

The Use Of Historical Allusion In Recent American And Arab Fiction

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Abstract

In this paper, we analyse John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) and Mohammad Ismail's *Desert of Death and Peace* (2005) with the aim of examining the use of allusion in the depiction of 9/11 acts and the US occupation of Iraq. The comparison of the two novels, selected from two different literary traditions, enables us to explore American and Arab viewpoints of recent history. By appropriating the discussions of Gerard Genette, Michael Leddy, William Irwin, John Campbell and Allan Pasco on the use of allusion in literature, we argue that when authors allude to history in their works, they either employ allusion to affirm or oppose certain notions. In other words, there are two main strategies of allusion: affirmation and opposition. Updike alludes to history to affirm that Arab terrorists are the main enemies of the USA and also to oppose the actions of those terrorists who give themselves the right to kill civilians. In contrast, Ismail asserts that the Iraqi and American people are equally victims of super-power Jews. Therefore, he exposes an opposition to the US occupation of Iraq and the irrational reaction of the US to 9/11. Both novels implicitly utilise 9/11 and the US occupation of Iraq but each one employs these incidents according to the viewpoint and cultural background of its author. Hence, the different employment of history reveals contestations of worldviews which are symptomatic of the ideological clashes between the East and West.

Keywords: allusion, affirmation, opposition, 9/11, terrorism, Iraq, America.

Introduction

This paper is motivated by the 9/11 acts of 2001 and the US occupation of Iraq in 2003, which have shaped American and Arab fiction. In this study, we intend to examine the

use of allusion in the depiction of these incidents in John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) and Mohammad Ismail's *Desert of Death and Peace* (2005). These two novels will be analysed with the aim of exploring how history is implicitly employed to expose an affirmation or opposition to certain notions. The framework of the analysis will be an appropriation of the discussions of Gerard Genette, Michael Leddy, William Irwin, John Campbell and Allan Pasco who have theorised the use of allusion in literature. In fact, the treatment of allusion in fiction is divided into affirmative and oppositional allusion. These two types will be extensively explained further.

Literature Review

Before tracing some critical works that have examined the textual relation between literary works and history, we need to explain briefly Kristeva's definition of "intertextuality". According to Kristeva (1980, p.66), "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another". It means that texts interact with one another. Just like Kristeva, Barthes (1977, p.148) argues that any productive "text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations..." Therefore, writers, deliberately or otherwise, are influenced by past works. For some writers, the influence can be clearly traced; for others, hint of the past may be less discernable.

The appropriation of historical events is a form of intertextuality practised by many writers. For instance, Edward Quinn (2004, p.85) traces a number of literary works that reflect twentieth-century history. We have merely selected the ones that deal with the period of colonialism. According to Quinn (2004, p.85), "among the many novels dealing with the colonial experience, two rank among the fictional masterpieces of the 20th century, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and E. M. Foster's *A Passage to India* (1924)." The cohesion of these novels and history is elaborated below:

Conrad's story examines the moral disintegration that the colonizer undergoes, while Foster explores the tragic gap, the failure "to connect," that inevitably emerges in the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The two works also describe two different forms of colonialism: in Conrad's, the rapacious exploitation of the resources of the colony for the benefit of the colonizer; in Foster's "settler colonialism," in which Europeans occupy the colony, constructing a separate and privileged class within it. (Quinn, 2004, p.85).

Even though the two novels are different in their development of characters and plots; both make apparent use of the era of British "colonialism". The two stories highlight "the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized". Since the setting of Conrad's work is Congo, the "colonized" natives are then Africans, unlike Foster's narrative which focuses on India and Indians. Regardless of this disparity, the two texts successfully portray British colonial history.

By the same token, Ismaznizam Jesmaj Azyze (2007, p.60) claims that “Hawthorne’s ... *The Scarlet Letter* is ... an artefact of history, the history of a complex nineteenth-century America.” This is probably because the “reformations taking place in America [at that time] has influenced Hawthorne’s shaping of this novel” (Ismaznizam, 2007, p.60). This “influence” occurs because many authors cannot disconnect their writings from the political events that happen in their societies.

Among the critical works that deal with recent history and literature, Lindsey Moore (2009, p.1) argues that “Nadeem Aslam’s second novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) participates in the construction of British Muslim identities in the aftermath of 9/11.” For instance, with a special emphasis on Pakistan, Aslam shows a “relentless coupling of intolerance and violence with Islamic institutions and politics” (Moore 2009, p.9). She argues that the story also mirrors some of “terrorizing cultural practices” such as the “honour crimes” which some Pakistani women experience in Britain as well as in their homeland (2009, p.16). In addition to that, the text sheds light on the “hostile relations between Pakistan and India” (Moore 2009, p.11). Hence, even though the novel is seen as fiction, its employment of Pakistan-India relationship is derived from historical data. This incessant use of history in fiction leads Maud Casey (2010, p.54) to argue that “fiction” can be seen “as a way of understanding our past.” She also adds that “every work of fiction is, to some extent, in conversation with history” (Casey 2010, p.56). Due to its importance in the minds of creative writers, “history” is used as a great source and a backdrop which helps to trigger other actions in a number of stories.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of intertextuality, which was coined by Kristeva and disseminated by Barthes, has invoked other theorists and critics to shed light on a number of its mechanisms and allusion seems to be the most complicated one. Michael Leddy (1992, p.112) defines “allusion” as “words [which] typically describe a reference that invokes one or more associations of appropriate cultural material and brings them to bear upon a present context.” These “words” have double meanings, overt and covert. The former explicitly deals with the obvious “context”, and the latter is ambiguous for it refers to the “associations” that allude to elements outside the text.

Similarly, Gèrard Genette (1997, p.2) relates “allusion” to “an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some infections that would otherwise remain unintelligible.” This “enunciation” can be a word, a phrase, a sentence or maybe a complete paragraph. In fact, Genette’s perception of allusion is similar to Leddy’s which has been discussed earlier. He merely elaborates that knowing the “infections” of the old text on the new text can assist a reader’s understanding. However, William Irwin (2001, p.288) criticises Leddy’s use of the word “typical” and claims that the “additional associations are more than just typical; they are necessary for correct and complete understanding.” Hence, according to Irwin, the “allusion” is:

A reference that is indirect in the sense that it calls for associations that go beyond mere substitution of a referent. Allusions often draw on information not readily available to every member of a cultural and linguistic community, are typically but not necessarily brief, and may or may not be literary in nature. (Irwin, 2001, p.289).

As illustrated above, the reader's interference is needed to complete his/her understanding of the text. This coincides with John Campbell (1994, p.19) who argues that "allusions invite us to select from our mental library, knowledge which is not in the text itself and without which the writer's intention will not be fully communicated." Yet, the role of the reader can distort the meaning of the text particularly if the reader is subjective or biased. Therefore, although Irwin (2001, p.293) "cannot deny that the reader must play a vital role in his or her own understanding of an allusion", he insists that the reader's "understanding" "must be in accordance with the author's intent." In other words, when readers claim that a particular text alludes to another, evidences must be provided and proved. This leads Allan Pasco (2002, p.10) to explain that "when allusion is unnoticed or misunderstood, the blame should fall on readers rather than on writers and their occasional use of covert allusion." Hence, readers must be aware of the double meaning used in texts to understand them very well.

Though many discussions have been done on allusion, only a few of them have emphasised on its types. According to Pasco (2002, p.110), there are "parallel and oppositional allusions." The former refers to key-words which writers use in their texts to affirm certain notions that "parallel" a pre-existed text. Henceforth, we will call this type "affirmative allusion". The word "affirmative" is derived from the strategy of "affirmation" which David Spurr (1993, p.110) defines as "the rhetorical gesture in which the subject actually constitutes itself through repetition". This "repetition" normally affirms a certain idea that corroborates the author's perspective. Affirmative allusion can also be achieved through parallelism. Writers can show a parallel or harmony between two events, symbols, or notions to affirm that both are interrelated. However, affirmative allusion becomes dangerous when it exceeds the views and ideas into fixing stereotypes.

In contrast, the latter refers to the allusions where texts implicitly counter and oppose one another. According to Pasco (1994, p.103), "an allusion of opposition may weight parallels as a means of preparing a contrasting conclusion." In other words, text B can employ some elements of text A in order to expose an "opposition" or a refusal of its contents. Pasco (1994, p.98) argues that "allusion of opposition has been virtually ignored ... [because] allusions of opposition present particular difficulties, however, for their ironies and paradoxes usually bring nuances of extraordinary complexity to bear on some aspect of the created world." Based on this argument, we can claim that oppositional allusions occur through the use of "ironies and paradoxes". However, the affirmative and oppositional allusions converge in their "formation of metaphorical relationship where the reference and referent come together to create something different from either" (Pasco, 2002, p.98). Both types of allusion will form the theoretical framework of our analysis of the two novels. We will show how the two authors' allusions to history reveal an affirmation or opposition to certain notions.

Historical Allusion in Recent American and Arab Fiction

Following the theoretical framework explained earlier, our analysis of the allusions to 9/11 and the US occupation of Iraq in the two novels will be divided into two parts. Firstly, we will investigate the affirmative allusions in which these historical events are employed with the aim of confirming certain views. Secondly, we will examine the oppositional allusions where the two authors ironically utilise these incidents to express an implicit objection to certain notions.

1. Affirmative Allusion

In its allusion to 9/11 and the US war on terrorism, Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) employs repetitions to affirm that Muslim terrorists make the USA unsafe. Before analysing instances from the text that show how the idea above is repeated, we will briefly highlight the plot of the novel. The story centres on an eighteen-year Arab-American boy called Ahmad. He is the only child of an Irish-American nurse and an Egyptian exchange student. His father left the USA after he had finished his studies leaving Ahmad with the American mother. The absence of his father leads him to trust a Yemeni imam, Shaikh Rashid and a Lebanese-American named Charlie, both of whom brainwash him to become a suicide bomber in Lincoln Tunnel. However, Jack Levy—a Jewish American who works as a “guidance counsellor at Central High School” where Ahmad studies—realises that Ahmad is deceived (Updike 2006, p.75). The story ends when Jack knows about Ahmad's mission and marvellously succeeds in convincing him to stop driving the truck that is planned to blow up the tunnel.

The novel's allusion to 9/11 and the US war on terrorism serves to affirm the idea that Muslim terrorists are the enemies of the USA. For instance, Jack Levy explains to his wife, Elizabeth, that: “we can never be happy again—we Americans” (Updike 2006, p.129). Jack implicitly alludes to the US war on terrorism but he avoids the direct use of Arab or Muslim terrorists. The repetition of the pronoun “we” in the dialogue foregrounds the US fear of terrorism. Although Jack in this example does not denote Muslim terrorists, the picture becomes clearer in another scene which replicates the same idea of fear but with a special emphasis on Arab Muslim characters. This can be seen when Jack thinks that he can discuss with the Yemeni imam, Shaikh Rashid, about the conflict between the Muslims and the USA. Through his conversation, Shaikh Rashid's discourse frightens Jack and makes him recall traumatic memories about “crowds [which] gathered to see smoke pour from the two World Trade Towers and recede over Brooklyn, that clear day's only cloud” (Updike 2006, p.110). These memories “dissolves” his “initial good will toward the imam” (Updike 2006, p.110). Jack's reaction is intended to assert that Shaikh Rashid and other “imams” who adopt similar discourse are enemies of the USA. Such employment of 9/11 and US war on terrorism can be dangerous because its repetitive reference can lead people to adopt negative attitudes not only towards terrorists but towards Arabs and Muslims in general. This claim reinforces Leddy's earlier argument that allusion “invokes one or more associations of appropriate cultural material and brings them to bear upon a present context” (1992, p.112). In other

words, the novel utilises a double meaning; one refers to the fictional terrorists in the story and the other alludes to 9/11 terrorists and Arab Muslims outside the text. The depictions of characters inside the novel reinforce this claim. For instance, the narrator implicitly parallels between his fictional character, Ahmad, and a 9/11 terrorist, “Mohammad Atta”, to verify that the two characters are alike:

[Ahmad] 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. (Updike 2006, p.271).

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). Thus, the excerpt above mingles fiction with an event which happened in the past. On the day Ahmad is supposed to explode himself in Lincoln Tunnel, he wakes up early and tries his best to disguise in another character. Therefore, he “shaves” his beard to make himself look different. Suddenly, the narrator adds that “Mohammed Atta had shaved, and most of the eighteen other inspired martyrs”. Although this sentence alludes to 9/11 and is not related to the novel, it can be seen that both in 9/11 as well as in the novel the terrorists are Arabs. Ahmad, the fictional character, is an Egyptian-American and Mohammad Atta, is an Egyptian as well. By this comparison between fiction and history, the novel consciously or unconsciously asserts that terrorism and Arabs are two faces of the same coin.

Unlike Updike’s novel, Ismail’s *Desert of Death and Peace* (2005) alludes to the US invasion of Iraq to affirm that the American and Arab people are used as scapegoats in that war. The novel centres on a US fighter pilot named John, whose country sent with many soldiers on a navy fleet to participate in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. John discovers that the leaders of the fleet, and particularly of his warship, have hidden agendas behind their participation in the war. While Smith is obsessed by the idea of revenging 9/11, Michael’s eyes are on Iraqi oil and Edward dreams to colonise the land. However, the main leader, Martin Luther, is under the strong influence of Edward. One day, while John is driving a truck in the Arab desert, he is attacked and arrested by militant Arabs. Habib, their leader, convinces John that the US people are deceived and used as scapegoats in this war. When John returns to the warship, he convinces an officer called Lisa, who later runs away and marries Habib. Therefore, Michael and Edward kill John and Habib to keep their strategies concealed and put the blame for this crime on the Arab terrorists. Lisa returns to the USA and struggles with John’s wife, Susan, to uncover the secret agendas of the US war on Iraq, but both are imprisoned. The story ends with a new administration ruling the USA and the release of the two women.

As argued previously, Ismail’s novel employs allusions to the US invasion of Iraq to prove that the American and Arab people are equally victims of one enemy. The novel indirectly exposes that this enemy is some super-power Jews and economists. For

instance, when John knows that Edward and Michael have planned to kill him after he has joined the Iraqi resistance group, he insists on facing them; for he identifies them as:

The enemies of the Arabs and Americans, the Muslims and Christians, and all mankind. They aim to kill world peace to revive their interests in settlement and economy. They live like animals; practicing treachery and murder. They ascend on the bodies of the others to eat from the fruits of the forest that lost its laws and constitutions (Ismail 2005, p.221).

Both men have vested interests: Michael engages in the war for oil; and Edward takes on the battlefield because of his loyalty to Israel. In fact, this affirmation is clarified when the leader Smith, who runs away from the warship and hides among an Iraqi family, talks to Ahmad Al-Shafa'i who leads the Iraqi resistance group after Habib dies. Smith convincingly utters: "Sir, we the Americans and the free civilised nations were deceived and led here by a magic stick to protect individuals and dreams of the devil who cheaply sold human blood, Arabs and Americans" (Ismail 2005, p.241). The phrase "individuals and dreams of the devil" is ambiguous. It perhaps refers to Michael and Edward; it may also refer to other super-powers in the US administration. This is because when Lisa goes to the USA and struggles to uncover the secret agendas of the war, she claims, in a symposium, that:

The fear of terrorism, which our administration spread in our hearts, is nothing if compared to the fear and panic the Iraqis tolerate in their home. Even when they are praying in the mosques, we do not mercy them. We also did not respect the worship of God in His land. We did not honour the elders and did not preserve the purity of their women. (Ismail 2005, p.319).

Lisa's use of the word "administration" reinforces the previous argument that the phrase "individuals and dreams of the devil" can also allude to the US "administration". Besides, her claim above that the Americans "did not preserve the purity of [Iraqi] women" implicitly illustrates some practices of the US soldiers in Iraq. This liaison can be made clear when comparing Lisa's sentence with an event that happened in Iraq after the US invasion, such as the molestation and murder of a fourteen-year Iraq girl, Abeer al-Janabi, whose incident shocked people around the world. As reported by Marc Pilisuk and Jennifer Achord Rountree (2008, 40-1), "a group of soldiers ... changed into civvies; burst into Abeer's home; killed her mother, father, and five-year-old sister with bullets to the forehead; and took turns raping Abeer. Finally, they murdered her, drenched the bodies with kerosene and lit them on fire to destroy the evidence." Back to the novel, this event reinforces Lisa's claim that the US practices in Iraq are also forms of terrorism. In fact, the treatment of history in this story is completely different from Updike's. This divergence indicates that each writer's employment of history is coloured by his own prejudices and ideological tendencies.

2. Oppositional Allusion

In his allusion to the scene of people who jumped from WTC, Updike ironically opposes the US intervention in the Middle East which makes terrorists irrational in their revenge. This echo of history has two oppositional dimensions: one is against the US interference in the Arab World and the other is against the irrationality of terrorists who see themselves as pursuing the right path by killing civilians. For instance, while Ahmad criticises the current world where people kill one another, Charlie replies; “Ahmad, you must think of it as a war. War isn’t tidy. There is collateral damage” (Updike 2006, p.185). Although the Lebanese-American Charlie is an antagonist in the novel, he is given a voice. Being a member of a terrorist organisation, Charlie attempts to familiarise Ahmad with the notion that even if suicide bombings kill civilians, they must not be stopped. This is probably because he sees all Americans as “enemies”, as he explains to Ahmad below:

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. (Updike 2006, p.184-5).

Charlie portrays the Americans as “enemies”, “oppressors”, and “killers”. In addition to that, through ironical emphasis of the word “innocent”, he ridicules the claims which show the Americans as victims, and he conversely asserts that they are responsible for what happens in the Middle East. In other words, Charlie insists that the terrorist acts must be done because “the Western powers steal [Arab] oil, they take [Arab] land”. He also utilises the word “towers” to refer to the World Trade Center towers which collapsed on 9/11. He recalls the scene that was broadcast after the attack and showed victims “jumping from the towers” as they could not tolerate the heat of the fire there. With historical reference to this traumatic event, Heather Michon (2007, p.135) claims that “it is estimated that 50 to 200 people jumped from the upper floors” of World Trade Center. This reporting confirms that Charlie’s phrase “jumping from the towers” alludes to 9/11. However, this allusion is ironically employed to expose an opposition to two divergent views. On the one hand, Charlie uses irony to oppose the US intervention in the Middle East and insists that terrorist acts must continue. On the other hand, Charlie’s voice is ironically employed by the narrator to oppose the absurdity of terrorists who give themselves the right to slaughter “innocents”. In fact, this opposition coincides with the discussions of Nancy Connors Biggio (2002, p.354) who claims that “the use of terrorism by ... Al-Qaeda ... is best classified as irrational.” This is probably because “Al-Qaeda” and other terrorist organisations are run by fanatics who lack practical objectives. Their actions mostly distort the image of the Arabs and Muslims and make their nation lose more lands. For instance, as a result of the 9/11 incidents, Afghanistan and Iraq have been occupied by the USA.

The novel also employs irony to oppose the absurdity of fanatic Muslims. As seen in the novel, Ahmad's esteem of the *hijab* leads him to maltreat his mother. When Terry notices that Jack "Levy's eyes ... fix on her jauntily demure head scarf, she laughs and explains, "He wanted me to wear it. He said if there was one thing he wanted for his graduation it was his mother not looking like a whore"" (Updike 2006, p.114). In fact, Ahmad's persistence in making his mother wear the *hijab* before she attends his convocation is irrational for two main reasons. Firstly, Terry is not a Muslim to be asked to wear the *hijab*. Secondly, the perception that by wearing the *hijab*, his mother will "not [be] looking like a whore" explicates that Ahmad is a simple-minded extremist. The *hijab* cannot preserve the purity of women because people behave according to their will, not according to their clothes. For instance, although wearing the *hijab* in Iran is compulsory, Hamideh Sedghi (2007, p.239) claims that "there are an estimated 300,000 prostitutes in Iran, including 84,000 in Tehran." This statistics confirms that forcing women to wear the *hijab* does not forbid them from transgressing Islamic tenets. In fact, although Terry has ironically emphasised on this issue, her voice is not necessarily a reflection of the author's viewpoint. Dialogues utilised in creative writings give fictional characters independent voices. Yet, this does not lessen the fact that the ironical allusion discussed previously exposes an opposition to religious fanaticism that leads to aggression against women.

In contrast, Ismail ironically opposes the American negative attitude towards the Arabs and Muslims after the 9/11 acts. For instance, while Michael and John talk, on the warship, about their imminent mission in Iraq, the narrator exposes that:

John confirmed that this is the moment he waited for a long time through which he can take revenge on the terrorist Arabs and Muslims. At long last, he will attack those terrorists and retaliate. Since his brother's death in the recent incident performed by the terrorist Muslims, he has vowed to kill all Muslims to protect the world from their evilness and hatred. He is proud that he participates in eradicating the Arabs, whom we do not hear good of. (Ismail 2005, p.10-11).

In fact, the phrase, "his brother's death in the recent incident performed by the terrorist Muslims", is not enough to confirm our previous argument that the speaker alludes to 9/11. Therefore, referring to other quotations from the same novel can be of assistance. This step reinforces what has been discussed earlier where Irwin (2001, p.293) asserts that "the reader must play a vital role in his or her own understanding of an allusion." In the novel, while John converses with his wife, Susan, he asks her not to utter words like "Arabs" and "Muslims" because they "remind him of his brother, Prosopo, who died in the Nine-Eleven Acts" (Ismail 2005, p.14). The negation of John serves to underline the 9/11 allusion. Due to the death of his brother in that traumatic incident, John greatly detests the Arabs and Muslims. By characterising the Arabs and Muslims as possessing "evilness and hatred", the narrator not only reflects John's feeling but also implicitly ridicules it. The author is aware of some overstated reactions after 9/11. For instance, the word-order of the phrase "the terrorist Arabs and Muslims" indicates that John attributes acts of terrorism to all Arabs and Muslims. The narrator also exaggerates in his use of the word

“eradicating” when John decides to dismiss the Arabs as if they are diseases or insects. This excessive exaggeration uncovers the ironical tone of the allusion above.

The fictional treatment discussed previously has its historical roots. According Joy Gordon (2007, 97), “some would say that the lesson to be learned from September 11 is that we must be even more aggressive in protecting what we see as our security interests. But perhaps that’s the wrong lesson altogether.” Gordon’s rejection of the US “aggressive” procedures in its war on terrorism is consistent with the ironical allusion employed in the novel where the narrator implicitly opposes the US reaction to 9/11 and the US people’s attitude towards the Arabs and Muslims. This attitude has led to an occupation of two Muslim countries—Afghanistan and Iraq.

Conclusion

9/11 and US occupation of Iraq have allusively been employed in recent American and Arab fiction for affirming and opposing certain views. Updike’s *Terrorist* (2006) utilises repetition and compares between his fictional characters and 9/11 terrorists to affirm the notion that Muslim terrorists are the main enemy of the USA. It also employs irony to oppose the US intervention in the Middle East as well as the absurdity of those terrorists who give themselves the right to kill civilians. In contrast, Ismail’s *Desert of Death and Peace* (2005) alludes to the US occupation of Iraq to assert that the Iraqi and American people are equally victims of one enemy. The novel exposes that this enemy is some super-power Jews. Ismail also ironically opposes the US occupation of Iraq and the irrational reaction of the USA to 9/11 that led people around the world to take a negative attitude towards the Arab Muslims. Hence, the two authors utilise the same historical events but each one employs them according to his own point of view and cultural background. The two authors’ different employment of history shows the extent of the contestations of worldviews. Both writers see terrorism as a menace which must be eliminated, but each one refuses to explore the psyche of “the other”. By making the other the enemy, both American and Arab literature propagate stereotypes in perpetuity.

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