

Contesting the Story?: Plotting the Terrorist in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*

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Abstract

The work of Don DeLillo has frequently focused its attention on terrorism, and therefore the cameo role of Hammad, an imaginatively created member of the terrorist group who carried out the attack on the World Trade Center, is unsurprising in his post-9/11 novel *Falling Man* (2007)¹. The intrinsic interplay of fact and fiction that frequently characterises post-9/11 novels and situates them within hegemonic discursive frameworks has fostered a debate about the role of literature in documenting such events and its relevance to understandings of significant historical moments. Within such contexts conventional readings of DeLillo's novel focus on the success or failure of his depiction of the American protagonist, Keith Neudecker, who survives the attack on the World Trade Centre. My reading argues that contingent on Keith's orthodox American perspective; a modernist privileging of narration remains stylistically prominent and seeks to affirm a Western discourse. Yet, through the play of temporality, the text also interweaves a counter-claim to this hegemony through the construction of Hammad's plotting. While situating the fictional text within a dialogical relation to an actual and implied international rhetoric, DeLillo offers a faltering humanising of the terrorist that complicates popular understandings of terrorism. The inclusion of Hammad in an otherwise constrained personal sphere of experience implicates its specificity within a global political narrative.

Key words: Post-9/11 Fiction, Islam, Terrorism, Don DeLillo, Pakistan, Temporarily, plotting terrorism, United States

The underlying conceit of the post-9/11 novel exploits the reader's awareness of the socio-political text exterior to the literary work, and these imbrications of the real and the fictive are at once limiting and productive. Thus, inclusion of the 'terrorist' Hammad, in *Falling Man* (2007) has an air of inevitability for a novelist such as Don DeLillo for two reasons. First, DeLillo is well versed in writing about terrorism, and second, this particular characterisation corresponds with other post-9/11 discursive constructions of terrorists and terrorism. Indeed,

1. Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (New York: Picador 2007)

the long career of the New York writer has fallen under the shadow of the twin towers. DeLillo's work frequently encompasses various forms of domestic and international terrorism—for example, the Texas serial killer in *Underworld*;² Oswald's role in Kennedy's assassination in *Libra*;³ hostage taking and bombings by Middle Eastern terrorists in *Mao II*;⁴ seizure of the NASDAQ exchange by anarchists in *Cosmopolis*,⁵ amongst others. He seems especially prescient when it comes to the narrative turn in this 'Age of Terror'.⁶ DeLillo acknowledges that "there are people who say my books have a prophetic quality."⁷ He claims "to show the things that are happening in such a way that one can understand them more clearly. And maybe I do see some things more clearly and a little earlier than others do. For example, terrorists appear in my books again and again. Why? Well, because they exist!"⁸ Yet, Pankaj Mishra observes that, given DeLillo's previous preoccupations, he makes no attempt to extend his exploration of terrorism. It is significant that, when confronted with the most audacious act of terrorism to date, DeLillo neglects the political reverberations of such violence.⁹

Mishra's claims fuel the debate about the failure of imagination inherent in hegemonic post-9/11 fiction, and imply that a more nuanced mode of representation can be found in the work of those postcolonial or migrant authors more engaged with the complexities of contesting cultures. Ahmad Gamal claims that such narratives challenge the 'conventions and traditions that are informed by the familiar oppositions between 'them' and 'us', East and West, and the pre-modern and modern'.¹⁰ Yet as intellectuals seek to deconstruct these binary oppositions, the questions about how global security might be adequately addressed are confounded. Nivedita Majumdar notes the dichotomy of representation that posits the concerns of the political with that of the literary:

Outside literature, terrorism is often explained as a product of cultural difference or psychological aberration. In literature, however, regardless of whether terrorism is

2 . Don DeLillo, *Underworld*, (New York: Picador, 1997)

3 . Don DeLillo, *Libra*, (New York: Penguin, 1988)

4 . Don DeLillo, *Mao II*. (New York: Viking, 1991)

5 . Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, (New York: Scribner, 2003)

6. See Joseph M. Conte, "Don DeLillo's Falling Man and the Age of Terror", *MSF Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 3, Fall, 2011, pp. 559-583. (p. 566)

7. Ibid

8. Ibid, p. 566

9 . Pankaj Mishra, "The Age of Innocence", *The Guardian/UK*, 19.May.2007. (12.04.2011)

10. Ahmed Gamal "Encounters with Strangeness" in the Post-9/11 Novel', *Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, 4:4 (2011), 50-76 (p.51).

cast in a sympathetic light or unequivocally rejected, the phenomenon is often embedded within a context that is both historicised and humanised.¹¹

The assertion by Mishra, that it is novels such as *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid that counter the mute voice in Anglophone accounts of the east-west clash may be apt, but it also forecloses the possibilities when reading Anglo-American writers such as DeLillo. Thus, productive insights may be gained by noting how the competing discourses of the literary and the political are at work in *Falling Man*. When the Muslim figure of Hammad is woven into the domestic narrative of an American survivor of the 9/11 attacks, the literary impulse of humanising is conditioned by a political subjectivity inscribed by the vital issue of contemporary terrorism and security.

Falling Man depicts the life, the mission and the death of Hammad as a form of signature to the attacks on America that morning of 11 September 2001. It is also a reiteration of the stereotypical willingness of the Muslim terrorist to embrace death. However, I do not circumscribe my consideration of Hammad within the theme of terrorism and its topicality within fiction after 9/11; rather I am more concerned with how the plot of death and the willingness of the terrorist to die impinge upon the form and production of post-9/11 literature. *Falling Man* focalises Keith Neudecker's experience of the attacks on the World Trade Center and his aimless drifting within the boundaries of time and space. The structure of the novel depicts a cyclical movement that reinforces his entrapment within the temporality of that experience. Despite being integral to the actuality of events, and understandings of its representation, the character of Hammad makes only a cameo appearance and his place in the novel is often critically overlooked. While I uphold the view that the function of Hammad is to underline the tensions between the West and a geo-political Islam, the infusion of this within the everyday American sensibility is perhaps a more disturbing presence

A reading more focused on Hammad explores the wider implications of representations that promote a doctrinal complicity with death. It would be simplistic to read Hammad as purely an articulation of a terrorist, and I suggest he functions as an expression of a nihilistic faith in death and destruction. This sentiment is inscribed within a wider discourse that is envisaged as Islam. Hammad's peer, Amir, gives voice to this notion when he states "Islam is the world outside the prayer room as well as the *sūrah* in the Koran. Islam is the struggle against the enemy, near enemy and far, Jews first, for all things unjust and hateful, and then the Americans" (*Falling*: 79-80). Thus, the historical binaries of conflict and opposition are firmly articulated. Yet, because such identities are more vexed in the modern

11. Nivedita Majumdar, "Literary Engagements with Terrorism: An intervention", *Peace and Conflict*, 17:2 (2011), 110-119 (p.112).

world, and because of the lack of a clearly defined enemy, the war on terror is a new phenomenon. Nevertheless, *Falling Man* collaborates in the discursive renderings of this enemy and assumes the responsibility of collective understanding of the 9/11 attacks. Hence, Versluys writes “DeLillo indicates that September 11 can only be understood geopolitically as the clash of two opposing frames of reference, two worlds on a collision course”,(Versluys:44). Versluys calls this a “geopolitical stalemate” wherein “Hammad summarizes the defining difference between East and West.”(Versluys: 45)

Certainly, the characterisation of Hammad is resonant of these sensibilities; nevertheless there is a crucial subtlety in the representation of this terrorist figure that may be glimpsed in the interstices of critical opinion. A frequently examined episode demonstrates Hammad’s struggle for identity: “the closer [Hammad] examined himself, the truer the words. He had to fight against the need to be normal. He had to struggle against himself, first, and then against the injustices that haunted their lives” (*Falling*: 83). This self-reflexivity is interpreted as a “reluctant terrorism”. Linda Kaufmann insists “Hammad is particularly memorable because he secretly harbours doubts about jihad. He wants marriage and children. He has an overwhelming desire simply to be “normal”—which he knows he must resist.” (Kaufmann: 355). Aaron Mauro suggests that “DeLillo offers Hammad’s internal monologue as evidence of his confusion, but the terrorist rationale is so absurd that even Hammad struggles to believe it.”¹² Versluys finds that of “the many estranged features of the novel is the fact that the narrative in the novel is not limited to Keith and Lianne and their immediate next of kin, interspersed with the interrupted family idyll and the account of the main characters’ bouts of melancholia is the story of Hammad.” (Versluys: 44). A view that is endorsed by Adam Kirsch who claims in the “attempt to inhabit the minds of the September 11 terrorists—showing them training in Hamburg or undercover in Florida [...] Mr. DeLillo’s psychology turns shallow and abstract.”¹³

For the most part, the applauding of Hammad’s desire for normality seems mistaken or naive. ‘Normativity’ for a group of terrorists seems to involve being actively engaged in a struggle against the West. It is a commonplace that the conventional order for a terrorist is the act of terror and its domain—hence the identification. DeLillo also appears emphatic in this respect as the narrative voice states that “they read the sword verses of the Koran” (*Falling*: 83).¹⁴ The text of this *surah* is directed not to an individual, but to the Islamic community. Yet, the singular interpretation by the terrorists promotes a specific logic. “Amir said simply there are no others. The others exist only to the degree that they fill the role we

12. Aaron Mauro, “*The Languishing*” p. 592

13. Adam Kirsch, “DeLillo Confronts 9/11”, *New York Sun*, May 2, 2007. (07.12.2011)

14. A frequently quoted Quranic verses is “The Verse of the Sword.” Its main focus is about jihad.

have designed for them. This is their function as others. Those who will die have no claim to their lives outside the useful fact of their dying" (*Falling*: 224). Rather than an 'other' that carries a trace of the self, here Amir voices a disturbing nihilism. The purpose of the terrorist being to die is complemented by his mission to kill, and this norm results in a common death: that of the terrorist and its traceless 'other'. This nihilism is contingent upon a belief in the validity of death through the mission itself. Hammad is ultimately convinced there "is no purpose, this is the purpose". He "did not think about the purpose of their mission" as all he saw "was shock and death". (*Falling*: 177)

Paradoxically, this nihilism hinges on a commonality of belief amongst the terrorists. They are described as being "strong-willed, determined to become one mind. While also urged to "[s]hed everything but the men you are with. Become each other's running blood" (*Falling*: 83).¹⁵ The comment by Versluys that "individual desire [...] has to give way to group solidarity"¹⁶ is reflected in Amir's declaration that "the world changes first in the mind of the man who wants to change it. The time is coming, our truth, our shame, and each man becomes the other, and the other still another, and then there is no separation" (*Falling*: 80). This re-emphasizes the dilemma of a shadowy, abstract enemy and an alternative concept of a centre grounded on the bonding of men that is fatal to America.

Through the imaginative re-construction of the terrorist, DeLillo creates a dialogue with Judith Butler's commendation that "we should emerge from the narrative perspective of US unilateralism to consider the ways in which our lives are profoundly implicated in the lives of others."¹⁷ DeLillo articulates this through the interplay of narrative strategy and plot. Convention probably dictates that post-9/11 fiction engages with terrorism and/or refers in some way or other to 9/11. *Falling Man* would presumably fulfil this to the satisfaction of a political analyst; yet its literary achievement resides in how the humanity of the individual characters are interwoven. Where the political analyst would marshal an argument with evidence from a range of disciplinary knowledge bases, the novel functions through the

15. The bond between terrorist groups goes beyond their mission to commit acts of terror: the organizational body looks after their families after their death. Mustapha Marrouchi writes that "Al-Qaida is like a holding company run by a council (Shura) including representatives of terrorist movements. It verges not on Islamo-fascism no matter how hard Christopher Hitchens and his tribe of neo-cons want us to believe, but on totalitarianism, with sub-divisions to manage key functions: ideology, administration, military action, and the media. This organization provides all the backup terrorist operations needed, including care for the families of martyrs. It forms alliances and engages in terrorist joint ventures with other movements such as the Egyptian al-Jihād or Abu Sayyaf group in the Philippines." This quote is borrowed from Mustapha Marrouchi, "Neither Their Perch Nor Their Terror Al-Qaida Limited", *Callaloo*, 31:4 (Fall 2008), pp. 1344-1345

16. Versluys, p. 45.

17. Butler, *Precarious Life*, p. 6

process of signification whereby “a thing is defined in relation to what it is not.”¹⁸ Keith and Hammad are defined by their difference from each other, but more so, Keith and his kin are defined by what they do not understand about the terrorism that affects them so significantly. The moot point being that Hammad exists to mark the differences between two cultural systems grounded not only on their conventional disparities, but also on their mis-readings and misunderstandings.

That being so, the Islamic world is identified as the space from which the fight against the West is being waged. The perceived interplay between Islam and death as glorious concept and vengeful mission looms as a permanent threat in the everyday life of American people. Further literary examples are to be found in the work of other Anglo-American writers. John Updike’s *Terrorist*, “seems to be his attempt to come to terms with the disturbing fact that the 9/11 attacks were dreamed up as a sacred duty”.¹⁹ *Terrorist*, as Hartnell observes, engages mainly with the “perpetrator’s life”.²⁰ Alternatively, *Falling Man*, and for example Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005), seek to explain the world after 9/11 by describing the experience of the victims. Yet, the dominant theme in these novels is the notion of spatial death within the sphere of terrorism. The point I press here, is that DeLillo and Updike’s interest in the identity of the terrorist encourages a definition of terrorism within specific spatial and temporal parameters. According to Walter Laqueur “it is impossible to provide a psychogram or an Identikit (composite) picture of the typical terrorist, because there never was such a person. There has been no ‘terrorism’ per se, only different terrorisms.”²¹ *Falling Man* actually underlines this when it obliquely refers to the Belsan school hostages and massacre in Russia, September 2004, by Chechen terrorists (*Falling*: 206). Perhaps with more significance, Lianne acknowledges that her mother’s lover, Martin, had in the past been a terrorist in Germany, but she is chilled by the thought that “he was one of ours [...] godless, Western, white” (*Falling*: 195). Yet whatever Martin had done “it was not outside the lines of response” (*Falling*: 195). In contrast, the incomprehensibility of Hammad’s willingness to die becomes a defining element of terrorism. While terrorism is commonly registered by its dramatic and devastating impact, such as the collapse of the towers and the

18 .Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 17.

19. Anna Hartnell, Violence and the Faithful in Post-9/11 America: Updike’s *Terrorist*, Islam, and the Specter of

Exceptionalism, *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, Volume 57, Number 3, Fall 2011, p. 484

20. Hartnell, p. 478.

21. Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 79-80

sight of people falling from them, it translates into *Horrorism* through the haunting effect of realising it was part of a pre-determined plot—an absent presence.

Plot and plotting, with their suggestions of cause and effect, carry a particular set of inferences in this text which are worth rehearsing here as they extend my analysis. I suggest these terms have aesthetic and thematic connotations here as DeLillo addresses the scope of literature while he stylistically presents differing world viewpoints. Modern literary criticism differentiates between plot and story. Plot consists of “the selected version of events as presented to the reader [...] in a certain order and duration”.²² The term story relates to the sequence of events in the ‘natural’ order they occurred. A consequence of this is that plot distorts time to emphasise relationships between incidents and ‘to elicit a particular kind of interest in the reader’.²³ This would also suggest that events are processes, which result in change or transition caused or experienced by actors in the narrative. Yet as Chris Baldick reminds, for Aristotle (although discussing drama) all other elements of the work, including character, should be subordinated to plot. It should form a coherent whole through a clearly discernible beginning, middle and an end.²⁴ Modernist tendencies have taken this edict in a different direction, where plot (the narrative) remains dominant, but filtered through the subjectivity of character; it deliberately obscures cause and effect and complicates the relationships between events to promote a multiplicity of truth and perspective. Jacques Derrida questions why it is “that narrative in the American-European tradition has become privileged over story”?²⁵ My reading of DeLillo finds that as the overarching point of view in the novel is that of an American survivor, a contemporary privileging of narration is dominant, but the counter-claims to this hegemony are made through the sections which present Hammad’s story in which character is subordinate to plot. Within this clearly structured novel, a self-reflective, fragmentary modernist aesthetic is contested by the desire for a seemingly more cohesive and prescribed understanding of the world.

Of course, ‘plot/ting’ in common usage has productive and ominous connotations which the author exploits. DeLillo describes how Hammad and his group “felt the magnetic effect of plot. Plot drew them together more tightly than ever. Plot closed the world to the slenderest line of sight, where everything converges to a point. There was the claim of fate, that they were born to this. There was the claim of being chosen, out there, in the wind and

22. Chris Baldick, *Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 2nd edition), pp.195-196.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. See Jacques Derrida, ‘Living On – Border Lines’, in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed. by Harold Bloom et al. (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).

sky of Islam. There was the statement that death made, the strongest claim of all, the highest jihad" (*Falling*: 174). By drawing attention to the terrorists' plot and their plotting, *Falling Man* transcends the images and discursive representations of TV and other mass media. The repetitive images of devastation and destruction constantly testify to the horrors of terrorism, and validate the consequent war on terror in order to seek justice. DeLillo's presentation of the plot/ting of spatial death chimes with the vocal rhetoric of horrorism— a coming future of horror, based on a set of beliefs that define the terrorists' sense of self: "We are willing to die, they are not. This is our strength, to love death, to feel the claim of armed martyrdom" (*Falling*: 178). It is the ironic imbalance of power that perpetuates the fear, as "One side has the capital, the labour, the technology, the armies, the agencies, the cities, the laws, the police and the prisons. The other side has a few men willing to die" (*Falling*: 46). DeLillo's representation reveals how these few men are empowered by the assurances of their own (pre-determined) plot driven text.

Further consideration of the allusions to time and temporality related to plot allow me to extend these points. Keith's wife, Lianne, "wanted to disbelieve" but nevertheless seeks solace in her visits to church (*Falling*: 232). Here plotting is signified by the dignity of human ruins in the crypts and graves of churches which bring her closer to the past. She derives a certain tranquillity from the sense of history plotted out by the spatial death that resides in a natural logic of time. Similarly, Martin Amis draws attention to Philip Larkin's poetic reflections of sitting in church graveyards, and despite his slightly ironic atheism, he acknowledges the philosophical intent and search for wisdom by those who dwell in their precincts.²⁶ Lianne seems to validate this culturally sanctioned appreciation of the present that draws on traditions of the past and rituals of death that celebrate life. While Lianne seeks understanding through a value system grounded on faith, belief and certainty, she cannot be completely consumed by this in the same way as Hammad who "prays and sleeps, prays and eats [...] the plot shapes every breath he takes," (*Falling*: 176). His existence is a consequence of the doctrine of terrorism: Amir speaks into Hammad's face; "a man can stay forever in a room, doing blueprints, eating and sleeping, even praying, even plotting, but at a certain point he has to get out" (*Falling*: 79). DeLillo does not allow traces of the past to intrude into the terrorist plot when he depicts Hammad's fixation on his role as a harbinger of the (glorious) horror. In his non-fiction DeLillo writes that "The terrorists of September 11

26. Amis, *The Second Plane*, p. 91. Here Amis considers two poems by Philip Larkin, 'Aubade' (1977) and 'Church Going' (1954), which reflect on death and the process of contemplation amongst the grave stones. A useful article on this is "Churchgoing in the Modern Novel", *Modernism/modernity* Vol. 11, No. 4, pp 669-694. Copyright 2004, The Johns Hopkins University Press. Also available on Yale University: <http://faithandglobalization.yale.edu/node/969>.

want to bring back the past"(RoF); however, in *Falling Man*, the past and any psychological individuality of lived experience is erased as Hammad urges "let these things fade into dust. Leave these things behind even as we sleep and eat here. All dust. Cars, houses, people. This is all a particle of dust in the fire and light of the days to come" (*Falling*: 174). DeLillo writes in *White Noise* that "All plots tend to move deathward. This is the nature of plots; Political plots, terrorist plots, lovers' plots, narrative plots, plots that are part of children's games. We edge nearer death every time we plot". (*White Noise*: 26).

The ironic inference to be taken from this Anglo-American discourse is that if terrorists formed a group with clearly defined religious inclinations and acted consistently within the constraints of a fundamentalist ethics, the necessary counter-narratives and modes of resistance could be more productive. Creating a conundrum whereby writers both humanise and complicate the image of the terrorist, but avoid producing a sympathetic treatment of character. Significant moments, such as when Hammad makes the check-out girl smile or laugh, illustrate the illusions of 'normality' and social mixing that runs counter to the popular images which seek to other the Muslim terrorist. Yet, documentary evidence also conveys this. Any examination of the groups responsible for the spate of terrorist strikes and bombings around the world--- for example, 7/7 in London, the Madrid bombings---would reveal a diverse range of identities based on social class, education and motivation and groupings of the genuinely devout, religious fanatics, drug dealers and criminals that explode the stereotypes of representation.

Hammad's positioning in the novel offers a definition of the terrorist as inflected through the lens of the all-American survivor. In the fragmented rhythms of Keith's life the gaps and ellipses are haunted by the account of the plotting that culminates in 9/11. For DeLillo, and Amis, the stimulus for this plotting has historical roots. Amis traces these roots over thousands of years to illustrate the deficit of Islam, whereas DeLillo locates the more recent political conflict of the Iran-Iraq war as the starting point. DeLillo seems to be aware that Bin Laden borrowed the notion of martyrdom from the Shiā in Iran, where the Bassiji volunteers defended the Khomeini regime against Iraq. Notably, "all the attacks attributed to Al-Qaida: the 1998 bombings of US embassies; the strike on the USS Cole in 2000; the attacks in Bali October 2002; Casablanca in May 2003; Istanbul in November 2003; the wave of shootings in Saudi Arabia in May 2004; the Madrid bombing in 2004; the London subway tragedy in 2005; the Algiers massacres in 2007---required the sacrifice of men".²⁷ The

27. Mustapha Marrouchi, "Neither Their Perch Nor Their Terror Al-Qaida Limited", p. 1343 Marrouchi suggests that "there is an interesting, if eccentric, analysis of this matter in Farhad Khoskhokavar, *Cultures et conflits* 29/30 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997): 15-22.

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'Bassij'²⁸ is a paramilitary militia established in 1979 that included thousands of volunteers including old men and boys of twelve years old. They were swept along in the Shi'i love of martyrdom and the heightened atmosphere of patriotism which was disseminated through visits to schools and an intensive media campaign. The Bassij are best known for their employment of human wave attacks which cleared minefields or draw the enemy's fire—actions in which tens of thousands are estimated to have been killed. Some reports tell of the Bassij marching into battle marking their expected entry to heaven by wearing plastic "keys to paradise" around their necks.²⁹ In *Falling Man* Hammad tells his fellow terrorists "about the boy soldiers running in the mud, the mine jumpers, wearing keys to paradise around their necks" (*Falling*: 80). These images are reinforced in the novel when Hammad glorifies the violence of death as he comes close to his own:

He thought of the Shia boys on the battlefield in the Shatt al Arab. He saw them coming out of trenches and redoubts and running across the mudflats toward enemy positions, mouths open in mortal cry. He took strength from this, seeing them cut down in waves by machine guns, boys in the hundreds, then the thousands, suicide brigades, wearing red bandannas around their necks and plastic keys underneath, to open the door to paradise. (*Falling*: 238)

This is the preordained text that Hammad and his fellow terrorists have been plotting. Like the novel's structure it also is cyclical and repetitive, as the narratives are continually self-perpetuating. Movement and action remains within its own spheres of temporality and is ultimately destructive.

The critical neglect of Hammad's position in the novel underscores the nature of the politicised readings of post-9/11 literature, while my foregrounding of this figure argues that it is imperative that the effects of 9/11 are not perceived merely within the ambit of American history. Yet, as the narrative focus and the dialogue indicates, Americans claim ownership of the day and circumscribe it within their own political and cultural settings either through their apathy or withdrawal. This compulsion accounts for the war on terror being repeatedly justified and inflected through the day of 9/11. Although the war on terror is fought as a rather

28 . Bassij is the movement and a Bassiji is one of its members

29. Quote borrowed from Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basij>, a book that has discussed this issue extensively is Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

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conventional military intervention, its continuance retrospectively sanctions and perpetuates 9/11 as a permanent introspective and ideological pre-occupation with fighting terrorism—a state of stasis. Jean Baudrillard claims that terrorism “puts the finishing touches to the orgy of power, liberation, flows and calculation which the Twin Towers embodied, while being the violent deconstruction of that extreme form of efficiency and hegemony” (Baudrillard 2002: 59). The success of any ‘9/11’ novel can mainly be measured by how it effectively brings terrorism into the foreground. Thus the foregrounding of a terrorist plot acknowledges the insertion of history into the timelessness of the fragmented and episodic framing text in that the sense of history being made elsewhere attests to the novel as a political narrative from which the American protagonist is alienated. The spatial vacuity into which Keith’s life is thrust by the terrorist plot provides an ironic twist to the American script of ‘shock and awe’. The American defence organisations and political commentators were taken completely unawares by the sophisticated level of the plotting that was fermented among the substrata of global security networks, and the consequent war on terror actually sustains the temporal vacuum in which the notion of plot(ing) fosters a state of permanent threat. DeLillo’s writing of Hammad into the novel produces a dynamic between narrative and story that enacts this paradox of stasis and action within the post-9/11 world.

معالجة القصة: التخطيط الإرهابي في رواية (دون ديولوجو) الرجل الهابط

نذير الدلالة

ملخص

إنّ إدماج شخصية الإرهابي حماد في رواية ديولوجو والمعنونة بـ " الرجل الهابط " و الصادرة عام 2007 م ، تعدّ جزءاً من التقليد الروائي الذي انتهجه الكاتب منذ بدايات كتاباته ، والمركزة في غالبيتها على المواضيع المتعلقة بالإرهاب.

تتميز هذه الرواية بدمج عنصر الخيال والحقيقة ، وهو طابع امتازت به الروايات الغربية منذ أحداث سبتمبر 2001 م، وهذا بحد ذاته عزز دور الأدب السياسي في التعبير عن أحداث تاريخية ذات تأثير قوي على حياة البشرية، ونتج عن ذلك تجربة إنسانية تمثلت بشخصية (كيث نويديكر وعائلته) كونه أحد الناجين من هذا الهجوم.

إن قراءتي للرواية تتوصل الى النتيجة التي مفادها أن الطريقة التي تمت بها معالجة شخصية نويديكر تعزز الرؤية الاستطردادية الغربية والتي تخلق الأفضلية لصالح الشخصية الغربية ، لذا فإن السرد الروائي النمطي يسعى إلى تعزيز الرؤية الأمريكية ممثلاً بوضع نويديكر بمنزلة خاصة وهي التزامية ، والتي تعني أن شخصية حماد الإرهابي تتزامن في الرواية وتتجدد مع مصطلح التخطيط الإرهابي المستمر، والذي يرى فيه ديولوجو استمراراً في تزامن العلاقة التاريخية بين أمريكا والإرهاب.

إضافة إلى ذلك إن ديولوجو بعرضه للجانب الإنساني لشخصية حماد فإنه يُعقد فهم الرأي العام لمفهوم الإرهاب، ويعمل على إدماج هذه الشخصية في الرواية في إطار شخصنة " الآخر " التي أصبحت جزءاً لا يتجزأ من نمط السرد الروائي للمنتج الأدبي الذي جاء بعد أحداث سبتمبر مؤطراً بالأحداث العالمية الكبرى وعلى رأسها الحرب على الإرهاب.

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