils the human images. In addition to, he reminds Ahmad such spoiled people are denied by God. So he encourages him to be alert from there close relation. But Ahmad shows his internal disagreement with his master's ideology. It also reflects suffocation of his class with his teacher. There is not choice him to complete his mission of his 'Straight path'. He feels being prey of Shaikh his teacher in course of searching his best way to get ride of from hunted past. His facial expressions strike on his desire. He regrets how the waste not using her when she had been paid for. It clears his fears reflects the disagreement against it his teacher and his ideology.

Another character Joryleen's body language that is 'silence' where she is easily read the truth of this with her silence. Joryleen's silence shows her critical situation of her life. What she does 'prostitution' is not her desire but it is the domination of patriarchal society over her. She cannot go against the male dominated culture, so her silence strongly reflects the disagreement to given duty her to income money by such immoral job.

Updike *Terrorist* presents the nuanced and varied pictures of with the traumatic feelings in relation to socio-economic and political culture after the post 9/11 scenario after *Terrorist* attack on in twin tower on 9/11 American perspective towards Muslim, or Arabian American people and traumatic impact of 9/11 upon people is problematic. Major and minor characters suffer from the catastrophic effects in individual psyche. Ahmad chooses for being truck driver and Joryleen starts prostitution. Charlie works as CIA as undercover agent he is also plot designer of Ahmad for jihad. He uses Ahmad has been receiving private lesson in Islam since when he was eleven years old. The narrator puts it, Ahmad thought he might find in this religion a trace of the handsome father who had receded at the moment his memories were beginning' (99).

As Ann Kaplan observes:

"The experience 9/11 also demonstrates the difficulties of generalizing about trauma and its impact, for, as Freud pointed out long ago, how once reacts to a traumatic event depends on one's individual psychic history, one memories inevitably mixed with fantasies of prior catastrophes, and on the particular cultural and political context within which a catastrophe takes place, especially how it is" managed by institutional forces. (1)

This extract shows that generalizing trauma and its impact depends on individual psychic history of catastrophe. Political and cultural context also plays vital role in analyzing trauma. So, 9/11 event and its impact represented in the novel also shows how catastrophe affects individual psyche. The novel of post 9/11 scenario exhibits the trauma on the world stage and domestic stress. Moreover, it shows the way in which the family crises are resolved or remain unresolved because of historical and political baggage, cultures and demography as well as literary trends and ways of dealing with politics in literature. The novel emphasizes society's response to terrorism and individual *Terrorists* without suggesting how to solve profound conflicts of ideology.

Ahmad is a main character of Updike's *Terrorist* who has been suffering by his identity crises which has become the subject to torture him. His father's decamped from his family and hedonistic feature of his mother leaves him in border line of identity. The experience of theological innovation a person needs to be required ethical. In reference to these trauma is created the lack of culture and owns subjectivity in history of political life. Identity involves a cultural reference. It is the challenge to meaning that provides the sense of shock and fear not the events themselves. Whether or not the structures of meaning are destabilized and shocked is not the result of an event but the effects of socio-cultural process. It is the result of an exercise of human agency, of the successful imposition. Individual security is anchored in structures of emotional and cultural expectation that provide a sense of security and capability.

"Exactly he had hoped my mother had explained to me, to absorb lessons in American enterprise and marketing technique. It was not as easy as he had been told. It would be. His name was is; I very much

feel he is still alive - Omar Ashmawy and hers is Teresa Mulloy. She is Irish American. They married well before I was born. I am legitimate.

(35)

This extract depicts the wound of Ahmad that has blown up his life. To search his father for his security, identity and lost love of childhood. Unfortunately he does not have right to know about his father. His Irish American mother never tells him about his father's up to teenage. Ahmad uses a word 'legitimate' which explores the depth of his wound which regularly pain him. Every child needs child right love effects on, care, good education but they became far for him. Anyway he has some word about his father which he assumes the right.

An opposed to psychological and physical trauma, which involves a wound and the experience of great emotional anguish by an individual, cultural trauma refers to dramatic loss of identify and meaning, a tear in the social Fabric affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone, in a community a experienced directly by and or all. While it may be necessary to establish some events as the significant 'cause'. It's traumatic meaning must be established and accepted, a process of which requires time, as well as mediation and representation.

The main character of Updike's *Terrorist*, Ahmad suffers from the mentally tortured in his color and identity. He is the product of a black Egyptian Muslim father and white Irish-American protestant mother .This research depicts the complicated situation of having mixed culture character. Due to his father's decamped from his family and his mother's hedonistic culture he becomes powerless and isolated in his child hood. Updike paints the vivid picture that go beyond black and white color as the metaphor for his personality ;Teresa Ahmad's mother has unbelievable white like

a lappers while” his father’s color is perfectly matte like a cloth that has been dipped” (90), Ahmad as result is dun low luster shade lighter than beige. In addition to he is from two religious background families i.e Muslim and catholic. Because of his absent father and lack of education in childhood leaves him in problematic situation. Moreover his dresses white shirt and black paint reflects the traumatic feelings of confused Ahmad. He can’t identify himself in school. Sometime he stands him with white for his security as a closed to his white mother but at the same time he is harshly criticized and satire by his friend Joryleen with his mother’s immoral character. Likewise he is in school his black friends deny to take him in their group. Even his black friend Tylenol insulted him with very offensive word. These memories of his past become nightmares of his life. So he repeats the word ‘dun colour’(34). His confusing identity and his belief keep him separate from school’s Hispanic gang .In the same context his friend Joryleen and Tylenol say, “You wouldn’t preety yourself up with a clean shirt every day like some preacher. How is your mother stand doing all that ironing” (9). For security and cultural status, Ahmad expresses in the US. Further the narrator adds, “Tylenol likes the audience; he announce “Black Muslims” (16). I don’t this but you don’t black but a poor sithead.

The persona of the *Terrorist* depicts sense of self and self-presentation. It is based on expression of feeling and experience of self. Likewise after Ahmad's encounter with Joryleen and after he is convinced to give up on his mission- both seemingly huge alternations or challenges to his sense of himself-Ahmad reacts mildly, as though deflated rather than provoked.

The novel deals with the issue of trauma from the enlightenment perspective. In the novel, major characters show phobia or risky situation of American in cultural torture from different types of viewpoint. They have anxiety of their homeland

security. Memories of the past should be taken for best guidelines of future. He emphasizes on the rational evaluation of past and also suggest not to forget it blindly

Jack Levy says:

Even our vaunted freedom is nothing much to be proud of, with commies out f running, it is just make it easier for *Terrorist* to move about renting aero planes, and vans setting up website, religious fanatic and computer geeks: the combination seems strange to his old fashioned sense of the reason versus faith divide. Those creeps who flew the planes world trade center had good technical education. (27)

Jack and Hermione and Beth show the horror of upcoming dangers due to the American culture of freedom and craziness of coming other A Jews character Jack Levy has the the long memories of his past. He is the witness of the past historical revolution and events of civil war and the latest terrible attack on 9\11. His dissatisfaction toward white American culture and feeling burden to his given role it means guidance consular. This extracts shows his anxiety regarding threaten of security. His distress, recentness reflects the trauma of character. The circumstances and given burden role to him tortures in his past life. His objection on American freedom culture and religious fanatic and advanced education proves the causes of whole Americans peoples' traumatic feeling on horror of *Terrorist*. He views on American freedom culture which is more fertile and for *Terrorist* activities. Moreover American thought toward Muslim and its culture of freedom is to attempt to kill cat within closed room. He suggests being alert to the possible repetition of past events. Here his fear is not with other than outside present Muslim. They argue American education and freedom culture are used best for *Terrorist* attack.

This Present research in *Terrorist* presents the critical situation of character Beth' due to having relation with different culture life partner from Jews community and her trauma comes through the repeated nightmares as hallucination. In this context Caruth views as" in its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events. In which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, an controlled repetitive occurrence of phenomena" (unclaimed 181). Lutheran characters more critical past traumatic memories of her life become more critics in her present life. She has repeated unusual unreal images which frightened her. Narrator explains her memories repeat:

Emerging from the bathroom with her body wrapped in square yard of bathrobe. She sees him standing silent and motionless at the window of the upstaire hall and cries out, frightened "jack what is wrong ? This is the sign and depression, they were saying on television the other day. Oprah had a woman on whose written a book. May be you should see a - I don't know the word 'psychiatrist' frightens everybody who is not rich. (31)

This quote reveals the unfulfilled desire of Beth who is very willing to bend and change. Beth a Lutheran character is addicted to consuming culture. She has more upset and panic memories of past which hunt her day by day. She gets marriage with Jews boy Levy "on the second floor or New prospects ridiculous city hall" (24) but it is the against of her and her parents desire for church marriage. She also suffers from her husband very poor life style. So the flash back of these memories for torture, pain hunt and make very psyche also. And night mare may be frequent in her life.

The main character of *Terrorist* Ahmad has bitter memories of his childhood which lead him a 'straight path'. Edkins narrate "Traumatic experiences and memories

that lead to the construction of history. Trauma is fundamental to the production of political community. We have seen that the diagnosis and treatment of trauma survivor can serve to discipline their memories and render them politically powerless. Due to the absent black Egyptian father and Irish American mother's careless makes Ahmad of isolation and deserted life . When he begins to go in local mosque his memories of parts lead him to make his own history that is strong devotee of Muslim. But he doesn't think that his hunger or desires are capitalized by others. As a good follower of muslim he rejected American culture and education and decides to become truck driver. Though he has more potentiality for good education he rejected it saying as" An imperialist economic system rigged infavour of rich Christians (80)"

Further more Ahmad's memories of past are diverted by another character Charlie chehab. Ahmad's strong commitment of muslim faith raptures by the sexual relationship joryleen that is managed by Charlie. Since then Ahmad's memories glide to future. That politic of memories and the way of it's diagnosis from charlies compels a little Ahmad to think and questions about his memories of isolation. Finally another father figure a counselor Jack levy is successes to change the traumatic experience and memories that is going to be catastrophic. Ahmad is convinced totally and realizes that what really God says. He says " God doesn't want to destroy. It was He who made the world. (306)". In this way all his memories become powerless so trauma is central to relation with power.

This above extract becomes evident to prove how intense of trauma and its impact on African life. Naturally child closes to mother but their color match with nature innate becomes the subject to criticize that pains African day to day. Moreover his dun color matching with father and Arab also rejected in his school friend rather

they address him with offensive word like 'shithead' that mans very unpleasant. Thus his mixed blood identity becomes the traumatic issue.

The present research in Updike *Terrorist* shows the situation of character how does they victimize by their extremes stress. Mostly Ahmad Wrestles with the dilemma. Ahmad's oscillation between his desire and his religion exhibits the traumatic feeling of character. In the novel Ahmad regularly has to face the problem of desire versus faith. Ahmad encounters in opposite sex in his teen aged friend at the school create problem him. According to natural law every human being is attracted by opposite sex so does Ahmad. on the other hand he begins to commit Muslim ideology which is taught by one extremist Muslims teacher Shaikh Rasid .He can't manage well so he seems somewhere flirting with Joryleen's smooth body darker than Carmela but paler than chocolate. His observation on Joryleen's height and casts his sight on her breast and deep naval shows explicitly his desire towards opposite sex. Even he addresses her as 'Little Miss' popular ad feels most romantic and pleasure with her picture. But immediately Ahmad keeps him apart from his desire or from such friends Here Ahmad is victimized from his psyche .He uses the Muslim ideology to repress his desire. He says to these as 'Devils' Tylenol says, "Though he shuns, as unholy and impure, the glances of lingering interest he receives from the dusky girls around him in school, Ahmad doesn't wish his body marred. He wishes to keep as its maker formed it .Tylenol enmity becomes one more reason to live is hellish castle" (18). John Updike emphasizes on the complicated situation of character suffering in relationship and critical unfavorable circumstances. This research has tried to prove some characters unusual life style. Post unforgettable accident and events are the causes and effects of trauma where all characters are torture in their life.

Jack Levy is victimized character of the past memories. Cultural trauma occurs when members of collectively feel they have been subjected to horrendous event that leaves in deep marks on their group consciousness marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways:

Insomnia, despairing Jack thinks of seeking Beth's hand under the covers but in trying to find it and the mound her slumbering flesh. He might disturb her and awaken her needy, a tireless still-girlish voice. With stealth almost criminal, he slides his feet upward on the bottom sheet and eases the blanket aside and escape the marital beds. (26)

He is Jews characters. In his family there is a son and wife, for Jack his wife is heaviest symbolic burden of loving called Beth. She is overweight protestant and addicted to consuming and living in fear of *Terrorist* but incapable of anything about either of them. Jack Levy feds up with his overweight wife's snoring habits which always breaks up his sleep. He thinks his wife is warm for skilling his sleep. That makes disturbance tomorrow's whole schedule. This circumstance of home makes him pathetic. These past dangerous memories such as images thought or flashback may hunt the person and nightmare may be frequent. Insomnia may occur as lurking fears and insecurity keep the person vigilant and on the looks out for danger both day and night.

Moreover Jack levy one of the most virtue character of Updike is readily agree to enshoulder the responsibility of purifying America, deals with traumatic theme. Furthermore, he is a guidance counselor of central High school. According to his role he is supposed to be shutting students into their proper role in American society. He wants to Ahmad to go to college but Ahmad explicitly rejects this option, arguing not wanting to become a part of an American imperialist economic system rigged in favor

of Christianity (80). In addition, he suggests joining army which may be more beneficial for him but also this time he rejects this option saying "The army would send me to fight my brothers". Moreover, his student Joryleen and Ahmad have chosen the path of prostitute and *Terrorist*. Here his failure image mocks him. Again his conversation with Shaikh Rasid gives more shocked because of Imamic belief on the conflict or war. In this context, narrator says:

He sees himself as a pathetic elderly figure on a shore, shouting out to flotilla of the young as they slide into the total morass of the world - its dwindling resources. Its disappearing freedom, its merciless advertisement geared to a pre-posterior popular culture of eternal music and beer and impossibly thin and fit young females. (23)

Jack levy traumatic reference depicts the picture of American culture which victimizes the more as him. Narrator explains him as a 'suspens' character who struggles with his consciousness back against the certainty. He tries more to forget and 'ignore the whole revolution' (30). He laments his own old age with despairing voices. His burden duty and failure images including his family circumstances raptures his mind and become psychosis and recentness.

Antagonist character of Updike *Terrorist* Charlie has melancholic experiences of past history. His memories of past makes him complicated. In addition he stands himself as multiple but betrayed roles. LaCapra in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* claims 'and the future is blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop (21). In the same context LaCapra further states: Part of the feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it may be the melancholic sentiment that, in working through the past in a manner that enables survival or a reengagement in life, one is betraying those who were overwhelmed and consumed by that traumatic past

Charlie explains Ahmad:

The enemies around us, the children and fat people in shorts giving us their dirty little looks have you noticed?- do not see themselves as oppressors and killers. They see themselves as innocent, absorbed in their private lives. Everyone is innocent-they are innocent, the people jumping from the towers were innocent, George W. Bush is innocent, a simple reformed drunk from Texas who loves his nice wife and naughty daughters. Yet, out of all this innocence, somehow evil emerges. The western powers steal our oil, they take our land". (187-88)

This extract shows the traumatic feeling of Charlie. He has memories of the Hessian war. Charlie a Lebanese – American character from the Chehab family has been living in America since his grandparents. He has habituated to follow the American secular culture. His memories lead him into uncertainty. Charlie explains the Hessian war to Ahmad first he identifies him as a brave soldier having strong patriotic feeling, he says as: "we were toast" (175). Later on he expresses the feeling of being lost in war and its impact. Charlie explains the Hessian war as "enemies " " who butchered us" (177). In addition, he can't digest that the Hessian succeeded in being American by intermarrying with local Americans. In fact, Charlie portrays Americans as enemies due to the mix-up of Hessians with white people and their exploitation and domination over Arabs. So Charlie has such faith or feelings which make him feel betrayed. As a profession he is a CIA informant but he works with the underworld for a terrorist attack. For it Charlie and Shaikh Rashid prepare Ahmad for Jihad or suicidal bombardment. Charlie rides on Ahmad and encourages him to punish those Americans in addition to that Americans are victims rather than they are responsible for what happens in the Middle East. More over the

present exploitation and domination over Arab for oil and so on refreshes those memories of past and Charlie begins to vomit revenge.

Regarding trauma as a social construct, Edkin *in trauma and politics of memory* says : Traumatic impression doesn't have a direct connection to reality at all. That's why the narrative or the memory of the survivor of the traumatic event is guided by her/ his ideology. Consequently this narrative turns into historiography rather than true account of the past experiences or events- further more Edkin says Trauma is not experienced at the time; it is belated and this belatedness gives trauma a space for constructing discourse.

Updikes novel *Terrorist* written aftermath on 9\11 in political scenario where writers incline towards American views for the Muslim. Writer's comparison novel's character with real character of 9\11 i.e. Muhammad Atta to verify that the two characters are alike. The incident of 9\11 gave a catastrophic experience of cultural identity. It was horrendous events because it has left a traumatic fear on American psyche. Narrator says

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

The given extract shows the memories of 9/11 and its impact on American thought or views towards Muslim and also reconstruction of the memories of events on the basis of presents. The narrator of novel brings the historical reference to verify that Muslim character Ahmad is undoubtedly *Terrorist*. This also explores the views of American

towards Muslim after 9/11. They have begun to think that every Muslim have the same ideology i.e *Terrorist*. There is no more strong proof that accused of 9/11 event had shaved but not this is only discursive. There is also no link between these two fictional Ahmad and 9/11 Mohammad Atta. On the next side another Muslim from chehed family courage Ahmad for suicide attack. He is also guided by his ideology. In addition these anniversary of their feat and enemy will have relaxed it has no reality. These all references are guided by American ideology. As stated in world news that covered the 9/11 acts, the Egyptian student, "Mohammad Atta" was accused and televised as "the suspected leader of the World Trade Center Hijackers" (BBC 7 June 2002).

Updike's style of language and using of Metaphor like 'straight path' and 'devil' to describe the whole meaning of traumatized character. Ahmad's journey to straight path of the true believer reflects his repetitive nightmare phenomena and also creates the horror to the people. And the metaphorical word 'devil' carries the different meaning in Ahmad's theological mind. He uses 'devils' somewhere infidels people and sometime to immoral character so on.

Caruth strongly advocates 'the language of literature' as the exemplary genre that encourages a shift into forms of narrative that enables movement beyond the belatedness effect of trauma. This is because literary fiction gestures beyond itself, the figurative language offering an imaginative leap that moves beyond the denotative meaning (qtd. in Roman 78). However, through metaphor both in its structure and its context-that trauma can be worked through, provided the metaphors that are utilized, are both historically grounded and contextually oriented. We can suggest that it is in black literature that the emotional and psychic effects of racism and sexism on embodied subjectivity are most passionately and clearly articulated. The multiple

levels of fictional narrative differs from the writing of theory or history because while all three combine images of social groups and relations and their interactions with each other and the outer world within which they live, fiction adds in much greater complexity the inner depth of emotional and psychic responses that cannot easily be encompassed within the other two genres. However it is in literature that the effects of racism on subjectivity can be most clearly discerned and renegotiated.

The main character of *Terrorist* Ahmad has bitter memories of his childhood which lead him a 'straight path'. His childhood with absent black Egyptian father and Irish American careless mother is more isolated and deserted life. This circumstance makes him traumatic. Ahmad can't get love, affection and education from family which is more platform of future. So he feels everything in American culture and their life style as devil' and claims that is the cause of this loneliness. John Updike's novel opens with. These devils seek to take away my God" and ends with "These devils 'Ahmad thinks, have taken away my God". This is the traumatic feeling of Ahmad in relation to American people specially infidels and materialistic society. Within this society his journey to straight path to search his absent father as his identity leads him to Shaikh Rasid'. Imam directs his path into danger on the God's path (112). Ahmad's innocent mind and his hunger is capitalized by Charlie where he says 'I seek to straight path her Jihad. Finally, his straight path change into the path is straight" (309). All these reference show the dilemma of his journey or life.

Thus, race relations as well as the loss of the American dream are at the centre of the novel *Terrorist*. It depicts the trauma of race, ethnicity and place. Through the depiction of main characters from different religion, the novelist judges the impact of historical traumatic event, 9/11 in multicultural American society. Through the voice of a young Muslim, the novel depicts traumatized psyche of Muslims in American

society in post 9/11 scenario. His desire of suicide bombing represents how terror and fear affect the psyche of people. He tries to seek his identity of self in post dissolved American society.

III. Narrativization in Updike's *Terrorist*

The research focuses the issue of traumatic experiences in John Updike *Terrorist*. The research has basically focused on the traumatic effects upon the various characters and how the intensity of trauma and its effects the characters. Characters suffer not only in the past but also in present because of strong presence of perpetrator 'devil' and also deposited action in their mind. The main traumatic issues are: Isolation, frustration, attempt to suicide and sexual abuse, horror, anxiety, wound shown in characters life which ruptures the characters life as well as dehumanize the whole human race. The main character is victimized from ideology and theology of American society. The childhood of Ahmad seems as orphan because of his absent father and careless mother. Likewise his teenage is misguided by Imam: Who designs the plot for *Terrorist* attack on the occasion of anniversary of 9/11. As a truck driven, he works in Charlie's furniture where he is again capitalized for 'Jihad'. Finally he ahead to Lincoln tunnel with explosive bomb but it is averted by school guidance counselor. His unfinished project raises a question about Ahmad's traumatic psyche.

Moreover, this research finds that the psychological harassment of characters and ramification from traumatic experiences under the influences of external forces; society and internal forces; family. Updike has presented psychological harassment in the novel. *Terrorist* through the story of the characters are victimized from many factors. Ahmad's psychological disposition toward stereo typical image or obedient that creates anxiety or horror of upcoming *Terrorist* attack upon American people. In contrast Ahmad is victimized by American ideology and also by traumatized Muslim characters. Updike emphasizes on the complicated situation of characters. Mentally tortured relationship critical situation of human life and unfavorable appear in every circumstances. Mainly past unforgettable event of 9/11 and it's impacts are the main

causes and effects of trauma where all characters are frustrated, depressed and anxious, it leads the people's life in decaying.

Post traumatic consolation allows victims of violence and tortures to come back with a new sense of healing of soul. Ahmad, a victim of loneliness and misguiding, was successful to overcome the pain and suffering of the past only when he got an opportunity to share his traumatic life with Joryleen. It strongly verifies that the platform of sharing will be the most powerful dosage to neutralize the poison of the past. The narrative focuses on a method of recovery that is possible through an intimate relationship with others. Sharing of experiences lessens the negative memories that ultimately leads toward happiness. In this way, the writer endeavors to validate post traumatic consolation and sharing as the major approach to renovation of life.

Updike's novel and Alexander's cultural trauma and major cultural theorist are the tools for examining the cultural trauma of a major character in a post-modernist city, America. The protagonist of the novel begins to feel that the loss of Muslim identity and (distanced by) restricted by the American ideology then he comes to realize the need of action against the American dream by choosing the Islamic. For him, infidelity is a dangerous 'evil' so he keeps himself away from that culture by applying Muslim ideology. But he finds there is also a 'devil' a religious leader who distorts the theme of Islam that is peace and love so he leaves his mission in the middle of the road. So Updike's *Terrorist* is no more than an American narrow vision towards Muslims to identify themselves. Thus, race relations as well as the loss of the American dream are at the center of the novel *Terrorist*. It depicts the trauma of race, ethnicity and place. Through the depiction of main characters from different religions, the novelist judges the impact of the historical traumatic event, 9/11, in a multicultural American society. Through the voice of a young Muslim, the novel depicts the traumatized psyche of

Muslims in American society in post 9/11 scenario. His desire of suicide bombing represents how terror and fear affect the psyche of people. He tries to seek his identity of self in post disserted American society.

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