

# **The Centre Vs the Periphery: An Analysis of *Terrorist* By John Updike**

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## **Abstract**

The concepts of the Centre and Periphery are central in postcolonial theory and entail politics of power distribution. The focus of this paper is to interrogate the depiction of such power relations in *Terrorist* from a postcolonial perspective. The paper relies on Edward Said's *Orientalism* whose basic premise presupposes the dominance the West against the marginalization of the East through the main ideas of Occident vs the Orient. According to Said, the West, synonymous with Occident, promotes an Orientalist discourse which places the Orient or the colonized at the margins of the Western power. The study argues that, in postcoloniality, the colonizer designated as the West, occupies the Centre through association to a specific set of virtues. The centre defines a place of power and authority. Virtues such as valuing of life and peacefulness become the defining features of the Centre so that the rest or the East are presented as a contrast to these virtues. The implication of the contrast created by the West is the relegation of the East to the Periphery. The colonized or the East are marginalized to the Periphery since they are considered inferior and lacking in virtues that define the West. They are perceived as violent and aversive to the values that respect life which are inherent in the West. This paper observes therefore, that, the relationship of the Centre and the Periphery, is a relationship of power, authority and domination vs marginalization, decentring and relegation.

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Date of Submission: 08-11-2021

Date of Acceptance: 24-11-2021

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Centre and the Periphery are two opposed realities and worldviews. They embody aspects of power in which one entity attempts to define another by relegating and marginalizing it. The West which is at the Centre in the postcolonial discourse ascribes to itself desirable values which elevates its status while at the same time diminishing that of the East. In this case, the West presents itself as superior against the inferiority of the East. The question of religion and violence are relevant in achieving the status of superiority. This is because, by designating itself as non-violent and religiously tolerant, the colonizer described in the West is able to cast the East as the exact opposite, namely; violent and religiously intolerant. The effect is also achieved through a variety of symbols which reinforce the discourse of superior West and inferior East. These are the basis upon which this study analyzes *Terrorist*, a book which portrays the West as force for good and the East a force for evil. The novel recounts events in the life of young Arab American Muslim whose religious affiliation turns radical and extremist after exposure to the teachings of a cleric from Yemen. Ahmad Mulloy who is raised by a single mother, Teresa Mulloy, progressively embraces extremism and intolerance at the hands of his teacher at the mosque, Shaikh Rashid, who is determined to use particular interpretations of the Koran that promotes violence and intolerance. An assessment of these two Muslim characters, exposes their religion as hellbent on violence, destruction and murder as opposed to the Christian religion which is peaceful and tolerant. From a postcolonial paradigm, *Terrorist* can therefore be analyzed as a text that reinforces the perception of a superior West vs an Inferior East or the Centre vs the Periphery binary.

### **The West as the Centre and the East as the Periphery**

In *Terrorist*, imagery constitutes one of the strategies by which the West asserts its superiority. Through this style the East is depicted as insignificant and inferior. The use of insect imagery in the text achieves this effect. Here, the smallness and triviality of the insect image is used to reinforce and contrast the dominant status of the West against inferiority and powerlessness of the East.

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said alludes to the domination and oppression of the West or the Orientalists. This characterization both diminishes the East and cast them as insignificant. In *Terrorist*, the imagery of insect is employed in a way that it creates an association to the colonized thereby consolidating their position as peripheral. This is apparent when Ahmad Mulloy, the key protagonist of the text, reflects about his own life, thinking, "The deaths of insects and worms, their bodies so quickly absorbed by earth and weeds and road tar,

devilishly strive to tell Ahmad that his own death will be just as small and final” (p.5). It is significant that Ahmad finds a common cause between his own life and that of an insect. He recognizes that the nature of an insect can be perceived in his condition therefore ascribing to himself its attributes. The insect imagery contributes towards the construction of Ahmad as the insignificant peripheral.

As a descriptive form, imagery is a form of writing which appeals to human senses (Virtanen, 2011). This style uses “words to convey and evoke lively visual imagining of the reader” (Virtanen, 2011, p.19). For Abrams (1999), imagery is a figurative way of using language which specifies objects through descriptions. The use of insect imagery in *Terrorist* concretizes Ahmad as inferior and hence the object of colonization. Commenting on the imagery significance of insects and worms, Filipczak (2016) argues that:

The worm is a small crawling animal, living close to the earth and feeding decaying matter, it is associated with physicality, material decay, disintegration and dirt. Metaphorically, it can express a certain perspective on man’s condition: it emphasizes human mortality and transience; points to his insignificance in the grand scheme of things (p.1830)

As Filipczak affirms, insects signify insignificance. In *Terrorist*, this observation is bolstered by Shaikh Rashid, Ahmad’s religious teacher and surrogate father, who tells him:

The cockroaches that slither out from the baseboard and from beneath the sink-do you pity them? The flies that buzz around the food on the table, walking on it with dirty feet that have just danced on feces and carrion-do you pity them, no, you want to destroy them (p.77).

In the above extract, Shaikh Rashid’s description solidifies the otherness of the colonized in the way he depicts the insect imagery which is closely associated to Ahmad. For him, an insect cannot attract pity. It’s a nuisance whose presence is unwanted. But Ahmad perceives the entire matter differently. Contrary to the thoughts of his teacher, “Ahmad did, in truth, pity them (insects), being fascinated by the vast insect population teeming at the feet of godlike men...” (p.76). There is a sense in which Ahmad’s attitude draws him closer to the insects and their powerlessness. It’s an attitude that creates an association between him and the nature of insects. In embodying the insignificance and smallness of insects, Ahmad epitomizes the colonized and the dominated subjects.

The power relations in a colonial state are also inherent in Ahmad’s invocation of religion. When he describes insects as ‘teeming at the feet of godlike men’, this character is alluding to the domination of the colonized subjects who exist at the margins of the West. By assigning men the qualities of gods, the insects which in their association with Ahmad represent the colonized are shown to be at the mercy of the colonizers who are represented as ‘godlike men.’ In the same way gods are thought to determine the fate of the mortals, so are these ‘godlike men’ who hypothetically, can decide the fate of insects which crawl under their feet. This describes the outsize domination of the West in its relations with East. The former possesses godlike powers. It is why elsewhere, Ahmad “...stands over the insect in lordly fashion, feeling huge” (p.252). Here, divinity is assigned an element of size which describes both the reach and significance of the Occident or the West.

In *Terrorist*, religion plays a central role in the way the East is represented as peripherized. This can be discerned in the contrast between the preface and the rest of the text. At the beginning, *Terrorist* is prefaced with a biblical verse, Jonah 4:3-4 which states, “And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. And the Lord said, “Is it right for you to be angry?”” (p.2).

The broader context of this verse is that, Jonah is ordered by God to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that because of their transgressions God will destroy their city after 40 days. Jonah instead defies God and sails to Spain. In the voyage, a great storm rages and sailors are in danger of sinking. Upon inquiry, it is discovered that Jonah is the cause of this mayhem upon which he is thrown into the sea and swallowed by a fish. After three days and nights, the fish spews out Jonah at God’s command. This experience alerts Jonah to God’s power, and it is at this point, that he delivers God’s message to Nineveh. The people of the city respond to his warning by praying and repenting and their city is spared. This turnaround on God’s part angers Jonah. He therefore petitions God to let him die.

Jonah’s woes as implied (the text has only one verse, that is, Jonah 3:4-5) in the preface of the text are significant in the broader analysis of the West’s representation in the text. The significance is more apparent when the reasoning that leads God to change mind regarding his intention to destroy Nineveh is established in subsequent verses of the same chapter. In chapter 4:10, the book of Jonah records, “how much more then should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals”.

From Jonah chapter 4 verse 10, it is evident that God’s sympathy and compassion towards the people of Nineveh explains his reversal. The God of Jonah in this narrow sense, is portrayed as merciful and caring for his consideration of the potential suffering and death of innocent children and animals informs his decision to spare Nineveh. This highlights a God, the Christian deity, who is restrained, loving and merciful. The preface of *Terrorist* creates not only a God who is desirable in terms of the qualities he possesses, but also a contrast to a

God encountered in the rest of the text. The difference between the two deities as represented in the preface and in the rest of the text reveals on one hand what is desirable, and on the other hand, what is undesirable. The preface speaks of love, peace, mercy and order as interpreted from the restraining actions of Jonah's God. But in the subsequent sections of the text, the Islamic God of characters such as Shaikh Rashid and Ahmad comes across as vengeful, hateful, violent and destructive. The contrasting representations of these two Gods establishes the Islamic God as different and therefore inferior through association to undesirable vices.

Contrast can be defined as "...difference between two or more tangible or abstract entities, such as characters, settings, opinions, tones, and so on. Contrast generally involves a juxtaposition of two unlike things in order to showcase their differences" (Literary Devices, n.d). As for Muhaidat (2014), "Literary contrasts are rhetorical devices which, by combining disparate ideas, states, and scenes, consolidate authors' tableaux and render them more impressive and pithier" (p.73). From these commentaries, it can be observed that, contrast facilitates a graphical representation of disparate phenomenon. Through this style, the aspect of othering is evident in the contrast between the preface of *Terrorist* and the rest of the text.

This study asserts that religion constitutes the primary means by which decentering (or othering) is achieved in *Terrorist*. It is the basis upon which exclusion and marginalization, all of which are aspects of Orientalist othering, proceeds. Conceiving the basic premise of othering as "the quality of being different from an established social norm or standard" (Osei-Bonsu, 2018, p.3), it is noted that, the portrayal of Islamic religion through characters such as Shaikh Rashid and Ahmad in the subsequent sections of the text, bespeaks of a religion tainted with violence, destruction and disorder. The association to these vices emphasizes the otherness of Islam and Muslims, both of whom are associated with the East (Said, 1978). Al-Saidi (2014) observes that "Postcolonial theory is built in large part around the concept of *otherness* (which) sees the world as divided into mutually excluding opposites: If the Self is ordered, rational, masculine, good, then the Other is chaotic, irrational feminine and evil" (p.96).

Consistent with Al-Saidi's assertion, it is perceived that the dichotomy of goodness and orderliness of Jonah's God in the preface versus the evil and chaos of Shaikh Rashid and Ahmad's God in the rest of the text forms the basis of Centre vs the Periphery. This binary is a demonstration of power relations in which the Christian doctrine establishes its superiority by virtue of embodying desirable values contrary to Islam and Muslims.

One of the key concerns of Saidian Orientalism relates to the construction of Islam and the Arab as the Oriental other or inferior and insignificant therefore belonging to the periphery. Young (2012) writes "The question of representing or covering Islam was always central to the work of Edward W. Said, it was not always a major preoccupation of Postcolonial Studies..." (p.28). Young thinks part of the reason that accounts for lack of primacy of religion in postcolonial studies stems from the Marxist roots to the framework. Marxism aversion to religion is founded on its underlying principles which regards religion as both an illusion and a source of human oppression and alienation (Latief, 2011; Surin, 2013). For Sing & Younes (2013), *Orientalism* was not just a critique of Western hegemony, but also an indictment of Karl Marx for it portrayed him as another example of an Orientalist.

But more significantly, the contrast between the preface of *Terrorist* and the rest of the text highlights the Western attitude in colonialism. The depiction speaks of the perceived fundamental goodness which the West associated their regime with, while at the same time, dismissing the colonized as backward, savages and cannibalistic. In the preface then, we encounter the West and their perceived noble mission while in the rest of the text, in the form of a violent God, we confront the colonized, represented as backward and dangerous. In his analysis of *Heart of Darkness*, Achebe (1977) argues that Joseph Conrad's book represents the colonized or the natives as savages, cannibals and brutes. Achebe considers Conrad an imperialist and therefore an Orientalist who normalizes African's bestiality and dehumanization. He declares, in Conrad's book, there is a contrast "...of savagery of natives to the refinement and sophistication of the West" (Achebe, 1988). The negative association of the colonized as Achebe shows, persists in *Terrorist* through the contrast between the preface and the rest of the text. In a colonial discourse, the colonizers always paint themselves in positive light contrasting with the dark side of the colonized. This contrast typically functions to justify colonial rule and imperialism (Karari, 2018).

Ahmad Mulloy, the chief protagonist of *Terrorist* is in multiple and complex ways both an othered object and an othering agent based on the principles outlined from the foregoing. To begin with, he is a product of mixed ancestry which renders him marginal and peripheral. Thus, "Ahmad himself is the product of a red-haired American mother, Irish by ancestry, and an Egyptian exchange student whose ancestors had been baked since the time of the Pharaohs..." (p.12). As a son of an Egyptian father and an American mother, Ahmad is a consequence of the intermingling between the East and the West. He is an embodiment of both worlds so that in a sense, he is neither part of these worlds nor apart from them. This creates his ambivalence and identity crisis, rendered worse by the fact that he was raised by one parent, his mother, since his father, fled, having "...failed to crack America's riddle" (p.163).

Ahmad's mixed ancestry conforms him to a postcolonial state of alterity which speaks of his status as a colonized subject. According to Bressler (2011) alterity is a philosophical concept of othering where one "is viewed as different and inferior" (p.200). This is the reality Ahmad confronts everywhere, including at school which he describes as a "hellish castle" (p.18) and he is eager to leave behind. His race and religion make him not only different but also an object of curiosity. About Joryleen Grant, "He (Ahmad) believes she is sincerely curious; in his severe faith he is a puzzle to her, a curiosity" (p.69). His guidance and counselling teacher at Central High, Mr. Jack Levy says, "...pardon me for saying it, his (Ahmad's) mix, is a kind of minority's minority" (p.84). Here, Mr. Levy is referencing Ahmad's race and religion as factors that render him a "minority's minority". It is the case that a mix of race, religion and culture establishes Ahmad's alterity, his otherness. Commenting on this postcolonial condition, Styers (2009) opines, "A number of interlocking themes dominate the complex cultural and national identities of colonized and decolonized societies through permutations of gender, race, religion and culture" (p. 851). For Ahmad then, his religion, race and culture affirm both his colonial heritage and otherness.

But the inferiority and powerlessness of Ahmad is mainly depicted in the representation of Islam and Arabs in the text. In representing the East, Ahmad's insignificance follows from his associations to negative vices such as irrationality which are ascribed to Arabs and Muslims. Said (1978) posits that, "the Westerners in no particular order (perceive themselves) as rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values...the latter (the East), none of these" (p.57). In the analysis of Ahmad, it can be asserted that, the attribution to these vices diminishes his status. He is inferior because he is deficient of Western virtues of reason and liberalism. This partly explains his slavery to religion. An examination of the narrative of character naming establishes Ahmad in his representation of the colonized entities as inferior and reinforces the West's superiority and domination.

Character naming is a critical component of narrative construction and it may sometimes represent an artistic platform to implicitly communicate the unsavory. There is a connection between the name of a character and their identity (Gerrig & Banaji, 1991; Windt-Val, 2012). According to Windt-Val, naming is critical for authors in representing certain characters as particular individuals. Of most relevancy, Windt-Val affirms that literary critics are becoming more mindful of "...the importance of names in the interpretation of novels and authorships" (p.283).

Gerrig and Banaji evince, "the very act of naming, of labelling and identifying, has the power to create and form a self-identity. Subsequently, it is with names that we negotiate our self-identities, within the constraints of social circumstances" (p.174-175). For these scholars, when an author names his characters, he in fact labels them, and in so doing, he sets them apart through the identity established in the naming process. Allagbe (2016) goes further in his analysis of the narrative technique of naming and claims that the process reveals "authorial attitudes, perceptions and biases" (p.20). In naming then, focus is not solely on the individual, but the author is also implicated in the final analysis and interpretative results of naming. In this sense, the name of a character not only reveals his identity (or its instabilities) but also the author.

The formal name of *Terrorist's* chief protagonist is "Ahmad Mulloy" (p.268). The name Ahmad is implicit with disempowering connotations which promote the assumptions of West's superiority. The denotative meaning subtly advances the notion of the Eastern decentring. The notion of literal 'madness' is wedded to the name. In a bifurcated version, Ahmad is distinguished into two, and it becomes, 'Ah~mad!' Captured in this manner, the name 'Ah-mad!' reveals two parts; the first part is expressing shock, or some form of strong surprise, while the second part, states a fact. Seen together, this name is expressing the emotion of shock at the fact of apparent madness in the conduct of the character in question. It is almost like an expression of revulsion at the magnitude of insanity discernable in the person bearing the name.

In the text, Ahmad is explicitly referred to as 'madman' many times. In his interview as a truck driver at the Chehab's family, Charlie, his guide tells him, "How do you feel about all this, Madman?" (p.148). The reference is repeated several times. It is significant that the only two characters who make these references are Mr. Jack Levy, Ahmad's Guidance and Counselling teacher at Central High and Charlie Chehab, who unknown to Ahmad, is an FBI operative assigned to gather intelligence about the developing terrorist plot. These two, as Teresa Mulloy, Ahmad's mother, observes, are "... representatives of the distant bureaucracy that hovers above..." (p.78). They are the Orientalists at the centre of power and authority. By dint of referring to Ahmad as madman so repeatedly, and as representatives of American bureaucratic institutions, the two assume the power to define and represent the identity of Ahmad, as the mad *Other* who therefore belongs to the periphery. Imperialism and colonization rely on their abilities to create categories and identities which consolidate their power and sense of self. As-Saidi (2014) states "The empire's power rests in its ability to name, to label, to categorize, and to define the world according to its own whims..." (p.102).

The name of Ahmad reflects the attitude of the West towards the colonized. It bespeaks of the perceptions of superiority and power of the West primarily in their colonial quest. To suggest an individual is

mad, is basically to erase the person. Madness then encompasses Saidian interpretation of how the Occident thinks about the Orient: primitive, irrational, backward, despotic and stupid. This representation is necessary for the eventual justification of colonization. Donze-Magnier (2017) declares that the perceived superiority of the West in the discourse of Orientalism depends on the image of the Orientals as inferior and backward hence the need for domination inherent in colonization. This means, the rendering of Ahmad, in this sense as an object of colonization, as degenerate, creates the necessity of help and guide. As a madman, his sense of self and being are disrupted. The colonizer in the form of the Orientalist becomes a necessity for the colonized whose existence is otherwise untenable. Ahmad's case demonstrates, that the colonized in his unstable condition of degeneration requires the colonizer for his own good.

As the case above shows, the West's quest to control the colonized regions and people is grounded on necessity. The condition of the colonized calls for assistance which can only be lent through what is perceived as colonization. The representation of Ahmad as 'mad' shows how the West in their intervention to non-Western regions interpret their efforts as redemptive of otherwise degenerate people and conditions. A mad man needs a guide and a helper. As such, Mr. Jack Levy, is fittingly Ahmad's guidance and counselling teacher at Central High. He represents the West and their endeavor to guide and control the East. The profession of Jack Levy amplifies the madness of Ahmad. As a guidance and counselling teacher, Jack performs the role of guiding the 'mad' Ahmad. The construction of these two characters creates an imbalanced relationship in which one character is supposed to guide the other. Here, the guidance of Jack is more important to Ahmad and not the other way around. This depiction echoes Allagbe (2016) proposition that the narrative technique of naming is also a reflection of the author's attitude. The attitude in this case constitutes the idea that it's the East or the perceived colonized people who require the help and the assistance of the West. It is Ahmad who needs the guidance of Mr. Jack Levy even if he does not recognize it.

In the binary construction of Ahmad and Levy, there is an emphasis on the guidance and supervision of Jack which presupposes the superiority and centrality of the West. This is so because, the depiction of Ahmad as *unintelligent* in the sense that he is mad necessitates a guide who is *intelligent*. The unintelligent versus intelligent dichotomy is the operational logic of colonization which depends on the assumption of the colonizer being superior. Tyson (2016) avers "the colonist ideology is based on the assumption of the colonizer's superiority...they see themselves at the centre, the colonized at the margins" (p.419). Seen from this angle, the guidance teacher is depicted as intelligent by virtue of his guidance to one whose name have denotative and connotative insinuations of madness.

The relations of power between Ahmad and Jack can further be discerned in the interpretation of the underlying meaning of the character name Jack as used in *Terrorist*. The endeavor to uncover such a meaning relies on Biblical allusion, a stylistic strategy that is necessary in this quest. Abrams (1999) defines allusion as "a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or another literary work or passage" (p.9). Abrams perceives allusion as an indirect reference, rather than explicit. Here, possession of basic appreciation of the referent material is necessary in the uncovering of object's meaning.

Harmon (2015) suggests a triad interplay of the author, his text and readers as necessary in the interpretation and analysis of allusion. The scholar utilizes what she calls "Eco's conciliatory triad of interpretation" which includes, "intention of the author, intention of the reader and intention of the work." However, the scholar clarifies, more often, the intention of the author and perhaps even of the work may not be available, or even if available, its understanding and interpretation may vary across diverse readership. It is the case then, that how a particular instance of allusion is analyzed largely depends on 'intention of the reader.'

In relation to Jack Levy in *Terrorist*, the study relies on allusion to determine the meaning and significance of this name. This quest also utilizes Harmon's (2015) third perspective allusion analysis, that is, the intention of the reader. In this endeavor, reference is made to Christian doctrine where the name Jack/Jacob has its roots. In the novel, Jack himself makes reference to the biblical allusion relevant in the analysis of his name, when he notes, "...poor Isaac, the trusting shmuck, having been nearly killed by his own father was as an old blind man tricked out of his blessing by his own Jacob and his own wife, Rebecca..." (p. 24).

The Bible has an account that explains how a character named Jacob, tricked his father into blessing him instead of his older brother, Esau. In the analysis of this Biblical episode, Anderson (2010) proclaims Jacob's trickery as a "phenomenon of divine deception in the Jacob circle" (p.1). Anderson's study elaborates multiple instances of deceptions and trickery of Biblical Jacob which have implication on the depiction of the character of Jack in the text under study. It is through Jacob's trickery that "God chose to continue His Abrahamic Covenant" through him (JACOB, n.d). By linking the textual Jacob to the Biblical Jacob, the phenomenon of trickery, deceit and deception become relevant themes analyzable in the context of colonization. As a representative of the colonizer, the textual Jacob highlights the extent to which the West are perceived to have weaved their colonial discourse with deceit and lies that eventually culminated to exploitation of the colonized people.

The centrality of Biblical Jacob based on his special role in the fulfilment of God's covenant finds parallel with Jack Levy in the text. By virtue of his role in the fulfilment of Abrahamic covenant, Jacob becomes special, important, central and superior. These virtues are also attributable to Jack Levy in the text. The centrality of Biblical Jacob in guiding God's covenant to fruition is mirrored by the textual Jack Levy who symbolically guides the misguided Ahmad who represents the East. It's Jack Levy in the text who dissuades Ahmad Mulloy from the plotted terrorist attack. He single-handedly averts a potential tragic moment when he convinces Ahmad, at the eleventh hour, to abandon a mission which would see him explode a truck loaded with explosive fertilizers at a busy Lincoln Tunnel thereby causing massive casualties.

There are parallels between the special roles played by the Biblical Jacob and the textual Jack Levy. The comparison of these roles reinforces the meaning of the name Jacob as 'important, special and superior.' Throughout the text, Jack Levy displays an outside interest in the welfare of Ahmad. He tells Teresa Mulloy, Ahmad's mother, "You've got to help me to get Ahmad's future more in line with his potential" (p.90). This interest in the welfare of Ahmad represents the interest of the West towards the East. Even when distrusted as is the case with Ahmad, the purity of the motive is not sullied. For Jack, Ahmad possesses a potential which through targeted guidance could lead to his success. His guidance is focused on Ahmad's potentials.

The major role Jack plays in Ahmad's life is to attempt to guide him away from his worst instincts. This role is prominent when Jack Levy successfully convinces Ahmad to abandon a terrorist plot which had the potential to cause massive casualties. Nudging him away from the plot, the guidance counsellor tells his student:

I am betting you won't set it off. You're too good a kid. Your mother used to tell me how you couldn't bear to step on a bug. You'd try to get it onto a piece of paper and throw it out the window" (p.296)

The emphasis here is on the fact that Jack Levy is an adult, a guide who knows more whereas Ahmad is a 'kid' who needs to be advised and controlled. But his guidance is focused on the good of Ahmad. He appeals to Ahmad's convictions which ultimately shakes the student's resolve to go through with the terrorist plot. In this manner, Jack Levy not only saves Ahmad from himself, but also the potential victims to the attack. This incident reestablishes the importance of Jack Levy as a saviour. His superiority as encapsulated in his Western representation presents him as a force for good. In a way, the West is depicted as only interested in the wellbeing of the East. They do not see their mission as exploitative. Rather, they perceive their mission as guidance towards the realization of the perceived colonized's people potential and promise.

The specialness and importance of Jack Levy highlights the negation and marginality of Ahmad. Marginality, according to Ashcroft *et al.* (1998), relates to positionality and power. This implies, entities are described as marginal if their access to power is limited and denied. Mart *et al.* (2010) finds Said's *Orientalism* as a work in which the Orientalists "...regarded their subjects as inferior to Westerners, and in general, backward and in need of European authority and guidance" (p.367). Accordingly, the West typically presents themselves as the guides, enlightened and civilized while the East, uncivilized and trapped helplessly in debilitating superstitions and primitivity (Falola, 2009).

## II. CONCLUSION

This paper examined the relationship between the Occident and Orient or the West vs East from a postcolonial perspective. Consequently, it established that, the West exercises power and authority against the East through association to a set of virtues. In depicting itself as embodying desirable qualities, the West occupies the Centre which is a place of power and authority thereby relegating the East to the Periphery. From a postcolonial prism which borrowed Edward Said's ideas in *Orientalism*, this study concludes that, *Terrorist* is a text which is pervasive with the stereotypical depictions of the superior West against the inferior East.

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Mabonga Atony Barasa. "The Centre Vs the Periphery: An Analysis of Terrorist By John Updike." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 26(11), 2021, pp. 45-51.