

Investigating Arab/Muslim Character in Some Selected Post- Colonial Novels

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Abstract

Post- colonialism is a literary movement which is as an opposition to colonialism. Post-colonial literature is based on racial affairs (white and black) with its effects the society. It aims to investigate the reflection of the Arab/Muslim in post-colonial novels. This study hypothesizes that this type of the novels has the negative qualities of the Arab/Muslim character. This study falls into four sections. The first section is an introduction. The second section represents the reflection of the Arab character in Post-colonial literature. The third section deals with background information of post-colonial novels. The fourth section investigates the Arab/ Muslim character in some selected post –colonial novels . Finally, the study has reached some conclusions that verify the hypothesis of the study.

المخلص

ما بعد الاستعمار حركة أدبية ضد حركة الاستعمار. أدب ما بعد الاستعمار يعتمد على القضايا العنصرية (البيض والسود) مع تأثيرها على المجتمع. وتهدف هذه الدراسة لتقصي انعكاسات الشخصية العربية المسلمة في روايات أدب ما بعد الاستعمار. تفترض الدراسة بان هذا النوع من الروايات لا يخلو من الخصائص السلبية للشخصية العربية. هذه الدراسة تقسم إلى أربع فصول. الفصل الأول مقدمة , الفصل الثاني يقدم انعكاس الشخصية العربية في أدب ما بعد الاستعمار. الفصل الثالث يتعامل مع نبذة عن روايات ما بعد الاستعمار. الفصل الرابع يتحرى الشخصية العربية/المسلمة في بعض الروايات المختارة من أدب ما بعد الاستعمار. وقد توصلت الدراسة لمجموعة من النتائج التي أثبتت فرضية الدراسة.

1.INTRODUCTION

Post-colonialism is full of authors and topics. It has a perfect diversity in distinctive subjects which include the difference in historical events, religious activities and social interests. This term describes the colonial society in a literary way and it also describes the universal manners which took place the colonialism.

The reflection of the Arab and Muslim character appears in the novels of post-colonial literature. However, the question is to what extent the theme of the Arab and Muslim character can be regarded by its authors whether the novelist is Arabic or British or American

2.The Reflection of The Arab/Muslim Character In Western literature

In the ancient times, Muslims and Arabs can be represented by the western literature during the early communication between them. ⁽¹⁾

According to the literary works and fictional texts in the western literature, the West keep some descriptive qualities to the Arabs during the times for example, in the past Arabs and Muslims were chiefly described in the West as “erotic”, “primitive”, “ignorant”, “slave traders” among other many belittling terms. recently, the terms such as “terrorist”, “fundamentalist” and “blood-thirsty” are the terms that are well-known recognized to the Arabs and Muslims. ⁽²⁾

2.1. Islam and Jihad

Islam means peace and it is a religion of brotherhood and equality and it is regarded an essential requirement for keeping the prevailing correspondence and benevolence with non Muslims. in this respect, Jihad comes as second choice when peace is not appreciated. Anyway, Jihad, as a concept, can be submitted a series of deformations. For instance, it shows Muslims as sanguineous people and makes them a love-brutality people..⁽³⁾

In a literal sense, the concept “jihad” is not limited in furious actions and war as it is conceptualized and described in Western world, but it is open according to Muslim that can do and play different actions and performances. In this respect, the similarity between the main beliefs of Islam and furious actions is a deformation of facts that is caused originally by the Western reasoned unawareness of Islamic principle.⁽⁴⁾

Western media creates inappropriate presumption about the ideology of Islam, the news journalists deform the right sense of the term fundamentalism.

2.2.Fundamentalism

This definition shows that the term means to take the religious doctrine as it is and thus it is the usual and established way of worshiping God. If this is right for Christianity, why should it be otherwise for Islam? fundamentalism is exposed from its literal sense and established a depreciatory one, connoting mainly extremism and terrorism.⁽⁵⁾

In the identical manner, in juxtaposition with the deformation of facts and the design of stereotyped images of the Orient's culture, Arabs costumes do not escape the goal of derision of the Western media. therefore, the scarf and the veil can be reduced to the level of masks worn by terrorists in order not to be recognized. In this way, the Islamic veil and scarf are stripped of their sacred and artistic demonstration of chastity.

unseen behind their scarf and veil, Western media try to equate Muslim women to masqueraded terrorists and evil doers. Some assert that putting a veil has nothing to do with religious principles, but it is simply a manner to cover their "ugly faces".⁽⁶⁾

2.3. Terrorism

Terrorism is the use of violent acts to frighten the people in an area as a way of trying to achieve a political target. Terrorism is the use of intentionally indiscriminate violence in order to achieve a political, religious, ideological aim. It is considered a major threat to society. It is also considered a war crime under the laws of war when used to target civilians.⁽⁷⁾

Terrorism is a principal topic in Western literature that is arbitrarily and supposedly ascribed to Arabs and Muslims regardless to tangible evidences.⁽⁸⁾ It is an incorrigible and inculcated Orientalist preconception of Arabs held by the West to the extent that Arabs and Muslims are instinctively stereotyped and recognized or rather equated with the word terrorism. L. John Martin established that word "terrorism" was generally used in Western literature whenever they portrayed the individuals or events they deprecated. shockingly, media use the word terrorism with great reservation when dealing with individuals who are not Arabs.⁽⁹⁾

3-Post- Colonial Novels

Post-Colonialism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. It is now used in wide and diverse ways to include the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and most importantly perhaps, the differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities.⁽¹⁰⁾

Post-colonial literature can be characterized by a number of features: Firstly, post-colonial writers take the language of their colonizer (English or French, for example) to write a novel or play in English. They do this way to defy the government of the colonial language. They take the language that was used to subjugate them and use it to challenge their oppressors. Secondly, they are really interested in nationalism. A lot of them are very patriotic. Their work is often nationalist; because they like to highlight and encourage their nation's cultural, political and social identity.⁽¹¹⁾

Thirdly, they aren't interested in decolonizing the political structures. They are interested in decolonizing the mind, to use a phrase made famous by Thiongo (the post-colonial Kenyan writer) . Decolonizing the mind means different things for different writers, but the idea is always to gain mental and cultural liberation from the structures of philosophies of colonialism.⁽¹²⁾

4. Investigating Arab/Muslim Character in some selected post- Colonial novels

The reflection of the Arab/Muslim character appears in the novels of post-colonial literature. However, the question is to what extent the theme of the Arab and Muslim character can be regarded by its authors whether the novelist is Arabic or British or American. The present study concerns with the post-colonial novelists. Yasmina Khadra *The sirens of Baghdad* (2006). Ian McEwan in *Saturday* (2005) and John Updike in *Terrorist* (2006).

Yasmina Khadra is an Algerian author who wrote many novels which reflect many conflicting forces (fundamentalism and terrorism). According to him," the novel is a tool, an instrument, which makes truth accessible."⁽¹³⁾

Khadra's "*The Sirens of Baghdad*", which shows the reflection of the Arab / Muslim in this novel. *The Sirens of Baghdad* shows and depicts life in Baghdad city through

the citizens (men and women) and how Khadra depicts the frustrations and the disappointments faced by the American and Iraqi soldiers.⁽¹⁴⁾

Khadra could reflect the theme of terrorism in his "The sirens of Baghdad" as it shows in this citation:

*"It's not a question of washing your bodies, but your souls,
Young men. If you're rotten inside, neither rivers nor ocean
Will suffice to make you clean".⁽¹⁵⁾*

This quotation is from " *The Sirens of Baghdad*" in which the writer wants to show that the human should be pure and true with himself and does not cheat her with mischievous deeds and wrong actions.

*"we have governments that only think about themselves;
They lie and deceive us. The young men are full of energy
And ambition and do not understand why they can not
Participate in shaping their country. When they join
The fundamentalists, it is first of all a political art".⁽¹⁶⁾*

According to khadra, young people with great energy cannot be useful in their country because of their barbaric authority of their government. So they have frustration and desperation in life in spite of they only dream of having a job, a house and a wife.

Ian McEwan is an English novelist and screenwriter .He began his literary career, Gothic short stories. His literary writings focus on themes of time, history and knowledge as well as the exploration of twisted interiors. He has written many fictional essays on the war against terrorism and the misrepresented philosophies of religion.

the British writer Ian McEwan' *Saturday* (2005) is a novel that shows the significance of life and what the point of existence in it. The major personality, though

externally triumphant, still conflicts to recognize sense in his life, discovering private fulfillment in the post-modern, developed world. Though smart and well read, Perowne feels he has little influence over political actions.⁽¹⁷⁾

McEwan wants to presents some didactic and moralistic lessons that the man can take from the experience of life such happiness, hope and yearning to the peaceful life.⁽¹⁸⁾

"It's an illusion to believe himself active in the story. Does he think he's changing something, watching news programmes, or lying on his back on the sofa on Sunday afternoon, reading more opinion columns of ungrounded certainties, more long articles about what really lies behind this or that development, or what is surely going to happen next, predictions forgotten as soon as they are read, well before events disprove them?"⁽¹⁹⁾

In this quotation, McEwan shows the character of Perowne, Physically, is neither above nor outside the fray but at an angle to it; emotionally his own intelligence makes him apathetic, he can see both sides of the argument, and his beliefs are characterized by a series of hard choices rather than sure certainties.

John Updike is a neo-realist celebrated for the precision of his style and the painterly way he recreates the surfaces of his world. His fiction conveys holding onto its style of life while at the same time trying to adjust its mind to new ideas and new social realities.⁽²⁰⁾ Updike has corned the market on stories and novels about middle-class life and the daily ups and downs of that existence.⁽²¹⁾

In Updike's *Terrorist*, individual sees a convinced literary development in concentrated form: the development of great formal, technical skill at one pole, and the strict weakening of the artist's understanding of history and social association at the other. It also shows a reflection of the image of the Arab character in the western conceptualization.

In *Terrorist*, Updike shows his extensive talent for storytelling and social commentary to the most important topic of the budding twenty-first century: the terrorist threats on American cities and citizens.⁽²²⁾

He showed the world what can be done against the odds, against a superpower. He showed -- and this is where Vietnam and Iraq come in, that in a war between an



imperialist occupier and the people who actually live there, the people will eventually prevail. They know the terrain. They have more at stake. They have nowhere else to go".⁽²³⁾ Updike shows the terrorism and the devastation of the war that take place between the conflicting forces which made the men destructive and waste.

4. Conclusion

To generalize the individuality of such large area in two terms Arabs and Muslims is a conscious and aware strategy which makes things easy for the West stereotype both the race and its religion. This population, regardless of its different languages, various cultures and incongruous religion, is radicalized as Arabs and religionized as Muslims. Arabs and Muslims represent as a threat for the west. This study shows post-colonial literature clearly and properly to help the readers in understanding this literary movement during the post-colonial novels. So the hypothesis of this study is accepted.

Notes

1-Olfat Hassan. *Islamic Fundamentalism and Its Image in the Western Media*.

2-Ibid.

3-Driss, Ridouani.(2011). " *The representation of Arab and Muslims in Western Media*.2011, p.1-2.

4-Ibid.

5-Emerson, Steven.(1995). *The Other Fundamentalist*. New Republic. June 12.

6-Ibid,22.

7-Hoffman, Bruce (1998). *Inside Terrorism*. Columbia University Press. p. 32.



- 8-Said, Edward. (1978). *Orientalism*. U.S.A. Pantheon Books.,p.65.
- 9-(WWW.Wikipedia.,p.1)
- 10-Ashcroft,B. Griffithe, G. and Tiffin, H. *Post-Colonial Studies*.(London and New York:Routledge. 2009) p, 186)
- 11-(WWW.Wikipedia, p.1)
- 12-Ibid.
- 13-(www.independent.com.uk.)
- 14--(WWW.Wikipedia,p.1)
- 15-Ibid.
- 16-Ibid.
- 17-McEwan, Ian. (2006). *Lit Matters: Notes on Saturday*.p,2.
- 18-Millman,D. and Prasada, S. *The Creative Compass: Writing your way from Inspiration to Publication*. California: Novato, 2013), p.71.
- 19-WWW.Wikipedia.McEwan/Saturday.p,1.
- 20-Skipp, F.E. *American Literature*. U.S.A.: Barron's Inc.1992),p.120.
- 21-Rozakis,L.E. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to American Literature*. U.S.A.: Alpha Books.1999),p.390.
- 22--(WWW.Enotes,2)
- 23-(WWW.Wikipedia,p.2)

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