

## **Rethinking the Imperial Encounter: A Comparative Reading of Updike's Terrorist and Sonalla Ibrahim's Americanly**

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This paper examines the controversial relationship between the two cultures that has originally started with the 'Suez Crisis' and escalated due to the catastrophic events of 9/11, and the American invasion of Iraq. It draws on the stereotypical presentation of the two cultures in each other's literary writings where we find American authors- especially after the former event- portray the Arabs as "terrorists" and religious fanatics, who are busy with nothing but destroying the U.S. Conversely, the long held belief of America as the 'land of opportunities', or even 'as the model of Freedom and respect for humanity', collapses after the fall of Baghdad. Hence, the unprecedented anti- Americanism sentiment that wishes America –as well as all its allies of Arab rulers- failure in all its efforts in the Middle East. This two way adversary relationship, is reflected in novels, ironically enough a form of colonization in itself, as referred to by Edward Said. Updike's Terrorist and Sonallah Ibrahim's Americanly, would best crystallize the shattering views between the two cultures. Sonalla Ibrahim's novel is the vivid example of Said's view of American Imperialism illustrated in Culture and Imperialism, where he notes that the U.S is "still unable to perceive that its intentions of making the world 'safe for Democracy' ..especially in the Middle East is futile!" Equally, Updike's novel dwells on the motivated 'act of heroism' undertaken by a Muslim, Arab adolescent. The horrific behavior is presented in a way that explains the terrorists' complicated rationales, rather than from a victim's point of view. The paper investigates the political and cultural contexts that help formulate the present way of communication between the two cultures.