

Intertextuality manipulation in post-September-eleven American fiction to misinform readership

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DOI: 10.18326/ijims.v10i2.271-296

Abstract

This paper investigates how some American writers manipulate intertextuality in American fiction in the wake of the September 11 events. The researchers use Updike's *Terrorist*, Miller's *Blindsided*, and McBain's *Merely Hate* to illustrate this kind of manipulation. An example is cited and discussed in light of the supposed Islamic reference material. The researchers provide a discussion showing how intertextuality is manipulated to misinform readership. The findings indicate that the most employed manipulation strategies are mistranslation, incomplete quotation, out of context Quranic verses, fake information, and distorted ideas about women and the concept of jihad.

Makalah ini menyelidiki bagaimana beberapa penulis Amerika memanipulasi intertekstualitas dalam fiksi Amerika setelah peristiwa 11 September. Peneliti

menggunakan Updike's *Terrorist*, Miller's *Blindsided*, dan McBain's *Merely Hate* untuk menggambarkan manipulasi semacam ini. Sebuah contoh dikutip dan didiskusikan sehubungan dengan materi referensi Islam yang seharusnya. Peneliti menyediakan suatu diskusi yang menunjukkan bagaimana intertekstualitas dimanipulasi untuk memberikan informasi yang salah kepada pembaca. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa strategi manipulasi yang paling banyak digunakan adalah kesalahan terjemahan, kutipan yang tidak lengkap, dan keluar dari konteks ayat-ayat al-Qur'an, informasi palsu, dan ide-ide yang menyimpang tentang perempuan dan konsep jihad.

Keywords: *Manipulation; Intertextuality; Distortion; American fiction*

Introduction

Some contemporary American fiction works tend to revive an old fashion of misrepresenting Islam in many ways. Irving (19th century) is one of the first American writers interested in the Orient.¹ Irving^{2,3} portrays Islam as a bloody religion that was spread by the sword. Tyler⁴ shows how prisoners suffered in Arab prisons, claiming they were forced to convert to Islam to gain freedom, though he does not relate mistreatment to the teachings of Islam. He⁵ explains, "neither their Alcoran nor their priests excite them to plunder, enslave, or torment. The former expressly recommends charity, justice, and mercy."

The Western negative attitude towards Islam results from violent contact with Muslims; the first was because of the expansion of Islam in Spain up to France in the eighth century. The second was during the Crusades (11th

¹Fuad Sha'ban, *Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought: The Roots of Orientalism in America*, North Carolina: Duke University, 1991, 32.

²Washington Irving, *Tales of the Alhambra: a Series of Tales and Sketches of the Moors and Spaniards*. New York: John B. Alden, 1832.

³Washington Irving, *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*, London: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017.

⁴Royall Tyler, *The Algerian Captive*, David Carlisle, 1797.

⁵Royall Tyler, *The Algerian Captive*, David Carlisle, 1797, 193.

and 13th centuries) in Greater Syria and Egypt. Muslims were portrayed as savage, although, as Shah-Kazemi⁶ argues, “the very name ‘Saladin’ was the byword for chivalry . . . even to this day.” Saladin showed mercy towards the crusaders who massacred Muslims before; his merciful treatment was upon “Islamic principles of conduct, as laid down by the Quran and the prophet”⁷. The third encounter was during the Ottoman invasion of the Europe (16th century). The Ottomans treated the People of the Book well in their lands; “it was to the Ottomans that the exiled Jews turned for refuge and protection. They were welcomed in Muslim lands throughout North Africa, joining the settled and prosperous Jewish communities already there, while also establishing new Jewish communities”⁸. The fourth encounter was during the Western colonization of the Muslim world. It was also bloody and involved armed struggle, as in Algeria, Libya, and Afghanistan. The French armies in Algeria (1830-1962) were “guilty of the most barbaric crimes in their ‘mission civilisatrice’; the Emir responded not with bitter vengeance and enraged fury but with dispassionate propriety and principled warfare”⁹. The fifth encounter was between the 16th and 19th centuries when almost “20 percent of the African slaves brought to America were Muslims.”¹⁰ Americans’ direct experience with the Muslim world started after World War II when America took “positions of dominance and hegemony once held in the Islamic world by Britain and France”¹¹. The sixth direct encounter was because of the September-11 (2001) event, which brought Islam into contemporary American fiction. It was claimed that these attacks were launched in the name of Islam against infidels, thus,

⁶Reza Shah-Kazemi, “Recollecting the Spirit of Jihad”, *Islam*, in *Fundamentalism and the Myth of Tradition*, Joseph Lumbard (ed.), Canada: World Wisdom, 2004, 121-142.

⁷Reza Shah-Kazemi, “Recollecting the Spirit of Jihad”..., 123.

⁸Reza Shah-Kazemi, “Recollecting the Spirit of Jihad”...,129.

⁹Reza Shah-Kazemi, “Recollecting the Spirit of Jihad”..., 131

¹⁰John L Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, London: Oxford University Press, 2005, 208.

¹¹Edward Said, *Covering Islam*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1981, 25.

stigmatizing Islam as a terror-oriented religion. Said¹² argues that unlike Europeans, Americans do not have direct contact with Islam and Muslims.

Esposito¹³ argues that several events in the Arab world enhanced the association of Arabs and Muslims with terrorism in America. The first was the Arab oil embargo in 1973. The second was the Iranian revolution (1978-79), with the detention of the American Embassy employees for 444 days with heavy media coverage. Finally came the September 11 attacks, which, as Esposito states, “raised disturbing questions about the nature of Islam itself—was it a religion of peace or a peculiarly violent religion”.¹⁴ Therefore, Esposito¹⁵ asserts, “Arabs and Muslims became the new villains, depicted as criminals, terrorists, and womanizers.”

The September-11 events motivated many Americans to seek further knowledge of Islam from different resources, some of which were authored to camouflage the truth about Islam. First, people began reading distorted translations of the *Quran* that contain misinterpretations. Dawood’s translation was a source to Updike in *Terrorist*. Ross’s translation (1649) based on Du Ryer’s French translation was another defective source.

Gilchrist describes Ross’s translation saying¹⁶

It was not a direct translation from the original Arabic but was done from a French version published a few years earlier. Unfortunately, Ross had no knowledge of Arabic and his proficiency in French left much to be desired so that the translation itself is extremely defective and at times misses the sense of the original altogether. Nevertheless, it served to introduce the Scripture of Islam to the English-speaking world and for nearly a hundred years was the only translation available.

¹²Edward Said, *Covering Islam...*, 11.

¹³John L Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path...*

¹⁴John L Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path...*, 253.

¹⁵John L Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path...*, 204.

¹⁶John Gilchrist, “Muhammad and the Religion of Islam”, <https://answering-islam.org/Gilchrist/Vol1/index.html> (cited on August 15, 2020).

Ross did it “to strengthen people’s faith in Christianity and show the ugliness of the religion of the Turks”.¹⁷ Ross claims:

Thou shalt finde it of so rude, and incongruous a composure so farced with contradictions, blasphemies, obscene speeches, and ridiculous fables, that some modest, and more rationally *Mahometans* have thus excused it . . . Such as it is, I present to thee, having taken the pains only to translate it out of *French*, not doubting, though it hath been a poyson, that hath infected a very great, but most unsound part of the universe, it may prove an Antidote, to confirm in thee the health of Christianity.¹⁸

Second, Americans read falsified resources about Islam written by non-Muslims. Dakake¹⁹ explains that the following verse was frequently quoted by American media to enforce the idea of violent Islam: ²⁰

O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as Auliya (protectors), they are but Auliya of each other. And any amongst you takes them (as Auliya), then surely he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the Zalimun (wrong-doers and unjust).²¹

O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is [one] of them. Lo! Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk. (Dawood)

This verse is interpreted out of its context to portray Islam as a violent religion that rejects Jews and Christians. There are many interpretations of أولياء here: friends, supporters, protectors. Al-Qurtubi²² says that this

¹⁷Fuad Sha’ban, *Islam and Arabs...*, 33.

¹⁸Alexander Ross (trans.), *The Alcoran of Mahmet*, London, 1649, A2, A3.

¹⁹David Dakake, “The Myth of a Militant Islam”, In *Islam, Fundamentalism and the Myth of Tradition*, Joseph Lumbard (ed.), India: World of Wisdom, 2004, 5.

²⁰To avoid repetition, the footnotes for Quranic texts show Sura name and number and verse number for the Arabic text and its translation.

²¹QS. Al-Maidah: 51.

²²Mohammad Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Qur’an*, Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1964, vol. 6: 216-217.

verse was revealed after the battle of Uhud, in which Muslims lost. Some Muslims, because they were afraid that the unbelievers would be victorious, said they would take Jews as friends and protectors; others, Christians (Romans) as protectors. The next verse explains this interpretation:

And you see those in whose hearts there is a disease (of hypocrisy), they hurry to their friendship, saying: "We fear lest some misfortune of a disaster may befall us."²³

Rodwell²⁴ in 'The Koran' claims that Prophet Muhammad "was the victim of a certain amount of self-deception. A cataleptic subject from his early youth, born—according to the traditions—of highly nervous and excitable mother, he would be peculiarly liable to morbid and fantastic hallucinations, and alternations of excitement and depression, which would win for him, in the eyes of his ignorant countrymen, the credit of being inspired." Rodwell says, "'The Koran' claims" but he does not show where, and "according to the traditions," but he never refers readers to any because they do not exist—a strategy that many such authorities employ.

Strategies of manipulation

Novel writers heavily employed intertextuality from the Quran to prove their points. All translations are taken from Pickthall's 1977 *The Glorious Qur'an*. The argument is organized as follows: First, a strategy is identified; second, material from a novel is provided; third, authentic material that a writer refers to is provided; fourth, the point with reference to both materials and its support is discussed with authentic resources.

A novelist cites verses out of their context to seemingly provide evidence from the Quran for his proposal. The reader is promoted to create a negative image about Islam. Here are some examples:

²³QS. Al-Maidah: 52.

²⁴J. M. Rodwell, *The Koran. Translated from the Arabic*. London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Son Ltd., and New York: E. P. Dutton and CO, 1861, 1909, 14.

Updike says, "Ye have no patron or helper save God"²⁵ referring to (التوبة: 9: 119) "And ye have, instead of Allah, no protecting friend nor helper." Updike does not only employ this verse out of its context, he also does not document it so that the reader could verify it. Updike, considering the literal meaning of the verse, portrays Ahmad as a socially lonely character, an outsider in his society, thinking that when God is his friend, he does not need anybody. The suggestion is that Islam encourages social seclusion. The contextual sense of the verse is that "to Allah belongs the absolute sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. And besides Allāh, you people have no patron, nor is there anyone who can vindicate you."²⁶ God is the only watcher for His worshipers, and His worshipers have no patron but Him.

Updike's seclusion idea can be refuted with a few examples from the Quran and Hadith. In the Quran, we find (الحجرات: 49: 13)

"O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct."

Addressing all mankind, this verse indicates that Allah encourages interaction of Muslims with all people.

We also find this Hadith:

Stick to (your) community; a wolf (only) kills a far-away sheep.²⁷

This Hadith stresses the importance of social life. Many verses and Hadiths encourage performing the five prayers congregationally at mosques. Others show how rewarding is visiting the ill and sharing people happy and sad events.

²⁵J. Updike, *Terrorist*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Penguin Books, 2007, 37.

²⁶Abu Shabaanah Abd Al-Khaleq, *Al-Muntakhab: the Select in the Interpretation of the Glorious Quran: Arabic-English*, Saudi Arabia: Al-Majlis al-A'la li Shu'un al-Islamiyyah, 2006, 298.

²⁷Abu Dawood Sulaiman ibn Al-Ash'ath As-Sajistani, *Sunan Abi Dawood*, 2009, Hadeeth # 574.

Updike also says, “When the heavens split asunder in the east and reddens like a rose or stained leather”²⁸ referring to (الرحمن: 55: 37)

“And when the heaven splitteth asunder and becometh rosy like red hide”

Updike tries to prove that Muslims are attracted “to the enemy’s superstitious mentality. The enemy is obsessed with holy sites, and as convinced as the old Communist archenemies had been that capitalism has a headquarters, a head that may be cut off, leaving flocks of the faithful to be grateful herded into an ascetic and dogmatic tyranny.”²⁹ This verse is provided as proof that Islam encourages hatred against the West. The context proves that it has nothing to do with hatred altogether. It is about the Day of Judgment and how the sky behaves.

Moreover, Updike also says

Who shall teach thee what the Crushing Fire is? It is God’s kindled fire, Which shall mount above the hearts of the damned; It shall verily rise over them like a vault, On outstretched columns.³⁰

Referring to (الهمزة: 104: 5-9)

Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Consuming One is! (5) (It is) the fire of Allah, kindled, (6) which leapeth up over the hearts (of men) (7) Lo! It is closed in on them (8) in outstretched columns (9).

Updike claims that this verse is “about the burning misery of separation from God and the scorching of our remorse for our sins against His commands.”³¹

Chapter 104 warns people “against traducing and amassing wealth, which will not confer eternity or avert punishment in the abyss of Hell.

²⁸J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 44.

²⁹J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 45.

³⁰J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 4.

³¹J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 4.

[Such people] will be gathered in Hell, which finds its way to the innermost being of bodies and hearts, with no escape.”³² So, this punishment is for those who harm others by calling them names, thinking that their wealth will guarantee them protection and longevity. It tells Muslims to obey God’s commands. So, this verse has nothing to do with Updike’s interpretation.

The second strategy is the mistranslation of verses of the Quran. For example, Updike says, “And the Jews plotted, and God plotted. But of those who plot, God is the best.”³³ He refers to (الأَنْفَالِ: 8: 30)

And when those who disbelieve plot against thee to wound, or to kill thee or to drive thee forth; they plot, but Allah (also) plotteth; and Allah is the best of plotters.

Updike shows why Ahmad is scheming against the West. It is mistranslated and taken out of context without any reference to its historical background. This verse is not about Jews; it is about the unbelievers of Mecca who plotted to culminate Islam by holding the Prophet or killing him. First, historically, Jews never lived in Mecca. Second, God warned the Prophet about the plan. At the same night the Prophet started his migration journey to Madina, leaving the unbelievers bewildered as to how he knew and escaped. God is a better schemer than the infidels.³⁴ It is not about killing infidels or encouraging jihad as Updike claims. Muslims then could hardly survive in Mecca.

In another example, Miller assumes that “Wives are playthings, so take your pick,”³⁵ by which he refers to (البقرة: 2: 223)

Your women are your tilth for you (to cultivate) so go to your tilth as ye will, and send (good deeds) before you for your souls, and fear Allah, and know that ye will meet Him. Give glad tidings to believers,

³²Abu Shabaanah Abd Al-Khaleq, *Al-Muntakhab...*, 1085.

³³J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 198.

³⁴Ibn Katheer, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Azīm*, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1981, Vol. 2, 99.

³⁵Calvin Miller, *Blindsided*, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2007, 21.

(O Muhammad).

Miller³⁶ quotes a part of a mistranslated verse. Projecting a Western view of the relationship between men and women, Miller says this verse indicates that a man should keep trying women until he finds the right one as did Prophet Muhammad. He claims, “Mohammed had thirteen women—or may be more—till he just quit counting.”* He interprets this verse that “Allah is the only essential; all women are playthings.”* Therefore, a man should not love any woman.

God teaches Muslim men how to treat their wives and mate with them within God’s commands.³⁷ Moreover, a legal marriage is Islamically intended for life. So, women cannot be taken for trials, as suggested by Miller. God warns people that He will treat them according the way they treat their women.

A third strategy is the incomplete citation of text. A fact that is also emphasized by Esposito,³⁸ who says Westerners have a “tendency to cite verses incompletely and thus distort the full intent of the verse.” Updike says, “Man never wearies of praying for good things”³⁹ referring to (فصلت: 41: 49) which means, “Man tireth not of praying for good, and if ill toucheth him, then he is disheartened, desperate.”

Updike quotes part of this verse to show that God and the Prophet encourage having materialist things for “the Prophet himself was a merchant.” Updike may be referring to a phase of the Prophet’s life when he worked for Khadija, who later became his wife. But in fact, the Prophet never ran his own business.⁴⁰ So, Updike misinforms readers about the Prophet. The verse is about people keeping asking God for good things, but if something wrong happens to them, they would feel desperate and

³⁶Calvin Miller, *Blindsided*, (in this paragraph: 21, 21, 23 in order).

³⁷Ibn Katheer, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān...*, Vol. 1, 196.

³⁸John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path...*, 25.

³⁹J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 149.

⁴⁰Ukasha Abd Al-Manan, *Zawjat al-Rasūl*, Amman: Dār al-Isrā’, 1994, 51.

impatient.⁴¹

In a fourth strategy, writers tend to cite verses calling for mistreatment of women. Referring to (البقرة : 2: 222-223) the translation of which comes second, Updike⁴² says,

He [Ahmad] consulted the Quran for sexual advice. It talked of uncleanness but only in regard to women, their menstruation, their suckling of infants. In the second sura he found the mysterious words, Your wives are your field: go in, therefore, to your field as ye will. he read that women are a pollution. Separate yourselves therefore from women and approach them not, until they be cleansed. But when they are cleansed, go in unto them as God hath ordained for you. Verily God loveth those who turn to Him, and loveth those who seek to be clean.

“They ask thee (O Muhammad) concerning menstruation. Say: It is an illness, so let women alone at such times and go not unto them till they are cleansed. And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah hath enjoined upon you. Truly Allah loveth those who turn unto Him, and loveth those who have a care for cleanness (223) Your women are your tilth so go to your tilth as ye will, and send (good deeds) before you for your souls, and fear Allah, and know that ye will meet Him. Give glad tidings to believers, (O Muhammad).”⁴³

Updike claims that the Quran associates women with “uncleanness.” He uses a lengthy quote preceded by “mysterious words,” thus, preoccupying the mind of the reader that women are filthy creatures. He refers the reader to “the second Sura” (48 pages) with no verse number. He portrays Ahmad as happy, being away from women.

The verses show that God advises Muslim men to avoid sexual intercourse with their wives during their menstruation for health reasons. They are bleeding, thus, vulnerable to infection. Also, Islam orders men

⁴¹Ibn Katheer, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān...*, Vol. 3, 267.

⁴²J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 154.

⁴³QS. Al-Baqarah: 222.

to have proper intercourse with wives. Therefore, Updike misinforms his readers about the way women are treated in Islam. If he only tells the truth, readers would appreciate this treatment of women. These verses tell that people who treat their women in this way are pious and “faithful” who will have “good tidings.”

McBain also says, “The imam—that’s the man in charge, he’s like the preacher—he quotes a scripture and verse that says only men are required to come to Friday prayer, whereas women are not.”⁴⁴ He refers, but with misinterpretation, to the Hadith, “The Friday prayer is obligatory upon every Muslim except four: slaves, women, children, or the sick.”⁴⁵ (researchers’ translation). The Hadith does not prohibit those people from attending congregational prayers at mosques; rather, it gives them permission not to. They can optionally attend any prayers at mosques.

We also have this Hadith that encourages Muslims to let women frequent mosques. The Messenger of Allah said: “Do not prevent women, servants of Allah, from the houses of Allah.”⁴⁶ It is emphasized with this Hadith: “The Messenger of Allah said: If your wives ask permission to go out to the mosque, then give them permission.”⁴⁷

So, McBain misinforms his readers about the way women are treated in Islam. He confuses prohibition from attending prayers at mosques with permission not to.

Miller relates illiteracy among women to Islamic teachings. He claims: Illiteracy is high among women . . . that is how men come to think of themselves as superior to women. Muslim woman would never think of interrupting her husband” (84). Muslim women always come as a second; they are “viewed as some kind of appendage to her husband’s

⁴⁴Ed McBain, *Mereby Hate: Transgression*, New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2005, 321.

⁴⁵Abu Dawood, *Sunan...* Vol. 2, 132.

⁴⁶Muhammad Mahdi, *Sahih Muslim*, 2005, Vol. 1, 456.

⁴⁷Mahdi, Muhammad, *Sahih Muslim*, 2005, Vol.1, 456.

agenda.⁴⁸

Authentic Islamic resources categorically refute Miller's claims that Islam is behind women's illiteracy and that they are an appendage of their husbands. It seems that Miller confuses social practices and conditions (geographical remoteness, poverty, insecurity etc.) in some Muslim societies, and Islamic teachings. Islam strongly urges Muslims—males and females—to pursue knowledge. In the Quran, we find this verse (الزمر: 9: 39): "...Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Are those who know equal with those who know not?" We also find these Hadiths that show the position of women from an Islamic point of view: The Prophet said, "Whoever has three daughters and has patience (raising them) nourishes them from his own gain, they will be a veil for him from Hellfire."⁴⁹ (researchers' translation). Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri narrated that: "The Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever has three daughters, or three sisters, or two daughters, or two sisters and he keeps good company with them and fears Allah regarding them, then Paradise is for him."⁵⁰ The Prophet said, "Take half of your religion from this reddish [woman] (i.e., his wife Iyshah)."⁵¹ (researchers' translation)

A fifth strategy is the distortion of the concept of jihad and shahada (martyrdom). Muslim characters are portrayed as potential terrorists. Updike refers to several verses to prove that Islam encourages jihad, being already associated with terrorism. Updike uses what according to Dakake⁵² Western writers have "provided literal or surface readings of Quranic verses related to jihād and 'fighting' (qitāl) in an attempt to reduce all of Islam to military jihād."

⁴⁸Calvin Miller, *Blindsided...*, 85.

⁴⁹Abu Al-Hasan Al-Hanafy, *Sunan Ibn Majid*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1996, Vol. 4, 189.

⁵⁰Al-Tirmidhi, *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, 1916, Book 27, Hadith 22.

⁵¹Majd al-Din al-Mubarak b. Muhammad Ibn al-Athir, *al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa al-Athar*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979, vol.1, 438.

⁵²David Dakake, "The Myth of a Militant Islam", in *Islam, Fundamentalism and the Myth of Tradition*, Joseph Lumbard (ed.), India: World Wisdom, 2004, 4.

Updike says, “Who shall teach thee what the Blow is...A raging fire.”⁵³ He refers to (الفارعة : 102: 3-4) (“Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Calamity is? (3) A day wherein mankind will be thickly-scattered moths (4)”) to illustrate this claim. Ahmad is a potential martyr who plans to undertake a suicide attack to kill the unbelievers, upon orders from his religion. He describes Ahmad’s mission by quoting these verses. Updike not only mistakenly associates jihad with terrorism, he uses verses that do not relate to the concept of jihad at all. They describe the Dooms Day: the “Blow.”

Miller also relates Islam to the distorted concept of jihad. He claims that Islam aims to destroy the country of the infidels (Christians), America. Ishaq, one of the jihadies, defines jihad against America as:

It is a holy war for a holy cause. Many in America have already died. More must. It is jihad alone that purifies the earth. It is jihad that will wash away America’s secular disease of sin. It is jihad that Allah ordains to pave the Prophet’s way.⁵⁴

And a true believer carries out a suicide attack against unbelievers, the ultimate sacrifice to prove one’s faithfulness. Al describes jihad as

. . . the most fervent of prayers. I have many friends who paid with their lives to show their love for Allah. For them, their sacrifice was a prayer that began in this world and ended in the presence of the Prophet himself.⁵⁵

Miller adds that Muslim martyrs do so “to go to Heaven to have a sexual orgy...Muslim martyrs get a harem of seventy-two virgins just for dying for the Prophet.”⁵⁶ And because the Prophet had thirteen wives on earth, he knew the pleasure of sex, so he “felt that men just need sex so badly down here that it has to be a part of things up there, [Heaven].”^{*} Miller shows

⁵³J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 273.

⁵⁴Calvin Miller, *Blindsided...*, 7.

⁵⁵Calvin Miller, *Blindsided...*, 70.

⁵⁶Calvin Miller, *Blindsided...*, in this paragraph: 84, 84, 108,146 in order.

that jihad for Muslims is a way to purify the world from sins and go to Heaven for virgins as a reward for their sacrifice. To Westerners, this is considered “the shallowest of reasons for wanting to go to Heaven.”* Miller also shows the Prophet as a ruthless man because he, according to Miller, “encourages his followers to go around blowing up things.”*

There is a misconception about Jihad. It does not intend to kill anybody; the Prophet started by calling people to admit Allah as the one good God for humanity. When the Islamic state started to take shape, the Prophet sent letters to emperors calling them to embrace Islam. If they did not do so personally, then they should let Muslims talk to their people about Islam. When those emperors refused both options, jihad was inevitable to establish contact with people to tell them about Islam. Even when Muslims conquered some regions, nobody was forced to accept Islam. The Quran says, “there is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error.”⁵⁷

A sixth strategy calls for citing verses out of the contexts. Sometimes it is difficult to understand a verse without its historical background, *asbab an-nuzul* (reasons for revelation), time, place and participants. Dakkak⁵⁸ explains, “this issue of the need for knowledge of the commentary tradition is further complicated-for those unable to read the original Arabic text-by translations, which often add yet another layer of difficulty for coming to terms with the meaning of the verses.”

Updike says, “Let not the infidels deem that the length of days we give them is good for them! We only give length of days that they may increase their sins! And a shameful chastisement shall be their lot.”⁵⁹ The researchers assume that he refers to (أَلْ عَمْرَانَ : 3: 178) which means, “And

⁵⁷QS. AL-Baqarah: 256.

⁵⁸David Dakake, “The Myth of a Militant Islam”..., 6.

⁵⁹J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 47, refers to Chapter 3. The researcher assumes that it is verse number 178.

let not those who disbelieve imagine that the rein we give them good unto their souls. We give them rein that they may grow in sinfulness. And their will be a shameful doom.” The imam interprets this verse as that God never shows mercy towards the infidels, and he enjoys torturing them. He compares these infidels to cockroaches which people hate and feel disgusted from. “They are manifestations of Satan, and God will destroy them without mercy. God will rejoice at their suffering.”⁶⁰

The imam interprets this verse as God visualizing infidels as insects, which people dislike and destroy. The Third Chapter was revealed after the Uhud Battle where Muslims fought against the polytheists of Mecca and lost. God tells Muslims that even though the infidels won this battle, they should not be happy with that. The infidels a year later pursued their victory to finish the Muslim state in Medina. So, they invaded Medina and besieged it with a coalition of some tribes. Then God sent a storm that scattered them in the desert. So, God comforts the believers and teaches them lessons from these two battles. Muslims should not be deceived by what the infidels get in this world. When the infidels illegally get something, they will get punished for that. God tells Muslims that they should not feel sad for what the unbelievers have.

A seventh strategy calls for the incorrectness of the Quran. Updike claims, “The version available to us, fixed by the first caliphs within twenty years of the Prophet’s death, is somehow imperfect, compared with the version that is eternal.”⁶¹ There are a few misconceptions. Updike claims that only the Prophet could recite the Quran by heart. Thousands of Muslims knew the Quran by heart at that time, which was taught to millions of Muslims throughout time until today. Moreover, upon the request of the Prophet, the verses were immediately written down. Abu Abdulrahman as-Salami reported,

⁶⁰J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 75.

⁶¹J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 102.

Zaid bin Thabit recited [the Quran] before the Prophet of Allah twice in the year in which he [the Prophet] died. That reading was called the reading of Zaid bin Thabit, for he wrote it to the Prophet of Allah, and he read it to him. He [Zaid] witnessed the last revision. He [Zaid] used to read it to people to his death. For this [reason] Abu Bakr and Omar assigned him to its [the Quran] collection, and Othman assigned him to the copying of the Siḥaaf [copies of the Quran], may Allah be pleased by them all.⁶²

It was only that the Quran was not in the form of one book in the life of the Prophet. In the days of the first caliph, Abu Bakr, the Quran, and within the first year after the death of the Prophet, was collected in one book which was kept with Hafsa, a wife of the Prophet. Caliph Abu Bakr ordered people to destroy any rugs or paper with any Qur'an. So, there was one copy of the Quran. In the days of the third Caliph, Othman, copies of the Quran were distributed throughout the Muslim state.⁶³ Muslims who knew the whole Quran by heart would not approve of even a single word of the Quran that did not match what they got from the Prophet.

The second problem is that Updike's character assumes that he knows the eternal version of the Quran, which allows him to establish that the copies do not match. For over 14 centuries, the Quran has not exhibited any change.

Updike mistakenly connects the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet's journey to heaven when he claims, "The Quran may not have eternally pre-existed in Paradise, to which the Prophet during one-night journey traveled on the supernaturally horse Buraq."⁶⁴ The traditions of

⁶²Abdulrahman Ibn Abi Shamah, *al-Murshid al-Wajīz ila 'Ulūm Tatallaq bi al-Kitāb al-Azīz*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 96.

⁶³Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith # 4986. In Book Reference: Book 66, Hadith 8. USC-MSA web (English) reference: vol. 6, Book 61, Hadith 509. <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/66>

⁶⁴J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 143.

the Prophet do not show any kind of connection between the two events.

In a seventh strategy, and trying to distort the image of Islam, some writers target the Prophet's tradition knowing that it constitutes the second major part of Islamic theology, the Quran being the first. Updike goes on, "He prayed with Jesus, Moses and Abraham before returning to Earth, to become the last of the Prophets, the ultimate one."⁶⁵ He refers to the Hadith, "I found myself with a group of prophets (Moses, Jesus, and Abraham), I lead as Imam (leader) when it was prayer time."⁶⁶ (Translation is the researcher's).

There are some misconceptions in Updike's reference. First, he says that the meeting was in Heaven. What we have in authentic Islamic literature is that it took place in Jerusalem (Al-Quds). The symbolic reference in this prayer is that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam come from the same source, Islam being the last. Second, Updike claims that Muhammad came down with the Quran. We know that the first heavenly contact with the Prophet was with the first words from (Chapter 68), which begins with "Read" and the Qur'an continued to be revealed over the next 23 years.

Miller claims that the Prophet, out of despair, tried to commit suicide. Al says: "Khadijah has once helped Mohammed through a despondent time in which the prophet seemed about to kill himself."⁶⁷ The Prophet said (about Khadijah), "Allah has never given me better than her: she believed in me when people didn't; she believed me when people didn't; she supported me with her money when people didn't."⁶⁸ The prophet gave Khadija credit for what she did, even though she was a woman, at a time when women were culturally only secondary beings. It is a well-known

⁶⁵J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 3.

⁶⁶Ibn Katheer, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān...*, Vol. 2, 362.

⁶⁷Calvin Miller, *Blindsided...*, 72.

⁶⁸Muttaqi al-Hindi & Ali ibn Abdul Malik, *Kanz Al-Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwāl wa al-Af'āl*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1979, Vol. 12, 132.

fact that at that time female newborns were unwelcome and a source of shame to the extent that it was common to infanticide them alive, a practice that Islam prohibited.

Suicide is one of the ultimate sins in Islam. The Prophet said:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever purposely throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in the (Hell) Fire falling down into it and abiding therein perpetually forever; and whoever drinks poison and kills himself with it, he will be carrying his poison in his hand and drinking it in the (Hell) Fire wherein he will abide eternally forever; and whoever kills himself with an iron weapon, will be carrying that weapon in his hand and stabbing his `Abdomen with it in the (Hell) Fire wherein he will abide eternally forever.”⁶⁹

Obviously, a person who says so about committing suicide would not commit it.

McBain, through Osman Kiraz who quotes these words, tries to say that Islam generally condemns poetry and poets: “Filling the belly of a person with pus is better than stuffing his brain with poetry.”⁷⁰ He refers to this Hadith, which he misrepresents:

Abu Sa’id Al-Khadri reported: While we were with the Messenger of Allah “PBH,” in al-Arj (place), a poet who was reciting poetry appeared. The Messenger “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: Keep away the Satan” or hold the Satan; for filling one’s belly with pus is better than filling his mind with poetry.⁷¹

Islamic authentic literature (the Quran and the historical background of this Hadith) and the literature of Arabic after the advent of Islam refute this claim. Osman implies that poetry is forbidden, referring to this verse (الشعراء : 26: 224-227).

⁶⁹Sahih Bukhari, 5778. Book 76, Hadith 90. USC-MSA Web (English) Reference: V. 7, Book 71, Hadith 670.

⁷⁰Ed McBain, *Merely Hate...*, 428.

⁷¹Muhammad Mahdi, Al-Sharif’s translation *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2005, Vol. 4, 115.

As for poets, the erring follows them (224) Hast thou not seen how they stray in every valley (225) And how they say that which they do not do? (226) Save those who believe and do good works, and remember Allah much, and vindicate themselves after they have been wronged. (227).

Authentic resources assert that the intended type of poets addressed in verse (224) and the cited Hadith are those who are not righteous as verse (227) states plainly. Also, the encouragement of the Prophet to Muslim poets to compose righteous poetry emphasizes the idea that Islam does not categorically condemn poets.⁷² The following Hadith provides clear cut evidence:

Amr Ibn Ash-Sharid reported his father: One day, I was riding behind the Messenger of Allah “PBH,” when he said: “Do you keep any of the Poetry of Umaiyya Ibn Abu As-Salt?” I said yes. He said: Heh [say some].” I recited a verse. He said: Heh. “Until recited a hundred verses.”⁷³

In an eight strategy, writers claim that Islam addresses Jews and Christians as infidels. The message of Islam to all people is to believe in the one God, Allah. The Qur’an describes Jews and Christians as People of the Book. But Westerners, and to create a negative reaction towards Islam, claim that the Qur’an degrades them. Towards this goal, Updike says, “infidels and Zionists, whose torments in the furnaces of Jahannam are well described in the seventh and eleventh and fiftieth of the suras of the Book of the Books.”⁷⁴ He goes on, “But they who deny Our revelations and scorn them-such are rightful owners of the Fire; they will abide therein.” He refers to verses (الأعراف : 7: 40-41), which mean:

Lo! They who deny Our revelations and scorn them, for them the gates of Heaven will not be opened nor will they enter the Garden until the camel goeth through the needle’s eye. Thus do We requite the guilty

⁷²Ibn Katheer, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān...*, Vol. 2, 662-664.

⁷³Muhammad Mahdi, Al-Šarīf’s translation *Sahih Muslim...*, Vol. 4, 112.

⁷⁴J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 4.

(40) Their will be a bed of Hell, and over them coverings (of Hell). Thus do we requite wrong-doers (41).

Updike manipulates the upheaval against Islam after the Sept. 11, events. He says that Islam calls for the torment of Jews, in particular Zionists, and Christians, providing what he thinks is evidence from the Quran. Examining these verses, we do not find any mention of Jews or Christians, who are referred to as the People of the Book and also Jews and Christians. They talk about the infidels. Moreover, Updike imposes the concept of Zionists in the Quran though we know that this movement appeared at the end of the 19th century. The Seventh Sura (Chap. 7) tells the story of Adam and Eve and how they were deceived by Satan. It also states the stories of prophets Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, Shu'ayb, and Moses. God sent prophets to guide nations to the right path and those who refuse it will be tormented in an everlasting fire.

These verses talk about those who did not follow the calls of the prophets. Therefore, they are the ones who will be tormented. The reader can verify that in an authentic Islamic reference. In the Quran, we also find these verses:

“Those are they for whom is naught in the Hereafter save the Fire. (All) that they contrive here is vain and (all) that they are want to do is fruitless”⁷⁵

“(And it is said): Do ye twain hurl to Hell each rebel ingrate (25) Hinderer of good, transgressor, doubter (26) Who setteth up another god along with Allah. Do ye twain hurl him to the dreadful doom.”⁷⁶

Updike provides another false reference about Jews when he says, “not all the gold in the world can ransom those who disbelieve and now

⁷⁵QS. Hūd: 16.

⁷⁶QS. Qaf: 24-26.

disbelieve, and that God will never accept their repentance.”⁷⁷ He refers to this verse: “(On that day) neither the riches nor the progeny of those who disbelieve will naught avail them with Allah. They will be fuel for fire.”⁷⁸ This verse does not mention Jews or Christians. The following examples show how Islam treats the People of the Book:

Narrated ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr:⁷⁹

The Prophet said, “Whoever killed a person having a treaty with the Muslims, shall not smell the smell of Paradise though its smell is perceived from a distance of forty years.”

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar:⁸⁰

“Allah’s Apostle gave the land of Khaibar to the Jews to work on and cultivate and take half of its yield.

These examples prove that People of the Book (Christians and Jews) and people from other faiths are well treated within Islamic community and have always co-existed with Muslims for over 14 centuries.

Miller claims that “[Christian Women] are just not Muslims...it is a sin to marry outside the true faith”⁸¹ He refers to the verse: “Wed not idolatresses till they believe.”⁸² And also this verse:

*This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for them. And so are the virtuous women of the believers and the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you (lawful for you) when ye give them their marriage portions and live with them in honour, not in fornication, nor taking them as secret concubines.*⁸³

In *Blindsided*, Al, a Muslim mujahid character, claims it is impossible

⁷⁷J. Updike, *Terrorist...*, 90.

⁷⁸Qs. Āli Imrān: 10.

⁷⁹*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, Book 53, # 391.

⁸⁰*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, Book 36, # 485.

⁸¹Calvin Miller, *Blindsided...*, 145

⁸²Qs. Al-Baqarah: 221

⁸³Qs. Al-Māidah: 5.

for Muslim men to marry Christian women. Muslim men can marry Christian and Jewish women (الكتايبات Women of the Book), not infidels. Two of the Prophet's wives, Juwayriyyah and Maria, were Christians when he married them.

The martyrs in *Blindsided* aim to spoil a big Christian event. These jihadis will kill priests and monks of the Church. History provides evidence that Muslim armies were given orders not to harm anybody or the environment, refuting Miller's proposition.

Islamic literature refutes Al's proposition. Abu Bakr, the First Calif, gave his orders to an Islamic army leader before they embarked:

Abu Bakr said, "You will find people who claim that they have confined themselves for God, so leave them for that. Do not kill a woman, a child, nor an old man. Do not cut down a fruit tree. Do not ruin a structure, kill a goat, nor a camel, except for your food. Do not burn honey-bees or disperse them. Do not steal or behave cowardly."⁸⁴

History also provides evidence that Muslims never hurt people or the environment. They spread peace and prosperity. Gustave Le Bon⁸⁵ states that when the Arabs conquered Spain, they left people enjoying religious freedom in their Churches. He adds that the world never witnessed conquerors more merciful than the Arabs, and a religion as tolerant as theirs . . . they never imposed Islam on anybody.

Conclusion

The researchers propose that some American novelists, taking advantage of the Sept. 11 event, abuse intertextuality to mislead their readership. This paper has investigated intertextuality manipulation in post-Sept. 11 American fiction trying to establish how some writers misrepresent

⁸⁴M. al-Shaybani, (trans.), *Al-Muwatta'*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Turāth, 2004.

⁸⁵Gustave Le Bon, *La Civilisation des Arabes*, 1884. Adel Zueiter (trans.), *Ḥaḍarāh al-'Arab*, Beirut: Mu'assasat Hindawi li Ta'lim wa al-Thaqafah, 2012, 14.

Islam in their works. The researchers, through the investigation of three representative American novels, namely, Updike's *Terrorist*, Miller's *Blindsided*, and McBain's *Merely Hate*, have established that those writers employ eight strategies to achieve their goals. These strategies are mistranslated, partly quoted, and out-of-context Quranic verses, fake information, and distorted ideas about women and the concept of jihad. This paper refutes these arguments by highlighting these strategies by quoting some examples and discussing them, showing their false propositions and irrelevance.

This paper can enlighten readers of Western literature about misconceptions that can be seeded in novels, and other forms of writing, to misinform readership. Writers may try to implement their own ideologies in their works in an attempt to form the thoughts of their readers towards certain objectives, such as creating hate against Islam and Muslims. The paper brings about such attempts and the techniques in which they are manipulated.

The researchers recommend conducting further research, which could be comparative, on some other literatures, such as French, Spanish, and British to find out if there is any similar manipulation of intertextuality to distort the image of Islam, or any ideologies.

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