



## **Repercussions of Stereotyping and Cultural Bigotry in John Updike's 9/11 Fiction**

**Saleem Dhobi, PhD**

Department of English

Patan Multiple Campus, Lalitpur, Nepal

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**Corresponding Author:** Saleem Dhobi, Email: [gulsan2062bs@gmail.com](mailto:gulsan2062bs@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

*This article analyzes Updike's 9/11 novel, *Terrorist* to explore the implications of stereotyping and cultural bigotry in US society in the aftermath. The novelist demonstrates the problematic in the cultural integration of minorities particularly Muslims and Jews as represented by Ahmad and Jack Levy. The primary motto of the article is to analyze the novel from the perspective of the protagonists Ahmad and Jack who suffer the cultural and social exclusion in American society. Ahmad is the victim of cultural bigotry and Jack Levy faces discriminatory practices at school. The isolation and marginalization of Ahmad and Jack respectively imply the ethnic crevices prevalent in the US society. The author demonstrates that the dominant cultural groups: European and African Americans do not accept the religious minorities: Muslims and Jews. Consequently, Muslims who are overtly the targets of cultural hatred and marginalization in the aftermath of the 9/11 as portrayed in the novel become hostile toward the Western culture. The efforts for integration of religious minorities are cosmetic as exemplified in the cases of Ahmad and Jack in the text. The writer makes a balance in representing both dominant and Muslim cultures to demonstrate the problems pertaining to ethnic groups at their failure in accommodating differences. The cultural separation and hatred prevalent in US society become obstacles even for those like Jack who seek to integrate. The paper eventually demonstrates the possibility of integration of religious minorities when both mainstream Americans and people of religious minorities conform to accepting the differences.*

**Keywords:** *Repercussion, ethnicity, isolation, exclusion, bigotry, separation, integration, diversity*

### **Introduction**

The paper explores the frequency of cultural prejudice and stereotyping among ethnicities in Updike's *Terrorist*. The protagonist, Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy is a victim in American society because of cultural conflict extant between dominant European Americans and Muslim minority. Besides European Americans, African-Americans do dominate Muslims of the Asian origin as portrayed in the novel. Joryleen Grant and

Tylenol Jones – African American students, at Central High – reveal the cultural bigotry amplified in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks at the societal level. Tylenol bullies Ahmad, and treats him as if the latter is not an American. Contrary to Tylenol's intimidation, Ahmad perceives Western culture materialistic and hedonistic. Since students at school bother with cultural differences as exemplified in their intercultural communication, Tylenol and Joryleen can be taken as the representatives of mainstream culture, whereas Ahmad represents minority Muslims. Ahmad fails to reciprocate cultural differences when communicating with Joryleen. Consequently, he fails to integrate into the diversity because of cultural segregation. The cultural separation can be seen in Ahmad in *Terrorist*, in which he stays away from the Americans culturally but not geographically. This segregation is psychological. Both groups European Americans and Muslims seek to stay away from each other because of their intolerant behaviors as depicted in the novel.

The representation of Ahmad's interpersonal relations with his friends at school reveals the exclusionary practices based on cultural differences. This is apparently practiced with Jewish minorities as seen in the cultural adaptation of Jack, a teacher of Ahmad, with Jewish background. In spite of his long experience in teaching and his endeavors for integration into dominant culture, he has been working as a guidance counselor to troublesome children at Central High over last six years. US society has not accepted him wholeheartedly because of the extant cultural bigotry. His deprivation from respectable positions at school questions the liberal ideals of American schools. The exclusion of minority Muslims and Jewish minorities represented by Ahmad and Jack respectively substantiates the obstacles in the multicultural practices in US society. The stereotyping of minorities results into the marginalization and separation of minorities.

### **The Question of Social Exclusion**

The article analyzes Updike's *Terrorist* published in 2006 in the aftermath of 9/11. I explore the conditions of ethnic minorities especially Jews and Muslims. I argue that the author portrays Ahmad as an anti-American sociopath because of the prejudices in American society. Ahmad despises Western culture because of the discriminations existent in the school. His mates and teachers bully and tease him there. Instead of encouraging him to integrate in American society, both African and European American students isolate him because of his belonging to Muslim culture. He is socially excluded. Naila Kabeer, in "Social Exclusion: Concepts, Findings and Implications for the MDGs," defines social exclusion "has to be seen as an institutionalized form of inequality, the failure of a society to extend to all sections of its population the economic resources and social recognition which they need in order to participate fully in the collective life of the community" (4). For Kabeer, a society must include all sections of the population through equal distributions of resources and recognition. From this perspective, American society fails to accommodate religious minorities as exemplified in the case of Ahmad. Neither American friends accept his ethnicity, nor do they stop bullying Ahmad. The sustained practice of exclusion and ethnic discrimination at school implies the challenge to the principles of cultural multiplicity.

The author portrays Ahmad as a practicing Muslim who hates Western values. Contrary to him, Jack Levy is depicted as a liberator, rescuer, and motivator. Shaikh Rashid, a religious mentor of Ahmad is represented as an Islamic fundamentalist who

advocates for Wahhabism, an intolerant ideology of Islam, as portrayed in the novel. The novel written in the aftermath of the 9/11 demonstrates Muslim and Jewish minorities as the targets of hatred and exclusion in US society. Alaa Alghamidi strengthens my viewpoint by asserting that the novel is from the viewpoint of a self-declared Muslim extremist and a potential terrorist quite different from the usual protagonists in Updike's other novels. The novel portrays Ahmad Mulloy – a young boy of mixed ethnicities: an Egyptian father and a freethinking Irish-American mother. The boy's identity is unquestionably American (1). Ahmad hates American values because mainstream Americans do not accept him as American. Because of this identity crisis, he grows hostile towards Western values. His hatred and apathy toward dominant culture is the implication of long –time ethnic bigotry extant in US society.

The protagonist, Ahmad is forced to justify his national identity in the country he was born. When defending his position, he strongly says, "Of course. I am not a foreigner. I have never been abroad" (35). Ahmad struggles to prove his American identity. He is a student at Central High, where his schoolmates find him idiosyncratic because of his deep attachment to his faith, Islam and his abandonment from US materialistic culture. When Joryleen strives to persuade him for school, he does not respond to her. The novel reads:

As students go at Central High, they are "good". His religion keeps him from drugs and vice, though it also holds him rather aloof from his classmates and the studies on the curriculum ... "You're looking way serious," she tells him. "You should learn to smile more".

"Why? Why should I, Joryleen?"

"People will like you more."

"I don't care about that. I don't want to be like." (*Terrorist* 8)

Joryleen appreciates his faith, as it keeps Ahmad away from social vices. Contrary to this, she compares him with American students. Her advice to Ahmad for becoming more expressive implies that she seeks him to assimilate into American society. John Berry's model of acculturation is relevant here. He clarifies the concept of acculturation employed to "refer to the cultural changes resulting from these group encounters, while the concepts of psychological acculturation and adaptation are employed to refer to the psychological changes and eventual outcomes that occur as a result of individuals experiencing acculturation" (6). Their conversation reveals that Ahmad has grown up in a rigid Muslim culture, but he encounters an American culture at Central High that he finds irritating. Contrary to her opinion, Ahmad refuses to melt into dominant culture. His refusal to conforming to American culture reveals that he does not want to integrate into the multicultural set-up of American society. His failure at adapting to American culture is the implication of cultural exclusion of Muslims in US society. When Joryleen asks Ahmad, "What are you staring at, Ahmad"? (*Terrorist* 67) about his feeling to her look, Ahmad responds to her, "That little thing in your nose. I didn't notice it before. Just those little rings on the edge of your ear" (*Terrorist* 67). Besides, Ahmad wants Joryleen to stay away from materialistic culture. His subtle observation of Joryleen's clothing marks his indifference toward mainstream culture.

Although both Joryleen and Ahmad look intimate, they do not accept each other's culture. When Joryleen pleads him to mix up with other students, he preaches her about chastity and modesty of women as accorded in Islamic scriptures. Although

Joryleen wants Ahmad to romanticize with her, he does not show any infatuation toward her beauty and youthfulness. The portrayal of these opposite emotional responses suggests that Ahmad refuses to accept dominant culture although Joryleen loves American way that is romance and free life style. This contrariness does not allow them to come together. "The two young bodies cling together, panting climbers who have attained a ledge. Joryleen says, "There, now. You got a mess in your pants but we didn't have to use any scumbag and you're still a virgin for that bride of yours with the head scarf" (*Terrorist* 226). Joryleen cracks a joke on Ahmad's virginity and relates his chastity with the prospective bride. Hence, she stereotypes his would-be spouse with headscarf. Her mindset about women in Islam reveals her attitude toward minority Muslims. Meanwhile, Ahmad's disinterestedness in Joryleen implies Muslims' reluctance to accept Western norms.

The portrayal of Tylenol and Joryleen reveals the contrary image of Ahmad. Joryleen studies in Ahmad's class and he has complex feelings for her. Tylenol is her aggressive boyfriend. Joryleen and Tylenol celebrate American culture, "What a friend, what a friend," Joryleen pants lightly, in imitation of the way the choir broke up the hymn's phrases suggesting the repetitive (as he understood them) motions of sexual intercourse. "He just is, that's all," she insists" (68). Joryleen, a carefree and romantic girl, derives pleasure in all her undertakings. She seeks Ahmad to behave frankly and emotionally, but he does not respond to her sensually. Nevertheless, she invites him to mix up in the American culture. The narrator states:

"Hey," she says, "let's not talk this stuff. Thanks for coming, Ahmad. I never thought you would." . . . "Enemy? Whoa. You didn't have no enemies there."

"My teacher at the mosque says that all unbelievers are our enemies. The Prophet said that eventually all unbelievers must be destroyed." (*Terrorist* 68)

Because of Ahmad's reluctance into her world, she shows preparedness to change the topic. She exclaims whether Ahmad took his classmates and teachers as his enemies. Updike portrays the communication between Ahmad and Jack who put forward their perspectives toward the use of money. Jack endeavors to persuade Ahmad that the latter can earn ample money from a job, but he counters Jack's views. Thus, Ahmad despises consumable goods as reflected in their interpersonal communication. While expressing Ahmad's anger at the Americans, the narrator elaborates:

These doomed animals gathered in the odor of mating and mischief yet have the comfort of their herded kindred, and each harbors some hope or plan of a future, a job, a destination, an aspiration if only to rise in the ranks of dope dealers or pimps. Whereas he, Ahmad, with abilities that Mr. Levy had told him were ample, has no plan: the God attached to him like an invisible twin, his other self, is a God not of enterprise but of submission. (*Terrorist* 184)

Ahmad takes Americans as 'doomed animals' indulged in sex and illegal acts just for physical comfort. He perceives them obsessed with the future and they plan accordingly. Contrary to them, Ahmad stays dedicated to Allah and seeks to submit himself to Him instead of indulging in the commercial world. He hates sexual intercourse outside marriage and demeans the characters like Tylenol, Joryleen, and Teresa because of their openness and illicit relations. His subtle criticism reveals his views about marriage, "What's to say? I love 'em. And what about love, Madman? Don't you feel it? Like I say, we got to get you laid." "That is a kind wish on your part, but without marriage it would

go against my beliefs" (*Terrorist* 185). For Ahmad, Islam does not allow believers to stay in relationships with opposite sexes outside marriages. Contrary to this, Updike portrays Jack as a rational figure who makes a counter-argument, "Oh, come on. The Prophet himself was no monk. He said a man could have four wives. The girl we'd get you wouldn't be a good Muslim; she'd be a hooker. She'd be a filthy infidel with or without whatever you did to her." "I do not desire uncleanness" (*Terrorist* 185). Jack triggers Ahmad's rational faculty by referring to the Prophet, Mohammad who was married off with twelve women. As per the Islamic law, a man can marry four women. The depiction of Jack's counseling to Ahmad suggests that the inherent arbitrariness in Islam makes Ahmad think over his faith critically. As a result, he starts thinking of cultural practices. Updike by demonstrating the drawbacks of both American way and Muslim culture questions Western materialism and Islamic fundamentalism respectively.

The author portrays both Muslim and non-Muslim characters to demonstrate ethnic fissures – hatred, hostility, disrespect, and misconceptions. For Ahmad, Western culture is godless and the college track is unproductive and unfavorable. He cannot tolerate the behavior and manner of his mother and stays preoccupied about her illicit relationship with men. Accordingly, he generalizes Westerners. The narrator asserts:

The American way is to hate one's family and flee from it. Even the parents conspire in this, welcoming signs of independence from the child and laughing at disobedience. There is not that bonding love which the Prophet expressed for his daughter Fatimah: *Fatimah is a part of my body; whoever hurts her, has hurt me and whoever hurts me has hurt God.* Ahmad does not hate his mother; she is too scattered to hate, too distracted by her pursuit of happiness. (*Terrorist* 168-9)

The manifestation of Ahmad's understanding about Western culture reveals that Muslim culture, which focuses on emotional bond among family members, is better than dominant culture. He alludes to the Prophet of Islam who stayed dedicated to family relationship. The portrayal of Ahmad's attitude toward his mother's loose and hollow family bond contrary to the strong bond between Mohammad and his daughter Fatimah suggests that Muslims are more compassionate than Americans are. The cleavages in the intercultural communication as exemplified in the case of Ahmad and his mother hinder the integration process of minority Muslims in US society.

### **The Politics of Representation**

In the research paper, "Terrorism and the Critique of American Culture: John Updike's *Terrorist*" Peter C. Herman argues, "Updike conceived *Terrorist* as both an exploration of the roots of Islamic terrorism and as a critique of post-9/11 discourse"(699). For Herman, Updike's Muslim characters depict "what the world looks like from their perspective, and their views partly overlap with Updike's long-standing criticisms of American culture as materialistic and self-destructive" (700). The portrayal of Shaikh Rashid reveals intolerance of Muslim fanatics who hate American culture. The representation of the characters from the culture other than that of the author can be questionable. The representation of these characters can be both real and unreal. The knowledge we have from the depiction relies on the linguistic mediation. My point is that Hall's definition of representation reveals the possibility of cultural politics in Updike's authorial position. In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Hall defines, "Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language

(broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning" (61). Language used by a particular cultural group based on representation is to interpret the phenomena. The depiction of both Muslim and non-Muslim characters in *Terrorist* novels reveals the significance of language. Updike uses the language to depict the problems in the intercultural communication between Muslims with the rest.

*Terrorist* reads, "Look at the history the school teaches, pure colonialist. Look how Christianity mined Asia and Africa and now is coming after Islam, with everything in Washington run by the Jews to keep themselves in Palestine" (*Terrorist* 38). Ahmad investigates into the school curricula and concludes that they are discriminatory and colonial. Accordingly, he unfolds the history of Christianity expansion and its intimidation in Asia and Africa. Meanwhile, the portrayal of Ahmad suggests that Muslims do not want to melt into American culture, which they view, is predominantly Christian.

In this way, the portrayal of the feelings and reactions of *imams* like those of Shaikh Rashid suggests that Muslim extremists implant hatred in youths like Ahmad that results into preventing them from integration in American society. Ahmad's preoccupied mind about Americans other than Muslims blocks his interpersonal communication with his mother, friends and teachers. Herman asserts that Muslim characters in the novel, "think of themselves as a beleaguered minority confronting a vastly superior power that desires their psychic and spiritual destruction while stealing their wealth and land" (702). The disgruntled psyche of Muslim characters isolates them from non-Muslim characters. Although Ahmad says he does not have any problems with Americans when Jack asks him about his attitude, he cannot accept American way. The narrator puts it:

"Shaikh Rashid did not suggest that, sir. He feels that such a relativistic approach trivializes religion, implying that it doesn't much matter. You believe this, I believe that, we all get along – that's the American way" . . . The boy shyly casts his eyes own again. "I of course do not hate all Americans. But the American way is the way of infidels. It is headed for a terrible doom." (*Terrorist* 39)

Jack Levy reflects on the principle of diversity that allows all cultural groups to practice their respective religion and culture. However, the defensive position of Ahmad implies that Muslims do not want to accept American way – dominant culture that prioritizes materialistic lifestyle – as they believe that they are only the true believers in Allah and the rest are non-believers. The depiction of Ahmad suggests that Updike is critical of both dominant culture and rigidity in Islam.

Suspicious Ahmad have in American curricula executed in Central High question the inclusiveness of the education system. When Teresa, the mother of Ahmad, communicates with Jack about obstacles Ahmad faces, she speaks, "Yes, I do." He doesn't want to argue over everything, though in truth he resents the hint of a threat. They're dying to graduate him, get rid of him. And graduate into what? An imperialist economic system rigged in favor of rich Christians" (*Terrorist* 80). Although Jack wants Ahmad to be a graduate, the latter is not interested. For Ahmad, the curriculum the American education system employs is imperialist, as it does not underscore minority cultures. The exclusionary American education system pushes minorities to margin and puts dominant culture at the apex. This practice in American society is the impediment for minority children to learning with fun. Suarez-Orozco argues, "Ethnic minority groups often lose faith in the education system if they are constantly subjected to

symbolic and structural violence or discrimination, because it no longer provides them with a platform for social mobility" (qtd. in Vadher 37). Ahmad cannot adapt to school because of the discriminatory education system, as it does not accommodate the issues and problems of ethnic minorities.

On a similar note, Blanchard avers that Ahmad is imagined to have the fear of being spoilt by Western education system that reestablishes the traditional dichotomy between the modern and civilized West and the primitive, uncivilized, and ignorant East. In Blanchard's analysis, Shaikh Rashid is portrayed as an Islamic fundamentalist who advocates extreme and intolerant Wahhabism – a theological reform movement – to help Muslims beat out the West with Western technologies. Shaikh Rashid's instructions and concepts are based on the Wahhabi principle – the primary adherent of the al-Qaeda (qtd. in Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia 181). The Wahhabi doctrine is deep-rooted in Saudi Arabia – a close ally to the United States that has been on the war against terror since 9/11.

Contrarily, Maryam Salehnia counters my argument, the pervasiveness of cultural marginalization in the novel. Salehnia asserts that Updike has created Jack and Ahmad to represent the orientalist and neo-orientalist respectively to justify the superiority of the West over the orient (484). Jews and Europeans were superior to the people whose land they proposed to obtain and appropriate. They put forward themselves superior to the Orient. The conflict between the West and Islam has heightened the sense of superiority complex of the Westerners. Besides, the idea of Muslims as the unavoidable enemy of God's plan to reinstate the Jews to their ancestral home in the holy land has developed (484). For her, Jack controls the life of Ahmad despite the influence of Islamic fundamentalism upon the latter. After casting Palestinians as uncivilized natives, Zionists started the colonization, the exclusion of Palestinians. Zionism, a political movement for the establishment of a Jewish state, took the advantage of defining, legitimizing, and consolidating its political basis and superiority by depicting itself as a messenger of Western culture and civilization. The legitimization process was designed in accordance with Neo-Orientalist discourse to represent Muslims as natural-born terrorists (485). In her view, the neo-colonist ideology seems to have dominated the narrative. The coordination of the US with the Jewish state in 'war against terrorism' after the 9/11 and the portrayal of the Zionist movement moral and liberating is the background of the terrorist attacks.

When reflecting on the condition of Arab Muslims, Maryam Salehnia elaborates that the portrayal of the conditions of the Arabs and their resistance as terrorism is the cause of 9/11 attacks. Most significantly, the colonial policies and political interference of the US and Israel in the Middle East must not be ignored when connecting 9/11 with Islamic radicalism (485). I think Updike depicts characters through the American worldview to change the world heading for the divide between the West and the East. Actually, the author portrays Ahmad as if this Muslim character does not hate American culture. Updike depicts Islamic civilization condemnable so that readers may react to rigid form of Islam. Although Ahmad is the protagonist, he is not the hero because of his marginalized position. The dominant culture does not allow him to prove his heroism in action. Not only Ahmad but also Jack suffers ethnic marginalization in American society as depicted in the text.

In fact, Jack plays a significant role in the school life of Ahmad. He is Ahmad's guidance counselor at Central High. Although he has long experience of teaching, Jack has to work as a guidance counselor to abnormal students at school. The representation reveals that majority groups do not only refuse to accept minority Muslims but also decline to recognize Jewish minorities. His role of a guidance counselor represents the marginal position of Jewish minorities in American society. Jack is the mouthpiece of Updike. The author by portraying Jack as a character seems to convey message for reconciliatory efforts for ethnic peace and harmony in US society. Jack's endeavors for mediating between two extremes: American materialism and Islamic fundamentalism become guidance for Ahmad to stop thinking of harming the US.

In spite of Jack's struggles to integrate by adopting American values, the school has not recognized his endeavors yet. "When Levy thinks of embattled Israel and of Europe's pathetically few remaining synagogues needing to be guarded by police day and night, his initial good will toward the imam dissolves: the man in his white garb sticks like a bone in the throat of the occasion" (*Terrorist* 112). The excerpt reflects on Jack's intercultural relations with Muslims that his fraternal relations with *imams* are over. His knowledge on the pathetic conditions of synagogues in both Europe and Israel because of Muslims as potential terrorists reveals the generalization of *imams* who carry guns. 'The man in his white garb sticks like a bone in the throat of the occasion' is full of images such as white garb, a bone in the throat, which symbolize *imams* and guns respectively.

The miserable condition of Jack Levy raises questions against the multicultural set-up of US society. He is now sixty-three years old and he wakes up "between three and four in the morning, with the taste of bread in his mouth, dry from his breath being dragged through it while he dreamed. His dreams are sinister, soaked through with the misery of the world" (*Terrorist* 19). The portrayal of Jack's condition suggests that he could not translate his dreams into reality. Although he has spent his youthfulness in teaching, instead of promotion, he has to undertake a tedious and irritating responsibility of counseling deviated children at school. 'His dreams are sinister' may imply that Jewish Americans could not have success in their respective domains, because of cultural fault-lines. The implication of the ethnic crevices reflects into the experience of Ahmad and Jack's otherness at school. American education system theoretically prioritizes diversity. The novel reads, "Any college these days, the way the politics of it are, wants diversity, and your boy, what with his self-elected religious affiliation, and, pardon me for saying it, his ethnic mix, is a kind of minority's minority-they'll snap him up" (*Terrorist* 84-5). Diversity in education, as the novel demonstrates, has primarily been a part of political hegemony. Jack explains why Ahmad fails to adapt to the school environment. For Levy, Ahmad's Islamic education does not allow him to accept the imperialist education.

Jack Levy's self-evaluation juxtaposes his real condition. The novel reads, "Levy doesn't mind Father Corcoran's nassaly nailing the triple Lord's blessing on the lid of the long ceremony; Jews and Irish have been sharing America's cities for generations, and it was Jack's father's and grandfather's generation, not his, that had to endure the taunt of "Christ-killer" (*Terrorist* 112). This extract reveals that Jews do not suffer backlash in the US now, although they had to suffer anti-Semitism earlier. Christians accused Jews of killing Christ. Even the preceding generations of Jack were the subjects of mockeries. Jews' position and intercultural communication with European Americans is much better



than that of Muslims. However, they are not fully accepted in American society as exemplified in the case of Jack.

Contrarily, Anna Hartnell explores the novel as a failed creative work of art to demonstrate the sensible relationship between politics and religion. She expresses, "Updike's novel fails to conceive of a meaningful relationship between faith and politics, and thus Ahmad's Islam is ultimately repudiated as a religious position irremediably contaminated by politics. For her, Islam is measured against an implicitly Christian model of religion and is found wanting" (495). She argues that Islam cannot be compared to Christianity. Her analysis of the text cannot go beyond the religiosity of the protagonist. Hartnell in "Violence and the Faithful in Post-9/11 America" states that the novel materializes as a crucial intercession, as it reflects on the "relationship between religion and violence" commonly shown as a cultural fault line (478). For her, the novel "contrasts the values of Islam with those of Judeo-Christian culture" (479). Her observation implies that Updike criticizes both Islam the American society. However, Hartnell's scholarship lacks a balance when evaluating the novel. The Egyptian scholar, while centering on the wide-ranging attitude among American writers after the 9/11 attacks in his essay "Encounters with Strangeness in the Post-9/11 Novel", Ahmed Gamal states:

These narrative works are thus an expression of the cultural ambivalence toward the other, a step toward beginning a new kind of writing that does not easily conform to orientalist conventions and simply perpetuate existing traditions. It is a writing that challenges these conventions and traditions that are informed by the familiar oppositions between "them" and "us", East and West, and the pre-modern and modern. (96)

Gamal has explored the novel that it challenges the conventional notions. He does not seem to have adequately justified that Updike has only limited his fictional representation to the conventional act of othering. The novel does not starkly perpetuate the binary opposition between "them" and "us". Rather, it interrogates the cultural differences that collide with each other in the American society. Gamal's opinion is not much different from that of Hartnell. The marginalized position of both Muslim and Jewish minorities is primarily depicted in the novel.

## Conclusion

The article deals with the issue of repercussions of stereotyping and cultural prejudices exponentially hiked in the aftermath of 9/11 as portrayed in Updike's 9/11 fiction. It raised the issue of the cultural separation of minorities especially that of American Muslims and Jews analyzed it accordingly. The claim of the critics that the biased representation of the East by Updike is the thematic backbone of the novel has been countered in my paper. What I have explored instead is stereotyping and cultural prejudice that has resulted into marginality and separation of both Muslim and Jewish minorities as represented by Ahmad and Jack respectively. Updike has not been culturally biased in the portrayal of ethnicities. Rather he has demonstrated the problems caused by the stereotyping of religious minorities and cultural domination of European and African Americans in US society. The exclusionary practices as exemplified in the school curricula and the marginalized position of Jack at school have been some of the causes of isolation and marginalization of Muslim and Jewish minorities. The researcher

has explored that the people represented by Ahmad and Jack Levy, have, although endeavored to become the part of American society by contributing to the development of the nation, they still suffer the repercussions of stereotyping and cultural bigotry. Their experiences are so bitter that they seem to lose hope for complete integration in US society. However, they are aspiring for the better time ahead as exemplified in the interpersonal communication between Ahmad and Jack Levy in the novel.

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