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# MANUFACTURING FEAR IN POST-9/11 AMERICAN NOVEL

**M. Ikbal M. Alosman**
Department of English Language and Literature, Dhofar University, Oman
meqbal1980@yahoo.com • https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3798-5347

**Raihanah M. M.**
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia (UKM), Malaysia
raihanah.mydin@gmail.com • https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9408-043X

**Ruzy Suliza Hashim**
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia (UKM), Malaysia
ruzy@ukm.edu.my • https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6574-5167

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## MANUFACTURING FEAR IN POST-9/11 AMERICAN NOVEL

### ABSTRACT

To illustrate the systematic means by which the Muslim other is turned into a source of anguish and horror, we use the term manufacturing fear. Manufacturing fear is the systematized process of creating and constructing fear of the other. It occurs through regularized procedures and techniques in an almost persistent mood. Through these methods, the other is shaped into a menacing entity with more-beast-like qualities as his/her definitive features. In this paper, we aim to investigate how fear functions in three American novels, namely, John Updike's Terrorist (2006), Don DeLillo's Falling Man (2007), and Andre Dubus III's The Garden of Last Days (2009). We also examine these disturbing images concerning the narratives' exemplification of Muslims. Pertaining anecdotes where fright is manifested about the Muslim other are contextualized within the existent discourse of fear. Situating these novels within the post-9/11 atmosphere of distrust and trauma uncovers the underlying approaches employed by novelists to exemplify the Muslim other. In these three narratives, imageries related to dread are presented by employing diverse techniques and approaches. Fear of the Muslim other is manufactured through blood scenes, historical conflicts and terrorist plots.

**Keywords:** Manufacturing fear, Post-9/11 novel, Andre Dubus III, John Updike, Don DeLillo

## 9/11 SONRASI AMERİKAN ROMANINDA KORKU ÜRETİM

### ÖZ

Sistematik yollarla Müslüman öteki bir ızdırap ve korku kaynağına dönüştürülmesini örneklemek için, korku üretme terimini icat ediyoruz (kullanırız). Üretim korkusu, diğerinden korkuyu yaratmanın ve inşa etmenin sistematik bir sürecidir. Bu tür korku, düzenli prosedürler ve teknikler aracılığıyla gerçekleşir ve neredeyse kalıcı bir ruh hali alır. Bu yöntemlerle, öteki korkunç bir varlığa ve daha canavar benzeri nitelikleri taşıyan bir ajana dönüştürülüyor. Bu makalede üç Amerikan romanında korkunun nasıl işlediğini araştırmayı hedefliyoruz, yani, John Updike'ın Teröristi (2006), Don DeLillo'nun Düşen Adamı (2007), ve Andre Dubus III'nin Son Günlerin Bahçesi (2009). Bu üç eserde, bu tür dehşet verici görüntüleri ve Müslümanları örneklendirmesi açısından da inceliyoruz. Müslüman öteki anekdotlarda, korku söylem içinde bağlamsallaştırılmıştır. Bu romanları 9/11 sonrası güvensizlik ve travma atmosferinde incelediyimizde, yazarların kullandığı Müslüman öteki temel yaklaşımlarını ortaya çıkarır. Bu üç eserde, korkunç görüntüler çeşitli teknikler ve yaklaşımlar kullanılarak sunulmuştur. Müslüman öteki korkusu kanlı sahneler, tarihi çatışmalar ve terörist planlarla üretilmiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Üretim korkusu, 9/11 sonrası roman, Andre Dubus III, John Updike, Don DeLillo.

## INTRODUCTION

After the 9/11 attacks, images of the attacks were projected intensively, successively, and constantly so much so that it was impossible to ignore them. They were 'one of the most thoroughly familiar and long-lingering after-images of contemporary history' (Gregory, 2004: 24). The attacks and their repercussions were visibly magnified (Gregory, 2004; Gray, 2011). Stories about the victims' families, survivors, and traumatized individuals were narrated repeatedly by the American media. Subsequently, the American media and popular culture persistently projected a 'discourse of fear' in the form of anticipated future terrorist attacks accompanied with the notion of 'moral and social superiority of the United States' to pursue America's 'War on Terror' (Altheide, 2010: 12). Americans were told to anticipate and prepare for more terrorist attacks.

A persistent 'rhetoric of fear' was broadcasted in the media where America, for most Americans, was considered vulnerable (Morley, 2009: 83). Dread prevailed and provoked an intensified sense of reality that ultimately leaked to the cultural milieu—'a reality so real that it borders on the surreal in its bamboozling capacity for inspiring terror' (84). Horror was also proliferated by the US government's rhetoric and 'constant surveillance' (84). Although the first reactions of American writers to the 9/11 attacks were highly subjective depending on their conditions, writings, and art, they subsequently integrated the American public response to the catastrophe in their narratives (Morley, 2009). A few years after the attacks, 9/11 representations in the American media, film industry and literature reiterated and endorsed the Western 'centrality' to the world (Hartnell, 2011: 477). The post-9/11 atmosphere of fear, the so-called good versus evil rhetoric, and discourse of the war on terrorism, were either consciously or unconsciously incorporated into the 9/11 narratives.

Most post-9/11 narratives were incapable of recognizing the political reality of 9/11; instead, they mostly reduced the event to 'the individual experience of rage, envy, sexual frustration and constipation' (Mishra, 2007: 6). DeLillo, McEwan, and Updike considered the attacks as an embodiment of the menacing Islamist terrorism that threatens the wellbeing of the US rather than a reaction to American policies in the Middle East (Jones & Smith, 2010). Jones and Smith went further to declare that 'not only do the 9/11 novels offer little apprehension of the jihadist psyche, they offer even less in the way of hope for recuperating the possibility of urban political purpose' (2010: 945).

Hartnell (2011) maintained that whilst Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* were written from the Western victims' viewpoints, Updike's choice to present a terrorist's viewpoint was 'a courageous attempt to pull away from the prevalent cultural tendency to privilege the category of 'trauma' in treatments of 9/11 that emerged in its wake and with notable rapidity in the years 2005–2007' (478). However, Nirjharini Tripathy (2015) believed that DeLillo enabled his readership to access the mind-set of a terrorist and that he depicted Hammad, the 9/11 hijacker in *Falling Man*, as humane. Ahmad Gamal (2011) suggested that Updike and DeLillo's novels represented a new approach of writing about Muslims that did not simply cope with conventional Orientalism; it was a type of writing that challenged the conventional and traditional Orientalist binary opposition between the West and the East 'us' and 'them'. Aldalala'a (2013) departed from the above arguments and contended that *DeLillo's* novel reiterated Western stereotypes about Muslims' inclination to die and stressed the tensions between the West and a geopolitical Islam' (Aldalala'a, 2013: 73). Maryam (Salehnia, 2012) asserted that the main Jewish character in *Terrorist*, Jack, was more of a prophet who saved the Muslim terrorist character, Ahmad, from his fundamentalist conception of Islam. He guided Ahmad to reclaim his freedom and thus reinforced the Israelis' claim of bringing Western values and well-being to Palestinians.

Novelists' approaches to representing Muslims within the frame of the 9/11 attacks were received differently, sometimes inconsistently. However, the narratives were not examined in terms of the post-9/11 rhetoric of fear and antagonism towards Muslims. Imageries of murder, panic, and terror in the novels were not situated within their due context, 9/11 discourse on Islam and Muslims. Hence, this paper aims to contextualize the narratives' representations of the Muslim other and relate them to the post-9/11 discourse of fear. It tries to demonstrate the degree to which imageries of murder, blood, and terror in each novel are

employed to exemplify the Muslim other. This paper examines three post-9/11 American novels, namely, *Terrorist* (2006) by John Updike, *Falling Man* (2007) by Don DeLillo, and *The Garden of Last Days* (2009) by Andre Dubus III. The selected narratives represent Muslims in light of the terrorist attacks and the corresponding discourse on Islam and Muslims. Situating these narratives within their post-9/11 circumstances will disambiguate the authors' choices of related words, characters, and settings.

## MANUFACTURING FEAR

By means of production, '[t]he Other is cited, quoted, framed, illuminated, encased in the shot/reverse-shot strategy of a serial enlightenment. Narrative and the cultural politics of difference become the closed circle of interpretation' (Bhabha, 1994: 31). Thus 'the other' becomes the passive object of recurring representative and interpretative acts in which each form of interpretation signifies 'the other.' Difference enables cultures to express their exceptionality and distinctiveness through constructing cultural patterns of 'the other,' such as literature, in which these other cultures are diminished, distorted and dehumanized in order be managed, controlled and administered (34).

To elaborate on the systematic procedures by which 'the Muslim other' is turned into a source of anguish and fear, we use the term *manufacturing fear*. *Manufacturing fear* is initially a *manufacture*, an organized process of fabrication and production, and its product happens to be *fear*. Manufacturing fear is also *systematic*, that is, it occurs through regularised methods and techniques in an almost constant timeline. The other is hence molded as a fearful entity with almost no recognized human qualities, whilst his more-beast-like attributes are his definitive features. Fear functions as an active stimulator of enmity; it allocates the fearful other to a state of enmity, and therefore, an urgent action against that other becomes rational and intuitional. Derek Gregory (2004) contends that in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the war on Afghanistan, the US government issued 'regular terrorism alerts that kept fear alive' (187). Fear is nurtured and sustained to make visible the enemy's threat, and consequently, the enemy becomes more vulnerable to attacks and colonization (Rose, 2003; Gregory 2004; Cole 2011). The Muslim other is turned into a *Frankenstein*, a less human and beast-like being (Barnett, 2002).

The post-9/11 global atmosphere is pervaded by a sense of government-fanned fear (Morley, 2009). There is an awareness that the world we live in is a segregated artificial one, and this creates the idea that an ominous agent is unceasingly threatening us with complete devastation (Žižek, 2002). Through the boundless official documents issued by American departments, what is prominent is "the extraordinarily pervasive rhetoric of fear' (Morley, 2009: 84). The regular terror alerts broadcasted by the media appear to produce an intensified sense of reality, that is, 'a reality so real that it borders on the surreal in its bamboozling capacity for inspiring terror' (84). This rhetoric of fear also leak into the cultural landscape and affected cultural manifestations (Morley, 2009). Allan Pred (2007) adds:

> Terrorist policies may also be implemented, fear and compliance may be *sought* or achieved, through the construction of a collective enemy, through discursively dis-placing threat to one or more distant *Others*, through scare stories and *fear-mongering*. Or, as during the persistent moment of danger associated with the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the state may gain public acquiescence to its use of violence against distant 'terrorist' Others and innocent civilians—as well as its domestic measures of repression—through successfully terrorizing a substantial fraction of its own population by way of menacing images. [Emphasis added] (364)

Fear is manufactured by perpetuating imaginative geographies of the Muslim terrorist and his uncivilized and subhuman barbarism by asserting the other as a pervasive military threat to Western civilization and their security, and by implanting an urgent sense of fear through repetitive representations (Pred, 2007). The other becomes basically defined by security-related parameters rather than any human qualities.

Such a culture of fear is employed by western governments to put forward their interests and substantiate their intervention in the Middle East. Terrorism is an empowering factor in the preservation and prolongation of American hegemony (Pollack, 2015). The artificial atmosphere of fear takes hold of America, and it is expressed by concealed motives that are beyond the measures required to curb terrorism as a definable

entity (Pollack, 2015). The discursive promotion of the war on terror builds profoundly on the effective production of 'fear-filled forms of situated knowledge that are infused with distortions, misrepresentations, and disinformation' (Pred, 2007: 364). Fear is thus invested to raise popular support for military actions on those 'evil states' and justify the seemingly necessary assaults.

The 'discourse of fear' lies beneath the current propaganda; it turns atypical events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks into typical and common ones that are likely to occur to everyone, and accordingly, these events are depicted as indicative of life (Altheide, 2006: 217). Such propaganda circulates constantly in the media to exploit the audiences' emotions of fear and instigate an additional precursor to the necessity for more control of the other (Altheide, 2006). In this way, the propaganda that comprises symbols of fear and threat, which are underwritten by measured situations, are demarcated and formed by the intensified 'symbolic fear machinery' (217). The other becomes the all-present danger that needs to be feared and handled before it becomes a reality for western people.

This paper elaborates on imageries and anecdotes of fear concerning the Muslim other in the selected novels. Each novel is analysed separately, then the novels' appropriations of fear in the three novels are compared in the conclusion.

## 1. MANUFACTURING FEAR IN *TERRORIST*

*Terrorist* tries to fathom the mind-set of a potential Muslim terrorist who is born and raised in the U.S. The overall plot of the story serves as an alarm for the American people against a primarily internal threat. It unfolds the story of Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, an eighteen-year-old American, whose father, an Egyptian exchange student, has long abandoned him with his Irish American mother. With an absent father and a busy mother, Ahmad is left without proper guidance. He rediscovers his father's religion, Islam, through a nearby mosque where he is acquainted with a Yemini imam named Sheikh Rashid. The imam influences Ahmad with his radical views of Islam and convinces him to quit the academic track and work for the Chehab's family furniture business as a truck driver. Meanwhile, Jack Levy, the Jewish school counsellor in Ahmad's school, tries relentlessly to convince Ahmad to pursue his college studies. In the last part, Ahmad drives a truck laden with explosives to bomb Lincoln Tunnel. However, Levy succeeds in dissuading Ahmad from accomplishing his terrorist plot.

In the opening pages of the novel, Updike gives his first warning about the imminent danger. Comparison is drawn between Ahmad and spring season: 'Ahmad is eighteen. This is early April; again, green sneaks, seed by seed, into die drab city's earthy crevices' (Updike, 2006: 4). Like spring, Ahmad, a seed planted by his Muslim father, is young and thriving in the United States. He is principally defined by his religion, Islam. i.e., 'green,' rather than any race or nationality. Americans are warned that the danger is prospering in these unnoticed cracks in American society. They are indirectly invoked to take action and close these gaps in order to prevent such threats from getting inside the country.

These gaps are further explained by Jack Levy, the good American citizen, who critiques American security policies for their incapability of preventing 'Islamic' terrorist attacks:

> America is paved solid with fat and tar, a coast-to-coast tarbaby where we're all stuck. Even our vaunted *freedom* is nothing much to be proud of, with the Commies [communists]out of the running; it just *makes it easier for terrorists to move about*, renting airplanes and vans and setting up Web sites. Religious fanatics and computer geeks: the combination seems strange to his old-fashioned sense of the reason-versus-faith divide. Those creeps who flew the planes into the World Trade Center had good technical educations. The ringleader had a German degree in city planning; he should have redesigned New Prospect. [Emphasis added] (Updike, 2006: 27)

He criticizes freedom in America because he believes that it facilitates terrorist attacks on America and that terrorists make use of the democratic space to implement their terrorist plots. Muslims are presented as the new enemy of the United States after the collapse of communism; therefore, Americans should take measures to curb their presence in The States. Instead of utilizing the knowledge they obtain in the west

for the prosperity of the world, Muslims would use advanced technologies as a means to attack the west. In the post-9/11 rhetoric of fear, the Muslim other is primarily perceived as a chief source of threat to the west (Pred, 2007). Islam is publicized as incompatible with technology (Alosman et al., 2018a). While Levy, the American Jewish citizen, would use technology to develop his city, New Prospect, Muslims are said to employ technology exclusively for evil ends, as exemplified in the 9/11 attacks.

Along the same line, the novel comprises the characters of the Secretary of Homeland Security and his aid to promote the post-9/11 official American discourse of fear. In a conversation between the Secretary of Homeland Security and his undersecretary, Hermione, he declares,

> 'I'll be knocked for this [. . .] If nothing happens, I'm a *scaremonger*. If it does, I'm a lazy leech on the public payroll who allowed the death of thousands'.
>
> 'No one would say such things', Hermione reassures him, her sallow spinster skin reddening with sympathetic feeling. 'Everyone, even the Democrats, knows you are doing an impossible job that nevertheless must be done, for the sake of *our national survival'.* [Emphasis added] (Updike, 2006: 30)

After the assaults on September 11, 2001, the US government kept issuing terror alerts on a regular basis to keep fear 'alive' among Americans (Gregory, 2004: 187). In *Terrorist*, fear proliferation is advocated by the Secretary of Homeland Security who is depicted as a patriot whose primary concern is to protect his country from imminent attacks. The readers are also led to believe that such warnings prevent the death of more thousands of Americans. His argument is further reinforced by his secretary who claims bipartisan and public support for their work and describes it as critical for their 'survival.' Updike reiterates official propaganda about an anticipated danger by fictionalizing these official personas and giving them credit for saving American lives.

Americans are warned against an internal threat*,* 'a blow from within' (Updike, 2006: 214), and Ahmad is said to represent a larger stream of enthusiastic terrorists who are willing to execute terrorist plots; they are 'eager for a glorious name and the assurance of eternal bliss' (Updike, 2006: 237). Fear is manipulated and Muslims living in the United States become suspects who are to be surveilled and watched closely so as to be restrained. Feelings of distrust and suspicion of American Muslims are nurtured in the post-9/11 era (Haddad & Harb 2014; Bakali 2016); Americans are increasingly fearful of 'home-grown terrorism' resulting from the radicalization of generations of Muslim immigrants (Murshed, 2013: 21). Updike tries to propagate the official rhetoric of fear regarding a lurking 'Islamic' threat. The fear of the Muslim other is cultivated throughout his novel and Americans are invoked to act before it is too late.

## 2. MANUFACTURING FEAR IN *FALLING MAN*

Though highly concerned with the traumatic repercussions of 9/11 on the lives of the main American characters, Keith and Lianne, *Falling Man* is also about the Muslim other, Hammad, one of 9/11 hijackers who is narrated throughout the novel, though in sporadic sketches. DeLillo approaches the 9/11 assaults by delving into middle eastern histories to build his argument against the fundamentalist mentality of the hijackers. In a flashback, the narrative brings Muslims' past to illustrate the post 9/11 present. Although his novel is largely slanted towards the traumatic repercussions of 9/11 on the lives of Keith, a survivor of the 9/11 attacks, and his estrange wife, Lianne, it also tells the story of one of the 9/11 hijackers, Hammad, whose story is narrated in sporadic sketches throughout the novel. While in Hamburg (Germany), Hammad is acquainted with an Iraqi who was a soldier in 'Saddam's army', now a baker in Hamburg; they meet while praying in the same mosque (DeLillo, 2007: 77). The Iraqi veteran recollects the Iraqi–Iranian war while still on duty:

> The martyrs of the Ayatollah [. . .] seemed to come up out of the wet earth, wave on wave, and he aimed and fired and watched them fall [. . .] The boys kept coming and the machine guns cut them down. After a time, the man understood there was no point shooting anymore, not for him. Even if they were the enemy, Iranians, Shiites, heretics, this was not for him, watching them vault the smoking bodies of their brothers, carrying their souls in their hands. The other thing he understood is that this was a *military tactic*, ten thousand boys enacting

> the glory of self-sacrifice to divert Iraqi troops and equipment from the real army massing behind front lines. [Emphasis added] (78)

Both sides— Iranians and Iraqis —are shown to be brute and merciless; those who send teenage boys to the battlefield and those who murder them. By such horrible scenes of cruelty, the narrative introduces the two major sects in Islam, i.e., Sunnis and Shiites. While narrating the post-9/11 traumatic effects on the lives of Americans, the narrative opts to introduce the Muslim other through these merciless scenes. The antagonism of Muslims, and consequently, their enmity, is assigned a magnified narrative space of visibility. Utilizing the Iraqi–Iranian war, although not related to 9/11, as an introduction to the Muslim other illustrates Muslims in totality as inhumane and aggressive.

The Iraqi–Iranian war is recollected to explicate the mentality of Hammad in his way to execute the 9/11 attacks. He feels the pain of a cut in his body whilst in the airplane heading to one of the assigned locations. He recalls the image of the Iranian boys running to their death, holding heavens' keys in their necks to be ruthlessly murdered by Iraqi troops. Hammad takes 'strength from this, seeing them cut down in waves by machine guns [. . .] wearing red bandannas around their necks and plastic keys underneath, to open the door to paradise' (DeLillo, 2007: 238). Despite the fact that both sides in the conflict, Iraq, and Iran, are discordant with al-Qaeda's ideology, Iraq was then a secular state and Iran a Shia theocracy, the 1980s historic war is brought to introduce a terrorist's mindset and hence to implicate both Sunnis and Shias in the conflict with the west. These scenes are invigorated at the closing of the novel to ascribe a final inclusive image of cruelty and animosity to both sects in Islam. The narrative's portrayal of the 9/11 hijackers in the aforementioned historic flashbacks is cautionary messages of the fearful enemy, Muslims.

Another historical event is reclaimed to showcase terrorism committed by Muslims in *Falling Man* as Lianne remembers the Beslan school siege in 2004 where Chechen separatists take more than a thousand people, mostly children, as hostages in Russia. This tragic event ends with 'hundreds dead, many children' (DeLillo, 2007: 206). Lianne proclaims, '[t]hey [terrorists] absolutely had to know. They went there to die. They made a situation, with children, specifically, and they knew how it would end. They had to know' (206). In the final pages of the novel, the reader is reminded of those Chechen extremists and their heartless execution of innocent children. Regardless of whether the killings occur in the Middle East, America or Russia, Muslims are in charge and to be cautioned against in the future.

Killing Americans in the 9/11 attacks as conveyed in DeLillo's novel is a duty for Muslims, not a political reaction to the U.S. policies in the Middle East as elucidated by wide spectrum of experts in the area (Gregory, 2004). While sitting around a table, the 9/11hijackers pledge 'to accept their duty, which was for each of them, in blood trust, to kill Americans' (DeLillo, 2007: 171). Muslim terrorists have an unwavering duty to murder Americans for the sake of killing. They are presented in post-9/11 discourse as menacing threats to all Americans (Pred, 2007). In the 9/11 discourse, Muslim terrorists are shown to having the intent and the enthusiasm to kill Americans, but no reasons or justifications are provided. American media avoided presenting contextual information about the assaults; the emphasis was on the victims instead of the rationale behind such acts of terrorism (Altheide, 2010). In brief, history is invoked in DeLillo's *Falling Man* to magnify an 'Islamic threat' and to endorse the post-9/11 rhetoric of fear. However, the geopolitical circumstances of these events are entirely ignored. The historical references serve as a warning against the danger of an 'underestimated' Islamic threat to America and the world, in general.

## 3. MANUFACTURING FEAR IN *THE GARDEN OF LAST DAYS*

In *The Garden of Last Days*, the 9/11 hijackers are introduced through highly sensual settings just days before they execute the attacks. Bassam al-Jizani, a young Saudi, visits a strip club where he carelessly spends too much cash on April as she performs for him in a private room in the club. He inquires mockingly about the bodyguard in charge of the private room: '[t]his fat man, does he think he can *save you if I am going to hurt you*? Why does he keep on knocking if *he can do nothing*?' [emphasis added] (Dubus, 2009: 106). She feels '[s]omething cool flipped inside her, *a deeper fear she hadn't really considered*' [emphasis

added] (106). Although he is depicted as short and physically weak, Bassam brags about his capability of hurting April despite the presence of the bodyguard. Before he leaves the club, he insists that he can kill the bodyguard 'in many different ways' (173). He is described as obscure and unpredictable to increase the degree of panic inside her and the reader. He does not try to impress her while his hungry eyes wander around her naked body. Instead, he tries to frighten her; he wants to be feared as a terrorist. The novel nurtures the fear of the Muslim other as an irrational being whose foremost aim is to kill Americans and spread terror in their country.

The hijackers in *The Garden of Last Days* are total villains who almost have no share of humanity. Though non-Muslims are kind to him while staying in Europe and America, Bassam does not appreciate their positive behavior or have any gratitude for them. Instead, he thinks that 'these people should fear him, too. He was prepared to do what he was chosen for. They must not doubt this' (Dubus, 2009: 254). Elsewhere, he feels that Americans 'should fear him but [they] do not' (25). He 'bites into the chicken cooked by the kufar', he wonders if, 'they know whom they are feeding tonight?' (Dubus, 2009: 495). Americans are to blame themselves for tolerating the terrorists' access to the United States and letting them live and move freely. Not like Ahmad in *Terrorist* who has some positive qualities, Bassam is the absolute fanatic who has no human trait or likable feature. The novel shows how these 9/11 hijackers, Bassam and his companions, have not raised any suspicion, and therefore, no action is taken against them. Consequently, they are able to execute the 9/11 attacks. The narrative thus accentuates the need for Americans to fear those heartless people in order to prevent terrorist attacks. It tries to infuse panic of the Muslim other and make him more beast-like and less human.

Terrorism is detached from any geopolitical incentive in the novel; it is a pure act of murder driven by sadistic and hate-based motives. Bassam envisions forcing the blade into the American guard's 'throat' or plunge 'the razor just below the ear' (Dubus, 2009: 114). He

> makes himself think of *cutting* their [two whores] *throats*, how the short *blade* must *be forced into the skin below the jaw*. The *artery* there. *He does not care if they feel pain*, for anyway it will be brief, and he does not worry of their souls burning for they have brought it upon themselves. [Emphasis added] (230)

Bassam's hate is rendered into a much more sadistic form as he imagines slaughtering Americans in diverse methods with much enthusiasm and enjoyment as if these horrible acts can make him more satisfied. The narrative thus renders terrorism into a more criminal-like act of massive killing where the executors' psychological status is at stake. While the political context is wholly dismissed, and the terrorists' beast-like traits are magnified to elicit fear.

The novel reiterates the notion of killing for the sake of killing through Bassam's repetitive murderous fancies. He imagines how easy it is to kill the waitress who attends to him and his friends in the restaurant, and how he can 'slaughter her like a goat' whilst 'her head against him as he draws the blade across her throat' despite that she smiles at him and attends him respectfully (Dubus, 2009: 379). Likewise, after having sex with a prostitute, Bassam imagines himself throwing her to the floor after he 'cut[s] her throat, let[s] her bleed her dirty blood onto the carpet' (455). Only because they are non-Muslims, he is willing to slaughter these women despite their being kind to him. He is only driven by his lust to kill unbelievers regardless of any circumstance or background. The Muslim other after the 9/11 attacks is represented as a monster rather than a human being (Barnett, 2002). Bassam is not a human being; he is more of a monster who does not weigh his actions and emotions; he is solely driven by his fanatic will to annihilate non-Muslims.

The novel draws a contrast between totally different opposites, an advanced and civilized west versus a backward and uncivilized other. In American cable news, '*executions* in the Mideast somewhere, *bearded men* shooting people where they knelt in the soft ground of *stadiums* where on another day athletes would kick a soccer ball over the *blood*' (Dubus, 2009: 249). People in the Middle East are executed in cold blood, then live is resumed normally; Muslims are defined by their association with death and blood. They are to be feared like 'the Yellow Peril' or/and 'the Mongol hordes' (Said, 2003: 301). The opposite is shown in the west during Bassam's stay in Germany and the United States. Although he is exposed to western advan-

ces and prestigious educational institutions, he is exclusively interested in inflicting pain and suffering on their lives. In the library of Harvard University, he envisages the slaughtering of an athlete student who is studying with his girlfriend: '[t]he hand on the forehead, the jerking backward, the thrusting into the skin below the ear' (Dubus, 2009: 437). He visualizes the situation: '[s]he may look up at Bassam and smile again, so warmly as before, and he would strike, the blade pulled from the boy's neck before he even feels the hand upon his forehead. The blood that must come. Her screams' (437). While the student's girlfriend meets Bassam's look with a warm smile, a sign of innocence, he thinks how he would attack her friend from behind and slay him momentarily. Western countries are shown to be naive and unmindful of the malicious Muslims who are moving uncensored in their lands. These blood-filled scenes and the accompanying terror are meant to raise panic among people in the west and enhance action against an immoral enemy. The Muslim other is turned into a visible malicious enemy whose danger is imminent and whose methods are unpredictable (Alosman et al., 2018b).

Like DeLillo in *Falling Man*, Dubus III employs history as a means to explain contemporary terrorism. History channels in the U.S. present,

> an Egyptian designed a hollow brass lion under which would be prepared a raging fire and it was built so that the condemned inside the lion, the one who screamed his last screams, would sound like the lion, its brass mouth open, and into this device the Egyptian torturer was confined by his king, *eager to see how it worked.* [Emphasis added] (Dubus, 2009: 249)

What is visible from the history of Egypt, and the Middle East in general is torture carried out by an Egyptian king as a source of entertainment. The long history of the region is reduced to such imageries and stories of sadism in the context of 9/11 to assert the inherent brutal nature of the enemy. The Muslim other in Dubus III's novel is transformed into a more differentiated, dehumanized, and thus more frightening entity through recurring images of murder, slaughter, blood spill, and historical atrocities.

## CONCLUSION

This article principally focuses on exploring the representations of Muslims in the three selected novels apropos the post-9/11 discourse of fear. In the three novels, fear is stimulated, generated, and invested through different approaches. In *Terrorist*, fear is fashioned by exaggerating Islam's antagonist nature. Both Islam and Muslims are ascribed urgency status of fear and mistrust, in the form of internal and external threat. In the portrayal of the main Muslim characters (Ahmad and Sheikh Rashid) within the terrorist plot in the aftermath of 9/11, Updike reiterates the persistent nature of Islamic threat against America. In *Falling Man*, DeLillo utilizes covert ways to generate fear. Through DeLillo's cautionary messages about the tenacity of the Islamic threat, both Islam and Muslims are depicted as fearful enemies of America and the West in general. He employs the context of the Iraqi–Iranian war to emphasize the fearful status of Muslims, both Sunnis and Shiites. Fear is generated in *The Garden of Last Days* through the recurring images of slaughter, murder, blood, and references to historical atrocities. Both DeLillo and Dubus III invoke history to clarify the nature of the Muslim other regarding the 9/11 attacks and terrorists' antagonism towards the west while Updike opts for a more recent terminology to endorse the American official narrative regarding the attacks. The three narratives manufacture a despicable enemy whose foremost purpose is to destroy the lives and prosperity of non-Muslims.

Reading literature within the post-9/11 rhetoric of fear elucidates the underlying means employed to shape the Muslim other into a total fearful monster, and hence expose Islamophobic influences in these works. We recommend an extension of this critical study by further elaborating on the mechanisms employed to incite fear from the Muslim other in a growing number of literary works. These works need to be contextualized within the ongoing discourse of fear of the Muslim other.

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