Discursive Practices and Narrative Building in Post 9/11 Among Young American Adults

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	The changing undercurrents of the political situation of the world, in the aftermath of 9/11, seem to have affected the notion of the 'other' in the social, cultural and most expressively the discourse of literature. The power structures embedded in these discourses have influenced the social practices in the portrayal of the 'other'. The construction of the 'other' is epitomized through writings illustrating biases that reveal themselves in ostracizing communities and ideologies. The socio-political implications of the identity in post 9/11 require further investigation. The current study investigates the portrayal of the 'other' delineated in American young adults. The theoretical perspectives of Siegfried Jager and Teun van Dijk (2001) in the domain of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) were employed to analyze the data. The results of the investigation substantiated that the 'other' was redefined as an entity loaded with explicit negative implications and depicted by adding a prefix to the 'other' creating a 'Muslim other'. The paper has implications for socio-political, education and cultural setting and practices in society.

1. Introduction

The present study aims at investigating the utilization of discursive practices by texts to create and legitimize identities. The basic assumption is that by the employment of the discursive practices, texts written for young adults after 9/11 follow the principles of 'othering' to represent a 'self' and an 'other' by establishing positive and negative identity features. Post 9/11 literature provides a site to ascertain the changes if any regarding representation of 'self' and 'other'.

Jensen S. Q. (2011) opines that identities are social constructs and social situations provide a locus for the construction of identities. A theoretical assumption of the process of formation of identity helps us understand the phenomenon of 'othering'. The concept of othering draws its principles from various theoretical approaches. The most significant being the understanding of self, put forward by Hegel which establishes a dialectic master-slave relationship between self and other. Said (1978) explains that othering is exclusion of a person or a group not fitting in the norm of the group which is a version of the Self.

Regarding the expression of identity, Vanheule and Verhaeghe (2009) quote Jacques Lacan a prominent psychoanalyst, opined that identity is constituted by language which marks a certain identity domain.

Versluys (2007) argues that language constructs new identities making it imperative to identify the resources which a language utilizes to construct an identity, the source, creating that identity and the purpose is questions worth considering. Dam, Holmgreen and Strunk (2006) explain that the uneven power balance between the source creating the identity and the audience is essential in achieving the desired change in the audience perceptions and in creating an identity. Hence the idea of Wodak and Myer (2007) holds true that language does not possess inherent authority, it is the user who gives it power. Thus, it becomes apparent that a change in social conditions can recreate identities. Mansoor (2012) posits that 9/11 changed not only the global socio-political scenario but also the concept of identity by creating "terrorists" and "us".

Lampert (2007) opines that events happening around us affect our perceptions therefore, it is important to investigate the texts which narrate events like 9/11 to understand their assumptions of 'self' and 'other'. Hence, exploring the Young Adult American novel written as the outcome of 9/11 offers a site to examine the emerging identities.

2. Research Methodology
This study investigates the phenomenon of identity construction by a text and its socio-economic effects. Critical Discourse Analysis provides many approaches to explore the expression of unequal power relations in social discourses and the resultant prejudices (Meyer and Wodak, 2001).

Griffin (2007) opines that CDA endeavors to interpret the discourses shaped by powerful socio-political institutions like administrations and regimes to paint a specific reality. Griffin (2005) emphasizes how CDA through the utilization of tools establishes a correlation between language and social practices. The researcher is able to determine how a particular reality is constructed by utilizing language. Wodak and Meyer (2001) describe that for textual analysis, CDA depends on linguistic categories. The emerging patterns of these categories help in comprehending the meaning being conveyed. The current study investigates a text and attempts to decipher the meaning being created. The exploration required an initial phase of sorting the content and then a linguistic examination was carried out. Identification of 'The Main Categories' provided the data. These categories were informed by the approach of Seigfried Jagar and Teun van Dijk (2001). The Main Categories included:

2.1   Rhetorical Means
Hodges (2001) elaborates how metaphors and similes act as markers to describe an event or a phenomenon in a manner to empower a narrative to influence the response of an audience. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) opine that these linguistic devices allow the user to construct an identity. Chilton and Schaffner (2002) highlight that these linguistic tools help convey a systemized ideology by creating specific identities.

2.2   Ideological Statements
These statements express multiple meanings but the text suggests only one meaning as the sole meaning.

2.3   Lexicalization
Texts use lexical descriptors to highlight, blur, foreground or to ignore events, phenomena and attributes. (Hodges, 2011). Van Dijk (1995) elaborates that connotations of lexicons can construct positive and negative identities.

2.4   Identity Features

Mansoor (2012) explains that by assigning qualities to the entity being described, texts accomplish the creation of explicit identities.

2.5   Strategies of Analysis
The identification and recording of the above mentioned Main Categories led to the creation of the categories given by Teun van Dijk (2001) for studying the nature of identity being created.

2.6   Concretization
Van Dijk (2001) explains that texts provide details of events, feelings, or phenomena so that the reader can actually see, hear or feel the entity being described.

2.7   Topicalization
The frequent but mostly indirect reference to an act or happening brings it in the notice of the reader and avoids its blurring.

2.8   Sympathy
Van Dijk (2001) points out that texts create sympathy against the 'other' by mentioning the harmful act of the 'other' implying that 'us' is a victim of the 'other'.

2.9   Identity Domains
Van Dijk (2001) is of the view that human, cultural and institutional traits of 'us' are shown to be positive and hence appreciated while the 'other' is shown to possess all negative traits in the said domains.

The current study will explore concretization, topicalization and sympathy as the domains of identity creation.

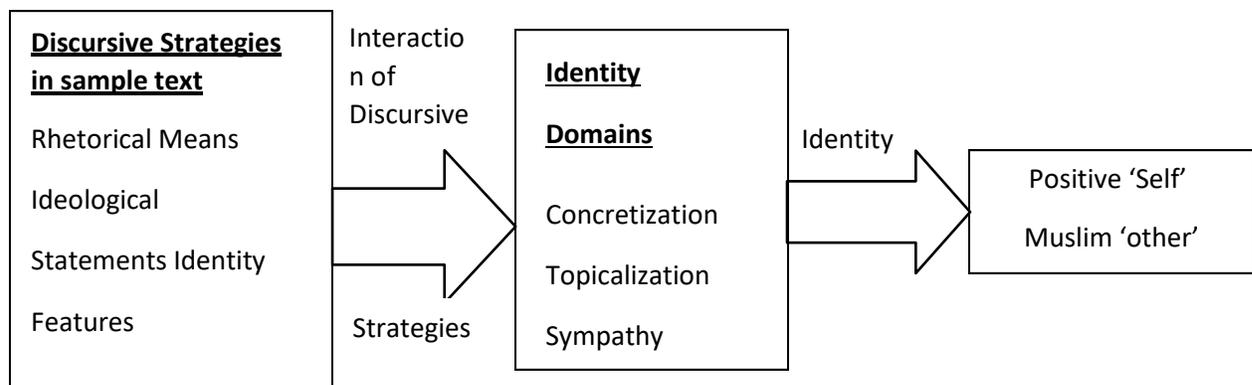**Figure1:** Construction of 'self' and 'other' by interaction of discursive strategies and creation of identity

3. Collection of Data
The categories of discursive strategies were identified from the text. The frequency of these strategies is given in table 1.

Table1: Frequency of Main Categories

S. No.	Main Category	Frequency
1	Rhetorical Means	19

2	Ideological Statements	36
3	Identity features	18
4	Lexicalization	39

4. Results and Discussion

The interaction of the Main Categories constructed the Identity Domains which defined the nature of identities. The analysis leads to the creation of Identity Domains. The frequency of these categories is shown in the table 2 and 3.

Table 2: Discursive strategies, identity domains and their frequency for Positive 'self'

S. No.	Discursive Strategy	Identity Domains	Occurrences
1.	Ideological Statements	Competence Positive Mindset Free Society 'us' and 'them' Sense of Responsibility All Encompassing Religion Total	2 4 3 2 3 2 16
2.	Lexicalization	Family Values High Ethical Standards Empathetic Society Total	7 5 7 19
3.	Rhetorical Means	High Moral Values	4

Table 3: Discursive strategies, identity domains and their frequency for Muslim 'other'

S. No.	Discursive Strategy	Representational Strategy	Number of occurrences
1.	Ideological Statement	Topicalization Concretization Sympathy Total	5 7 8 20
2.	Lexicalization	Topicalization Concretization Sympathy Total	6 5 9 20
3.	Rhetorical Means	Topicalization Concretization Sympathy Total	5 7 3 15

4.1   Positive Self Representation through Identity Building
4.1.1   Ideological Statement for Competent Authorities
After 9/11 attacks, Tess saw a clip on the TV prepared by the defense department describing how mountains could be blown up by bombs. "On the screen……….and watched for a while". (p.39). The American government had established that the attacks were engineered by Muslims who were hiding in Afghanistan in caves. The government was showcasing to the public that it had weapons which could destroy the terrorists even if they hid in the deepest of caves. The text thus concretizes a very capable government of America having the ability to admonish the terrorists.

4.1.2   Ideological Statement for Positive Mindset
The American people have been depicted as spirited and lighthearted by nature. "At that time of the year every family in the United States is at Disney World." (p.51). All families have been publicized to be affectionate towards children. The word "every" generalizes this attribute sending a message that children are considered very important in the American society. Rejoicing life paints a society which is at peace with its environment.

4.1.2   Ideological Statement for a Free Society
The American society has been depicted to be a free and open culture where no restrictions not even religious ones are imposed. People having a variety of beliefs live in harmony and attend various churches displaying tolerance for diversity in thinking. Before marrying David, Tess's mother changed from Old Methodist Church to Episcopal Church, which David followed. Religious beliefs do not dictate the quality of relationship among individuals. It is only through consideration for others that such a harmonious state has been achieved. A clear signal has been given that the Americans are very accommodating.

There is direct critique on the derelictions of religious figures. Tess comments, "priests getting married…..better than altar boys…" (p.61). Also she adds, "…old people who have nothing better to do with their Sundays" (p.59). Tess conveys that attending the church had little importance. Nevertheless, Tess mentions "I used to go to the church a lot". (p.60). Religious exploitation has been condemned by Tess when she mentions, "…Put your whole paycheck in the platter, bring clothes right off your kids back…". "…how you can go to the Mass from one door and go out of the other…". (p.62). Such unequivocal disapproval of faith is probable when contradictory views are appreciated and people have enlightened minds. This portrays a truly free American social set up.

4.1.3   Ideological Statement for Sense of Responsibility
Tess explains how her father valued relationship with his sisters and their children. Concretizing this concept, details are given when Tess mentions, "Dad spends a lot of time with his family…….he goes to every basketball game, wrestling or school play that one of them is in" (p.83). This shows the high degree of involvement of Tess's dad in the lives of his nieces and nephews and how he reinforced their hard work. When Tess came to live with him, he changed his habit of getting up late because he had to take Tess to school. Tess's dad is portrayed to be mindful of her education. "I want to be able to give you stuff" (p.98). So it becomes evident that he was aware of his responsibilities as a father.

4.1.4   Ideological Statement for All Encompassing Religion
Although Tess had earlier criticized Christianity she finds consolation in attending the Mass. "I have to admit……..Like a protective shield".(p.65). She feels safe because of the company of her grandmother and father and the atmosphere in the church. Hence, the reader concludes that the social and religious systems entrenched in the American society are founded on good moral grounds. The church-a symbol of Christian religion instilling a sense of safety in Tess highlights positive doctrine on which Christianity is based.   Tess describes the church as, "safe and beautiful" (p.65) which promotes genuineness of the Christian religion. Tess further adds, "The priest gave ………he was talking right to me." (p.65). The

Christian faith is depicted to be able to provide solutions to day to day life. This makes Christianity a genuine religion which provides spiritual supervision to its disciples.

4.1.5 Lexicalization for Family Values

Tess decided to live with her real father and leave her family. However, her concern was about her mother. The text creates an appreciable self-image of Tess by highlighting positive family tenets and concern for each other when she utters, "I was thinking about mom and how she was alone now. I felt by leaving, I was leaving her alone". (p.55). A teenager experiencing extreme trauma is worried about her mother's happiness does not leave any ambiguity in the thoughts of the reader but to acknowledge the existence of strong bonding in families. Tess does not want her mother to suffer loneliness and is visibly concerned about her mother's emotional well-being. A durable family connection has been portrayed again when Tess describes her affection for her father and states, " …in whatever rusted –out chariot he was driving and rescue me…". (p.54). She is not concerned about the quality of vehicle her father possessed but just wanted to be with him.

4.1.6 Lexicalization for High Ethical Standards

The text utilizes lexicalization to show that Tess's step father, David, possesses a progressive attitude. Tess describes "David's all about efficiency both time and money." (p.27). Likeable traits have been underlined portraying David to be a sensible and aware person who knows that to achieve success one must manage time and money. By explaining that personal growth was taken very seriously by David the text establishes him to be a person who strives for excellence and does not become complacent. This is highlighted by Tess's utterance that he did not consider "relative performance" (p.28) as sufficient.

4.1.7 Lexicalization for an Empathetic Society

The text utilizes specific words to depict an American society in which people possessed empathy. Sharing the sorrows with the grieved families helped them cope with the suffering. Tess states, "Just like all people in school who write poetry on 9/11…..feeling is the same as real loss" (p.69). The empathetic feature of the society is being stressed upon by using the word "real". The people who did not lose a loved in the wake of 9/11 provided support to those who were suffering the pain of losing a family member or friend.

4.1.8 Ideological Statement for Positive Identity Building

The strategy of using multilayered statements enables the text to construct diverse identities of the White Americans and the immigrants. The text depicts that White individuals had better manners and civility when matched with that of the immigrant population. Describing the refined and cultured White Americans in her neighborhood Tess explains "In our neighborhood you can sit outside…….even in summer when everyone's windows are open and not hear much of anything except a cricket or a car" (p.76). While describing immigrants living in her dad's neighborhood she says, "In my Dads neighborhood you never see any stars plus with all the crime in the area they have put up a lot of streetlights in the parking of the malls." (p.77). Her father's neighborhood had a majority of immigrants and the explicit meaning of "you never see a star" points towards the haphazard construction of houses in which aesthetic aspects had been neglected and also this statement points out that the residents were criminals.

4.1.9 Lexicalization for Social Consciousness

The text explains how people hurried to donate blood for those who were injured as a result of 9/11 attack. "There are lines at the blood bank in New York five hours long, people desperate to open their veins" (p.176). The words "lines" and "five hour long" make the reader envision enthusiastic and courageous residents of New York donating their blood to save the injured.

4.1.10 Rhetorical Means for High Morality

The text employs rhetorical means to send the message that modesty is a strong pillar of the American society. Parents, like David, stressed on its importance and Tess was made to follow a decent dress code by David emphasizing that "anything that shows cleavage or belly button is illegal" (p.28). The selection of the word "illegal" depicts the importance being given to this aspect by David.

4.2   Muslim 'other'

4.2.1   Ideological Statement for Topicalization

Narrating her story, Tess, mentions, "…what looked like any other September morning." (p.5). Employing an apparent comparison the text points out a contrast conveying that the morning of 9th of September was not a usual morning of September and prepares the reader to discover the irregularity that defined 'that' morning of September from a usual morning of September. Hence, through an ideological statement the reader is made to discover the happening which made that September morning different from other September mornings. The text indicates "until those planes flew into the tallest buildings in the world." incorporating events of 9/11 and substantiating that a specific entity had smashed their planes into the building and the devastation of the day of 9/11 was the result of this action of that entity. Thus the reader creates the certainty of 9/11 and also of the 'other.' The text has accomplished a successful construction of a Muslim 'other'.

4.2.2   Ideological Statement for Concretization

Ideological statements help to construct the Muslim 'other' both at the collective and formal level as well as at an individual level also. "On the news they say that history is going to be separated by what happened before that day and what will happen after that day." (p.5). The use of "the news" describes the formal level and the reference of "history" connects 9/11 to the shared perspective of the American populace. The text expounds how 9/11 has not only changed the present but the future also. 9/11 has become the locus from which the 'after' meaning the future will develop its uniqueness. Hence the reader can easily decipher that the American people and American government will now imagine the 'before' 'and 'after' in the light of 9/11. It also expresses that the newly emergent 'after' is permanent and its characteristics will be very unlike the previous 'before' entity. So the treatment of the 'other/s' will undergo change by the American citizens and by the American government. At the individual level the narrator of the story experiences an analogous state. The text explains in detail   Zoe's death "…you dying that day…." (p.5). The reader is told the ghastly sequence of events which apart from establishing the painful truth of the demise of Zoe also concretizes the authenticity of the assault on the World Trade Centre by a Muslim 'other'.

4.2.3   Ideological Statement for Sympathy

By using metaphorical device a reference is made towards the deed of the Muslim 'other' describing it as "the beginning of the end of the world" (p.14). This permits the visualization of the gruesomeness of 9/11. The magnitude of devastation triggered by the Muslim 'other' was so large that it seemed as if the whole world was about to be annihilated. Muslim 'other' brought death to the people as they jumped from the Twin Towers to avoid being burnt by the fire. The text remarks, "People who fell out from the sky" (p.14) shows the merciless nature of Muslim 'other'. This was such a horrifying way of killing people that even people who did not lose a family member had to ponder sadly on the lost 'no one' and would imagine in despair the desperateness inflicted upon those people who had no option but to embrace a wretched death.

4.2.4   Lexicalization for Topicalization

By using specific lexical choices the text brings to the surface the happenings of 9/11. Tess recollects the happenings of 9/11 and the death of her sister, Zoe in an implicit manner when she says, "Everything led to that day." (p.32). Although it is an indirect way of referring to 'someday', the context provides an opportunity to foreground the atrocious day of 9/11 again in the mind of the reader .Thus "that day" is

converted into a specific day -the day that witnessed the killing of many innocent human beings and most tragically Zoe, an infant who had not caused any harm to anyone.

4.2.4   Lexicalization for Concretization
The devastation due to the large number of deaths and damage to property as a result of the burning of Twin Towers has been described by means of words like "the Tower folded into the sidewalk" (p.170). The lexical choice of 'folded" enables the reader to actually see the falling Towers.This lexical choice helps to relate to the next step of such huge destruction -when huge buildings collapse, damage to life and assets can be envisioned to be enormous. There is no direct mention that the cause of the destruction of the Twin Towers was the act of Muslim terrorists it is inevitable for the reader to condemn the being that had brought an appalling end to life and property. The reader easily visualizes the complete destruction of Towers accompanied by many deaths.

4.2.5   Lexicalization for Sympathy
The text highlights that permanent loss has resulted due to the actions of Muslim 'other' as Tess utters, "You'll still be dead and I'll still be sad" (p.21). Tess describes that long hours of counseling by the psychiatrist are futile since the sorrow she and her family are enduring has no end. The text has used the adverb 'still' making the situation at that instant eternal.

4.2.6   Rhetorical Means for Topicalization
Metaphorical devices help in creating an undesirable image of the Muslim 'other'. The gruesome act of the Muslim 'other' had affected the individual and the collective sphere of life. Tess states, "Something as small as you cannot make a sound in a world where buildings can come down" (p.170). The utterance conveys that 9/11 was a tormenting act of the Muslim 'other' in which innocent lives like that of Zoe who was not capable of hurting anyone, were lost. The attacks of the Muslim 'other' were no doubt inhuman and brutal since they killed not just a few people but made a huge number of individuals lose their lives as when "buildings come down" those who are crushed by the rubble meet a painful death not to mention the agonizing death of those who were in the falling buildings. It is not difficult for the reader to conclude that the seemingly unimportant demise of Zoe had shaken the lives of four people so the number of people who had to bear the unbearable loss of loved ones would be so large. The text is thus able to represent both the physical and the psychological aspect of human life which were traumatized by the ruthlessness of the Muslim 'other'.

4.2.7   Rhetorical Means for Concretization
By employing metaphorical devices the text highlights that the Muslim 'other' had brought pain and agony of the extent that it was not possible to measure the amount of grief and anguish. Tess points out, "Impossibly our mother's face is ugly" (p.172) when her mother and Tess had gone to the hospital to enquire after Zoe who was unconscious after being hit by the car. Pain and distress had engulfed every place and everyone and had substituted loveliness and positivism in repulsiveness & pessimism.

4.2.8   Rhetorical Means for Sympathy
To describe the agony Tess's family was undergoing due to the act of the Muslim 'other' metaphorical devices have been used. When Tess decides to leave her family and live with her real father, her mother states, "I can't lose both of you. I can't" (p.131). The Muslim 'other' had created a chain of events causing Tess's mother to undergo the unbearable loss of Zoe's death and Tess's absence.

5. Socio-Economic Implications
The tragic incident of 9/11 had its inevitable socio-economic effect. America faced debt crisis after 9/11 and had to increase the defense budget (Amadeo, 2019). Report for Congress (2002) also states that American GDP growth during the first half of 2001, went down and contracted further during the 3rd quarter" (Makinen, 2002). Later, the Bush administration hurled a war in Afghanistan to find Osama Bin

Laden, and a $29.3 billion budget was approved by the Congress as funding for the war. (Amadeo, 2019). Troops were sent to Iraq to find weapons of mass destruction and the pretext that President Sadam was helping Al-Qaida and another $36.7 billion were sanctioned. (Amadeo, 2019). The total cost of the war-on-terror is '$2.126 trillion' (Amadeo, 2019) which is a big financial burden on America's economy. 9/11 led to socio-economic consequences not only in America but worldwide, due to War-on-Terror. (Makinen, 2002) .

6. Conclusion

This study explored the application of discursive practices and socio-economic implications highlighted in American fiction produced for young adults after 9/11. The application of Teun A. van Dijk's approach of analyzing the role of the discursive practices was highlighted in the sample text constructing a specific identity for Americans and Muslims. The results signified that the sample texts revealed Muslims to possess negative streaks of human nature. They have been described as an 'other' who is violent and hates America .Such images are crafted by employing discursive strategies which have created Muslim 'other' as the most dangerous enemy of America. On the other hand, everything and anything American retains all appreciable aspects.

The conventions of Muslims 'other' and positive America are the recurrent themes which the text brings to the surface. The results are thought provoking and call for more exploration in this domain to reveal and ascertain the effects of such identity creation in fiction for young adults written in the background of 9/11 to develop a better realization of the world around us.

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