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## **The Othering Concept towards the Church in the *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu* Travelogue by Sayyid Qutb**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Sayyid Qutb was a great thinker in Islamic religious matters. His writings and ideology were often used as reference by the Muslim community in the 20th century. Each piece of his writings contains implicit meanings that require in-depth understanding. However, his travelogue entitled *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu* or its English translation *The America I Have Seen in the Scale of Human Values* has received less attention than his other works. This travelogue is unique in that it mainly narrates the primitive side of the church institution in the United States (U.S), unlike his other works that are more neutral. This study, therefore, analysed this primitive perspective based on a selected theory known as othering theory. This qualitative research used the documentation and content analysis methods. The result of this study shows that while this travelogue mostly presents primitive connotation towards the church institution; based on the othering concept, it is an action of Sayyid Qutb as a nationalist who defended the Muslim community in Egypt at that time from being continuously colonised by Western ideologies. This study is hoped to provide a new perspective in religious studies, particularly from the aspect of religious criticism.*

**Keywords:** *American society, Church, Othering, Sayyid Qutb, Travelogue.*

Religion is humans' life belief system. By internalising religion, one would find it easier to mould their character to be more civilised (Malik Bennabi 1983; Rahmat Hidayat 2019). However, Sayyid Qutb's travelogue paints a different scenario as it states that the people in the U.S were not ethical towards their religion. The church institution, especially, was viewed as not playing an adequate role as a centre of religious propagation.

A travelogue is defined as a note written by travellers that record their observations of the social environment (Mohd Fadhli et. al 2021). A travelogue is a medium for travellers to express and write all the experiences they have gone through (Kingsley 2013). According to Firuz-Akhtar Lubis (2019), the concepts of captivity and freedom are paradoxical concepts that often intertwine with one another within any form of travel, whether physical, mind, or spiritual travel. Thus, the concepts of captivity and freedom in various aspects such as memory, ideology, belief, and religion usually influence the presentation form of a travelogue. This notion leads to the question of whether Sayyid Qutb's travelogue, which has a negative perspective of the church institution in the U.S, can be perceived and understood by using a particular concept.

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Sayyid Qutb was renowned for his great ideology in championing Islamic religious matters (Rosni et. al 2011). His great thought is often used as a conception for driving Islamic movements (Asyraf 2000). Due to his great thought, he was entrusted by the Egyptian government at that time to travel to the U.S to study the Western education system in the mid-20th century.

His experience in the U.S resulted in a self-written travelogue known as *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu* or its English translation *The America That I Have Seen in the Scale of Human Values*. This travelogue has numerous paradoxical elements regarding the church institution in the U.S. From the perspective of Sayyid Qutb, the churches in the U.S served as development centres that offered entertainment and often organised various activities that aroused one's carnal desires. This perspective raises the question of why did Sayyid Qutb use a primitive value in depicting the American church institution in his writing? In fact, to produce a good piece of writing, an author needs to avoid biasness (Nur Asyiqin & Firuz-Akhtar 2021). They need to be neutral by not siding with any party in the investigation (Nursham 2015).

The primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) towards the church institution in the U.S fits the othering concept. This othering process is triggered by the difference in social identities in social life. Examples include differences in the cultural or ethnic identity, gender, and religion in a society. These differences shape one's thinking leading one to view the group in the other society from a distinct perspective and impression such that the other group becomes a threat to them.

Scholars have their own perspectives of the othering concept where there are four main schools of thought regarding it. First, according to Prastowo & Wijaya (2020), this concept refers to the process where individuals/groups relate primitive attributes to other individuals/groups. Meanwhile, Nopiandi (2019) stated that othering is the process of describing a culture relative to another culture according to a hierarchy between the self/us (our group) and the other/them (their group). Aisyah Nur Amalia (2019) explained this concept as the process of labelling individuals/groups that are considered different by another community. Meanwhile, Udasmoro (2018) stated that othering occurs when one defines others according to their own perspective. In contrast, Vichiensing (2017) stated that this concept is a process of determining and exercising the identity superiority of one party over others who are regarded as different.

The othering concept emphasises the dialectical relationship between the author and their social environment only. Nonetheless, the background of the author influences as to whether the author wants to view their social environment as a threat or otherwise. If the author regards the social environment as a threat to their group, then the author will present a primitive perspective of their social environment. The various perspectives, good or bad, normally affect the author's social environment and the readers (Kurnia et. al 2021). Thus, this study was conducted to analyse the othering concept in relation to the church in the travelogue by Sayyid Qutb, *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu* or its English translation, *The America That I Have Seen in the Scale of Human Values*.

### **Methodology**

This is a qualitative study that employed the data collection and analysis method. The data were obtained from library research and data analysis, particularly from the excerpts of the travelogue pertaining to the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) towards the functions and activities of churches in the U.S only. This study used descriptive analysis. The selected excerpts were analysed based on the othering theory by Simone De Beauvoir to interpret the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) towards the church institution in the U.S. In addition, this study gathered data from secondary sources such as encyclopaedias, journal articles, and official websites to support the research statements. The data collection processes of this study are as follows:

1. Reading and understanding the *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu* travelogue or its English translation *The America That I Have Seen in the Scale of Human Values*
2. Selecting, separating, and analysing data from the excerpts that have a primitive connotation regarding church functions and activities in the U.S
3. Analysing and applying the othering concept encompassing the components and types of othering, as well as the identities of the self and the other in this study
4. Applying the othering concept based on the excerpts that have a primitive connotation regarding church functions and activities in the U.S
5. Understanding and analysing the othering processes and types pertaining to church functions and activities in the travelogue.
6. Using external reading material consisting of journal articles, encyclopaedias, books, working papers, and official websites to support the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) regarding church functions and activities in the U.S. in this study. The collected data were adapted and could establish the true identity of the self to the other through the travelogue.

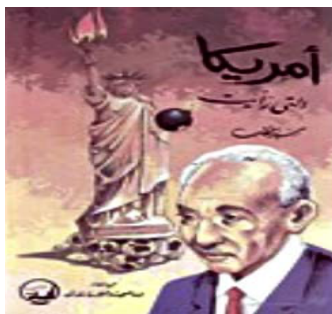
Next, for the data analysis process:

1. Data from the excerpts with a primitive connotation regarding church functions and activities were analysed using descriptive analysis and thematic methods.
2. The application of the othering concept pertaining to the functions and activities of the church was based on othering theory by Simone de Beauvoir, emphasising only the concepts of “crude but originally sophisticated but radically alien” (CO) and “apparently crude but really sophisticated, inferior and radically alien other” (AC)
3. The identity of Sayyid Qutb and the threat towards the other was found after analysing the othering concept pertaining to the functions and activities of the church based on othering components, othering types, and othering processes in the *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu* travelogue or its English translation *The America That I Have Seen in the Scale of Human Values*.

### Sayyid Qutb's Travelogue, *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu*

A travelogue is a travel note describing the life, culture, and how the society socialises in a country (Lisda 2014). Likewise, the travelogue by Sayyid Qutb, *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu*, describes the U.S society in 1951. This travelogue was authored by Sayyid Qutb and published in a series in the *al-Risalah* magazine in 1951, and its genre was categorised as social criticism.

This travelogue was written with the main purpose of describing how the American society was too materialistic to the extent of ignoring spiritual values. In this travelogue, Sayyid Qutb narrated his exploration of the American society's custom. His observation focused on the aspects of civilisation and humanity of the American society in 1951. The travelogue's cover page is shown below:



Cover Page of Sayyid Qutb's Travelogue *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu*

The cover page of this travelogue shows the picture of Sayyid Qutb with the Statue of Liberty, a national monument in the U.S. Some opinions stated that his original work was burnt.

Therefore, the picture on the cover page of this travelogue is not the real image. This travelogue by Sayyid Qutb has been translated into English by Abdel-Malek et. al (2000) with the title *The America I Have Seen: In the Scale of Human Values*.

The original work was also republished with modifications and improvements in the language aspect. This can be seen in the *Amria min al-Dakhil bi-Minzar Sayyid Qutb* travelogue by al-Khalidi, Salah Abd al-Fattah. The discoursed content is in line with the original meaning in the original work by Sayyid Qutb, *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu*. This travelogue contains a discussion of various topics comprising the economic, social, cultural, and religious aspects, particularly regarding the churches in the U.S in 1951. This travelogue substantially used the criticism approach towards the American society, particularly the churches in the U.S in 1951. In this travelogue, Sayyid Qutb likened the churches to commercial centres that provided various forms of entertainment to the public for their sole pleasure. The churches were no longer regarded as places of worship but instead were viewed as places of entertainment only. In fact, the condition and atmosphere in the churches were filled with sensual activities.

The depiction of the church institution was supported by the statement that the American society performed wild acts in churches, such as kissing and hugging, which would certainly lead to vice activities in the churches. Meanwhile, the church ministers were regarded by Sayyid Qutb as people who cared only for worldly power. He also stated that the ministers in the U.S mainly used the advantages of other people to boost the image of the churches in order to attract people to continue visiting the churches. Overall, in this travelogue, Sayyid Qutb substantially used negative criticism, particularly towards the church institution in the U.S.

### The Othering Concept

Othering was founded by Simone De Beauvoir, and the term “othering” emerged from his observation of Hegel’s work entitled *Master-Slave*. Hegel’s work narrated the dialogue between two people from different ranks, consisting of the master and the slave (Brons 2015). The othering concept uses the dualism framework. The Columbia Encyclopaedia (1963) defines dualism as two distinct frameworks. According to Rosnani (1996), dualism refers to different thoughts in terms of humans’ point of view, whereas al-Attas (1978) referred to different ideologies in answering the truth about something. The major components of othering are provided in the figure below:

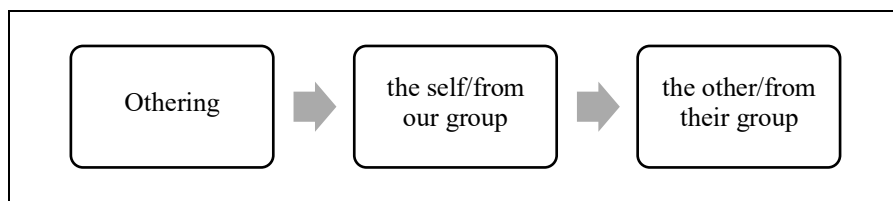


FIGURE 1. Components of Othering.

The figure above shows that othering has two main hierarchies. Canales (2000) stated that othering is done on the premise of an individual’s level, i.e., whether they have an advantage or not. The two categories consist of the self (me) and the other (they), and each category has a different level, either superior or inferior (Bauman 1991). According to Ossowski (1963) in *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness*, being superior means, the self has a higher rank or power than the other. On the other hand, being inferior means the other is at a lower position than the self. The components of othering consist of the self and the other. According to Canales (2000), othering works when the self has an eminent self-identity or a superior position. The self qualifies to make an assumption about the other and needs to meet three eminent identities, including eminent in society, knowledge, and experience of the cultural identity of the other. Due to this assumption, the other becomes inferior or in other words is in a lower position.

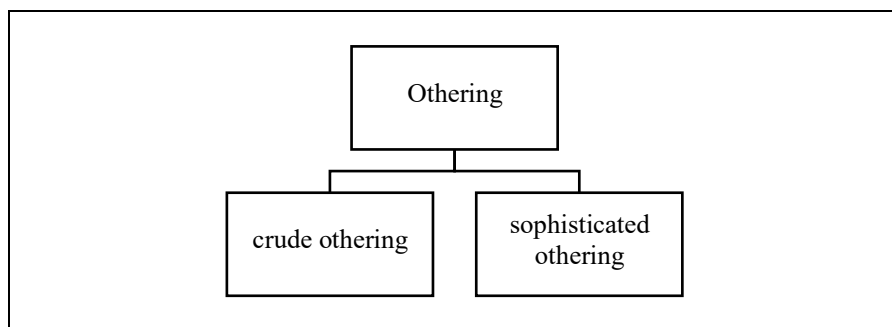


FIGURE 2. The Dimensions of Othering.

Othering has two components, namely, “crude” and “sophisticated” othering. Both components have different uses.

1. Crude othering means to assign the other with a primitive assumption without hiding the meaning. In other words, the assumption is made openly.
2. Sophisticated othering refers to an assumption that is not too primitive, and the assumption is not made openly.

The othering process in this study is explained in the figure below:

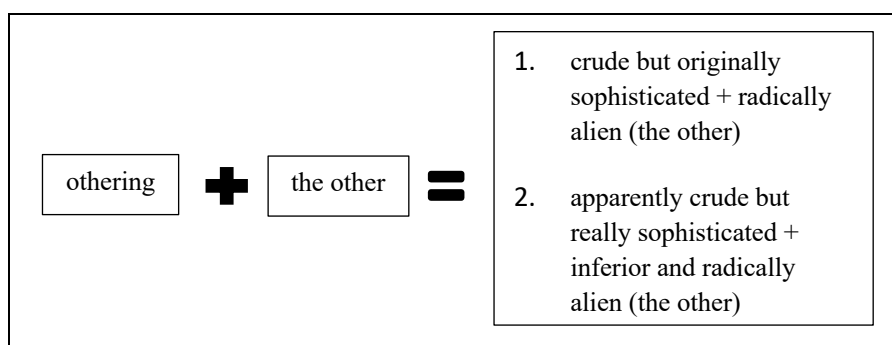


FIGURE 3. The Othering Process.

The figure above explains the effect on the other when the othering process is triggered. There are two forms applied in this othering: (1) crude but originally sophisticated, radically alien other, and (2) apparently crude but really sophisticated, inferior and radically alien other.

It is found that the use of crude, but originally sophisticated but radically alien other (CO) is triggered when the self/us has/have intellect, a high rank in society, and an extensive experience of the culture of the other/them. This form of othering is not too primitive in meaning. In terms of the effect on the other, they are radically alienated, which means they are not a part of the self/us at all.

The situation is different for the type of othering of apparently crude but really sophisticated, inferior and radically alien other or AC (Brons 2015). Initially, this category seems to show a primitive perspective. However, upon deeper examination of this type of othering, it is found to have an implicit meaning and usually the interpretation is done to highlight the eminence of the self and to project the self as someone who should be exemplified by the other. Thus, the other is in a low position and alienated.

In conclusion, the two types of othering in this study, namely CO and AC, are distinct from one another. The CO type is conformed if the self has three aspects of self-eminence as emphasised above, namely eminence in terms of rank, power, and knowledge and experience of

the culture of the other. Meanwhile, the AC type serves as an example for the other group, which is proven as not possessing any good value.

## **Discussion**

### **Othering Towards Church Functions**

In the first discussion, this study will highlight the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) towards the other. Here, the self refers to Sayyid Qutb, and the other refers to the church institution. From here on, Sayyid Qutb will be referred to as the self, and the church institution will be represented by the other.

Based on scrutiny, the self in this travelogue had made a primitive assumption about the other, particularly towards church functions. The self-stated that the other made the churches in the U.S a place for having fun instead of a place of worship. The primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) towards the church is demonstrated by the following excerpt:

أن هناك تنافسا كبيرا بين الكنائس المختلفة المذاهب، ولهذا تتسابق جميعا في الاعلان عن نفسها بالنشرات المكتوبة وبالأنوار الملونة على الأبواب والجدران للفت الأنظار، وبتقديم البرامج اللذيذة المشوقة لجلب الجماهير بنفس الطريقة التي تتبعها المتاجر ودور العرض والتمثيل وليس هناك من بأس في لستخدام أجمل فتيات المدينة وأرشقهن، وأبرعهن في الغناء والرقص والترويج. (سيد قطب، ١٩٥١، ص. ٥٦)

Each church races to advertise itself with lit, colored signs on the doors and walls to attract attention, and by presenting delightful programs to attract the people much in the same way as merchants or showmen or actors. And there is no compunction about using the most beautiful and graceful girls of the town, and engaging them in song and dance, and advertising (Sayyid Qutb 1951: 19).

In the above excerpt, the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) regarding the other is demonstrated by the first sentence (وهذا تتسابق جميعا في الاعلان عن نفسها بالنشرات المكتوبة وبالأنوار الملونة على الأبواب (والجدران للفت الأنظار (each church races to advertise itself with lit, colored signs on the doors and walls to attract attention). In this excerpt, the self-stated that the other did not show their place of worship, which functioned as a place for religious and spiritual activities, in a good light. That was because, the other decorated their churches with extreme colours akin to night clubs. According to Mir Hazil (2009), night clubs use bright colours such as red, yellow, and blue, and these colours can stimulate passion in individuals. In addition, the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) is further established using the next phrase, (وبتقديم البرامج اللذيذة المشوقة) (delightful program). This phrase, according to Cambridge Dictionary (2022) refers to activities that arouse one's passion, especially those activities focusing on churchgoers in the U.S.

In fact, the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) is further stated in the last sentence of the excerpt, (لستخدام أجمل فتيات المدينة وأرشقهن، وأبرعهن في الغناء والرقص والترويج) (the most beautiful and graceful girls of the town, and engaging them in song and dance, and advertising). This excerpt shows that the self-assumed that the other used beautiful women to seduce through singing, dancing, and advertising activities for entertainment purposes. In other words, to the self, beautiful women in the town were like the women working in entertainment centres because of their similar characteristics, such as beautiful faces, ability to dance, and attractive bodies that were displayed to the public. These assumptions were based on the observations made by Sayyid Qutb (the self) who stayed in the other's country. Therefore, the self-assumed that the other failed to set a good example. The assumptions made by Sayyid Qutb (the self) totally contradicted the

statement by Mujiburrahman (2008) that churches functioned as the main places of religious worship and promulgation of the teaching of Christianity to the entire society. Based on the self’s creative thinking, the othering concept of apparently crude but really sophisticated represents his assumptions of the church activities in the U.S. The figure below explains this othering concept:

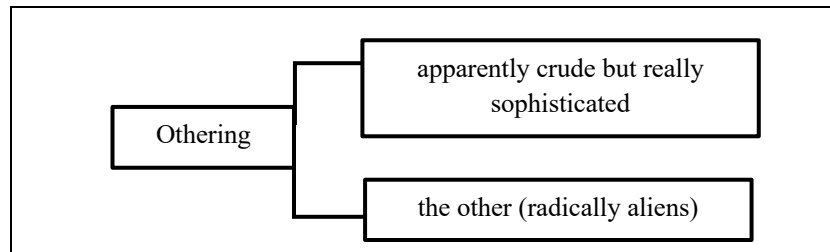


FIGURE 4. The Apparently Crude but Really Sophisticated Dimension.

The above figure shows that this othering dimension consists of two main elements. The first element is the othering process of the apparently crude but really sophisticated (AC) type, and the second element is related to the other. Based on examination, the AC process occurs when the self/in-group/us feels/feel that the other has failed to become a good role model. In general, the AC concept serves as a role model for the other group. Therefore, when the other fails to show a good character, the self-regards the other as inferior, leading to radical alienation of the other. This AC concept emphasises the aspect of self-eminence because the person’s identity would set an example for the other group. When the other does not show any eminence in their identity, the self can distinguish them openly and state that the other is not among the self. This scenario has an impact on the other, making them radically aliens. The formula structure of this othering concept (AC) is provided below to explain this type of othering:

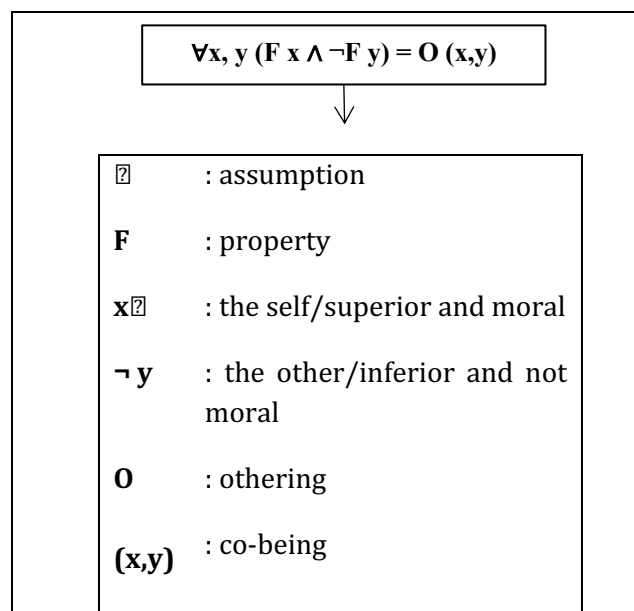


FIGURE 5. The Formula Structure of Apparently Crude but Really Sophisticated

The above formula structure describes several symbols that are related to othering. The  $\forall$  symbol refers to the form of assumption made, the **F** symbol represents the distinction in the self-identity of the self/other, and the  $x \wedge$  symbol means the self must be in a superior position if the other does not show a good self-identity. Meanwhile, the  $\neg y$  symbol refers to the position of the other that is inferior or low, and the other belongs to the immoral group. Morality in this context refers to good traits that can be emulated by the other group regarding a certain matter. If the formula structure is fulfilled, then the othering process that will occur is explained in the final solution of

= O (x,y). This formula of = O (x,y) is the end result of the othering process in which there is an interrelationship between the self (x) and the other (y).

Overall, this othering is a part of human thought theory and will occur if one conforms the formula structure of the AC othering process. If the other does not show a good identity, then the self has the right to view the other from a different perspective so that the other would not be included among the self at all. This discussion of the othering concept focuses on the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) towards the other regarding the functions of the church. However, all these assumptions by the self-depict the experience of Sayyid Qutb, who was familiar with the culture of the American society because he lived in the U.S for 2 years. Thus, the experience led him to make the primitive assumption when documenting the religious identity in the U.S in his travelogue. Next, what is the concept of othering towards church activities? Did Sayyid Qutb as the self also have a primitive connotation towards the other? Was the AC type of the othering concept used? All these questions will be answered in the second analysis regarding the assumptions made by the self towards church activities in the U.S in the mid-20th century.

### Othering Towards Church Activities

The next discussion is on the self's view towards the other, focusing on church activities in the U.S. The self refers to Sayyid Qutb and the other refers to the church institution. From this point onwards, only the self and the other will be used to refer to Sayyid Qutb and the church institution, respectively. Generally, the othering concept in the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) towards church activities is different from the self's assumption discussed previously. In this travelogue, the self-described the churches as frequently organising activities that aroused desire among the churchgoers. According to the self, those activities were solely intended to attract visitors to attend the churches more frequently. The excerpt is as follows:

وبدأ الرقص على أنغام (الجرامفون) الساحة ولنتشرت الاقدام والسيقان الفاتنة والتفت الاذرع بالحضور والتقتس الشفاه والصدور وكان الجو كله غراما. (سيد قطب، ١٩٥١، ص ٥٧)

And they danced to the tunes of the gramophone, and the dance floor was replete with tapping feet, enticing legs, arms wrapped around waists, lips pressed to lips, and chests pressed to chests. The atmosphere was full of desire. (Sayyid Qutb 1951: p. 20)

According to the self's view, church activities were very wild, filled with lustful activities such as kissing, hugging, and dancing scenes, which tempted the visitors. The self-affirmed his statement with the phrase (والتقتس الشفاه والصدور) (lips pressed to lips, and chest pressed to chest). This phrase, in terms of the language style, is a form of repetition. Al-Fatly (2018) in her article, *Al-Dalalah al-Qasdiyyah min Zahirat al-Tikrar fi al-Qissah al-Qur'aniyyah*, stated that affirmation occurs in a text when there are repetitions of syllables and phrases in the excerpted sentence. The repetition element emphasised in the above phrase is "pressed", i.e., "lips pressed to lips, and chest pressed to chest". Therefore, the self-wanted to assert that lustful activities indeed occurred in churches in the U.S, especially in the mid-20th century.

Based on the above excerpt, the factor driving the wild activities was the use of the gramophone tones in churches. The self-opined that the churches deliberately used sensual tones to encourage churchgoers to engage in lustful activities such as kissing and hugging. Afzali & Mokhtabad (2017) in their study *Technology of the Gramophone Records of the Music Museum by Fourier Transform Infrared Spectrometry (FTIR) Method* stated that the gramophone functions like the wireless radio to play musical melodies to people. The melody of the music plays a role. A haunting melody will trigger a dreamy atmosphere. A primitive melody will encourage primitive acts. However, it was found that in the mid-20th century, the jazz melody attracted the interest of American society. This notion was proven in the dissertation by Purwanto (2010) *Becoming a Jazz Musician: Pola Sosialisasi Musik Jazz Pada Beberapa Musisi BaleJazz*, stating that



jazz is a type of swing music. This melody type can inspire individuals to sway their bodies with their partners in line with the melody. In this aspect, the othering dimension in the form of crude but originally sophisticated (CO) represents Sayyid Qutb’s creative thinking.

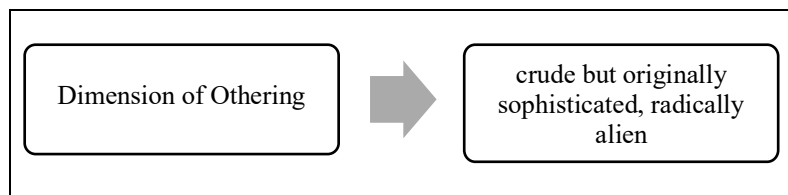


FIGURE 6. The Dimension of Crude but Originally Sophisticated, Radically Alien.

In the figure above, the othering process will cause the other to be radically alienated. Othering of the crude but originally sophisticated (CO) type was applied to the thinking assumption of the self towards church activities. This othering type was chosen due to his extensive knowledge and experience of the other’s culture, making the self-regard the other with inappropriate assumptions. The depiction of free culture in the American society in this travelogue resulted from his observation of the American society in the 20th century after living in the U.S for 2 years.

### The Self’s Identity Threat Towards the Other

In sum, the explanation for the primitive assumptions by Sayyid Qutb (the self) regarding the other in this study is provided in the figure below, which describes the space of the othering threat process:

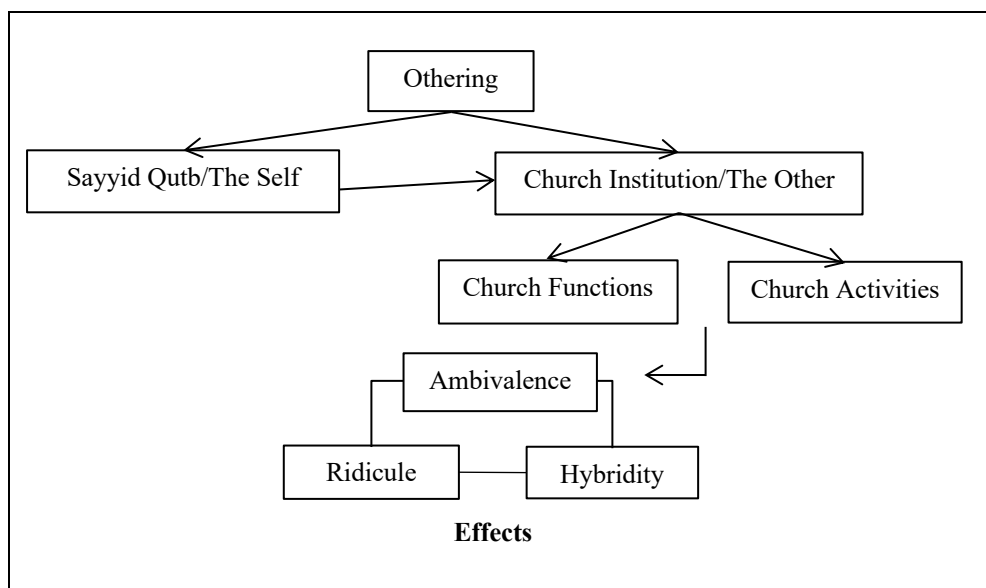


FIGURE 7. The Othering Process Space.

The figure above represents the othering process between Sayyid Qutb and the church institution. Indeed, the othering concept has a strong impact on the other (the church institution). In this study, the other represents the church institution in relation to the primitive assumption by Sayyid Qutb (the self) towards church functions and activities in the U.S. The threat to the other (church institution) consists of ridicule, ambivalence, and hybridity. Regarding ridicule, it depends on the self’s perspective as to whether the self wants to perceive the other from a primitive perspective or a positive perspective. If the author has a primitive perspective, then the effect on the other would be primitive, and vice versa. Regarding ambivalence, it is a paradoxical feeling of the self towards the other. Ambivalence is closely related to the emotion of the self. If the author is fanatical about a religion just like the self was, certainly, the author will oppose a

religion that is different from theirs. The last effect is hybridity, which is the self's act of attempting to introduce the true identity of the other, and it all depends on one's perspective as to whether they want to see it from a primitive or a positive perspective. Thus, it can be concluded that these three effects are related to each other, particularly in terms of the background of the self and their identity when conducting the othering process towards the other.

### The Superiority of the Self's Identity Over the Other

This study's examination shows that Sayyid Qutb fulfilled the othering principles. The othering principles refer to othering process, i.e., the hierarchy between the self who has a superior position and the other who is in an inferior position. These othering principles are interrelated. If the self assumes the other inappropriately, the other would be in an inferior position. Likewise, for Sayyid Qutb, whose eminent self-identity entitled him to make a primitive assumption about the church.

In conclusion, the othering process in this travelogue was between Sayyid Qutb and the church institution. Both influenced each other. Sayyid Qutb was among the self who had a superior identity to the other, as he was an influential man in society who had a high level of religious knowledge and was a feared fighter of Islam. Meanwhile, the other refers to the church institution, which Sayyid Qutb regarded as occupying an inferior position. He made a primitive assumption about the church institution. There was an interrelationship or co-being between the self and the other. The assumption occurs when one of the self or the other feels their group is threatened, thus triggering the primitive assumption. In this context, it will create a firm stance in a piece of writing due to the high emotions involved in the authorship of the work. These emotions will make the author look like a fanatic about something, and it fits Sayyid Qutb's travelogue, which is purely paradoxical and sarcastic towards the church institution.

Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that each religion has a unique manner of worshipping including the aspects of garments, food, culture, and others. Despite variations, each religion teaches its believers valuable things (Nur Farhana & Nur Syarihah 2020; Widiyanto 2020). Therefore, the need to understand other religions is important. This is because a lack of understanding of different religions will be an impediment to societal cohesion (Razick & Beev 2021). Yet, how an author approaches religion in his/her writing relies on whether he/she wishes to showcase it from a favourable or negative angle. In Sayyid Qutb's case, he emphasised his theological perspective from a fundamentalist view.

This travelogue narrates Sayyid Qutb's travel to the U.S to observe the condition of the American society who only expected worldly things and lacked human values. Thus, he used his travelogue as a medium to express his disappointment with the American society, who seemed too devoted to materialism. In this respect, Sayyid Qutb was from a group that was superior to the other, giving him the freedom to do anything to the other. He regarded the other as inferior and felt that the other had no uniqueness because they were purely materialistic. Thus, the other had no quality in the eyes of Sayyid Qutb as the self. In this respect, it can be proven that if the othering process occurs, it will put the other group in an inferior position, powerless to oppose the self because the self is superior to the other. Thus, the other will be alienated and undermined by other religious communities.

To conclude, religious diversity is generally viewed from two major perspectives, namely, positive and negative perspectives. From a positive perspective, religious diversity is seen as capable of fostering tolerance within society. On the other hand, from a negative perspective, this phenomenon can lead one to think from a primitive perspective. This perspective is possibly due to religious fanaticism in which they fear or worry that other religions that are considered unrighteous will threaten and influence their religion. The same scenario happened in the travelogue by Sayyid Qutb, *Amrika Allati Ra'aytu* or its English translation *The Amerika I Have Seen: In the Scale Of Human Values*.

Based on the researcher's examination, this travelogue highlights more primitive assumptions than positive assumptions regarding the church institution in the U.S. Generally, Sayyid Qutb is regarded as the self that had various identities in this travelogue. Among them, he

was an Arab citizen who adhered to the teachings of al-Quran and as-Sunnah, a *zuhud* (an ascetic person), and an Islamist who met the other group that was immensely different from his own group. However, the aspect that made him the most different from the other was the religious identity of the other, focusing on the church institution in the U.S. Sayyid Qutb viewed the other as not possessing any uniqueness and virtue because the other's society cared more about material things than human values. He stated that the other group had nothing that they could be proud of, unlike his own group that clearly had uniqueness and virtue. Therefore, he acted harshly by mocking and criticising the church institution in the U.S in the mid-20th century.

Even though this travelogue is full of primitive connotations, it was written as an effort to fight for Islam. This was because back then, printed materials such as newspapers, magazines, books, and travelogues were one of the approaches one could use to voice personal opinions on important issues, especially nationalism. Therefore, based on the othering concept discussed in this study, this travel writing underscores Sayyid Qutb's identity as a nationalist with noble ambitions who was willing to make sacrifices, especially in defending the religion and the Muslims in Egypt from being continuously colonised by the Western ideology at that time.

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