



Post 9/11 Hermeneutics of Structural Silences: A Critical
Study of *Confessions of a Terrorist*, *The Unknown Terrorist* and
A Delicate Truth

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ABSTRACT

Since the fall of the twin towers and the hysterical obsession of the Western discourse centred on Muslim terrorists, the need to critically question and resist such discourses has become indispensable. This need is fulfilled by counter narratives on terrorism that tend to unveil the way dominant terrorism narratives are constructed and disseminated by the power structures. The current paper explores three such post 9/11 counter-narratives, namely *Confessions of a Terrorist* (2014) by Richard Jackson, *The Unknown Terrorist* (2008) by Richard Flanagan, and *A Delicate Truth* (2014) by John le Carre in terms of their resistance to the dominant rhetoric on terrorism. The resistance posed by these narratives is studied under the rubric of Critical Terrorism Studies and Ground Zero Fiction. Of the typology of Ground Zero Fiction proposed by Birgit Dawes, only Appropriative and Metonymic fiction find relevance here. The former delegates the emergence of “subaltern” alternative narratives by voicing the silenced while the latter connotes the employment of silence as a resistance strategy. Such strategic structural silences are studied in view of the typology proposed by Leona Toker. Since these silences are employed consciously in the counter-narratives to expose the workings of the dominant narratives, they serve to unveil, resist, and subvert aneo Orientalist discourse that portrays a one-sided picture of terrorism. The outcome of silences can be seen in the form of fictionality as they unveil the constructedness of the master narratives of terrorism thus disrupting their authority and forcing the readers to search for the truth by critically engaging with them. In brief, this article has explored the way selected counter-narratives deconstruct and pose resistance to the dominant terrorism narratives by unveiling the structures of misrepresentation.

Keywords: Ground Zero Fiction, silenced, strategic silence, resistance

Introduction

Against the hegemonic representation of Muslims in the post 9/11 dominant terrorism narratives, in this article we seek to bring forward a distinct suppressed alternative narrative as advocated by Critical Terrorism Studies and Ground Zero Fiction. We have argued that the discourse on terrorism cannot be explored accurately if we fail to situate the terrorism discourse on “a larger map of temporal and geopolitical contexts” (Dawes 203). Contextualizing the terrorism discourse in a global context has therefore necessitated to look into an alternative narrative that not only resists the dominant terrorism rhetoric but also emphasises the way the voice of the Muslims is silenced in mainstream narratives to produce fictional discourses.

In *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation After 9/11* (2011) Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin assert that to combat “representational deception” (3) one has to break out of the frame of traditional narratives by devising various “outlaw spaces” where the stereotypical framing of Muslims is not only confronted but also resisted (16-17). In the context of terrorism, these “outlaw spaces” could be explored by inspecting the narratives of both Self as well as the Other, as David Simpson says, “every imagining of the other is an encounter with the self: they are us” (136). Therefore, a parallel inspection of both dominant narratives of terrorism as well as their counter narratives can assist in looking at the “gap that exists between representation and reality” (Morey and Yaqin 1). We aim to do so by selecting counter-narratives that embody a double perspective by “including voices and perspectives that are frequently missing in the orthodox literature”, thus “showing a willingness to challenge received wisdom and knowledge about terrorism” (Jackson, Smyth and Gunning 4, 222). We deem this pertinent to reopen “spaces for reconsideration, reimagining and critical thinking” (Lee 24). In this article, we explore how counter-narratives reconstruct the notion of being a Muslim by deconstructing the dominant terrorism narratives in the post 9/11 scenario. This deconstruction or “critical destabilisation” (Jackson “Knowledge” 77) is done in two ways. Firstly, by voicing the suppressed alternative narratives about the lives of the terrorist ‘Others’. Secondly, by employing the strategy of silences that provides a thorough insight into the way the power structures maintain their hegemony by means of weakening the truth, raising doubts about it, and finally silencing it. The employment of such silences, therefore, serves to unveil the “moments of bias, selectivity, exclusion, aporia or inaccuracy within terrorism discourse” (Holland and Jarvis 190), thus offering “a robust rebuttal of Western fictional representations” of terrorism (Kanwal 6).

Post 9/11 Counter Narratives of Terrorism

In *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, Jackson, Smyth and Gunning contend that Critical Terrorism Studies proposes “a critical orientation, a sceptical attitude, and a willingness to challenge received wisdom and knowledge about terrorism” (222). More specifically, Mark Neufeld is of the view that the field acts as a “redemptive hermeneutic” (2001) for the Othered communities, to bring them justice by challenging the prevalent knowledge on terrorism. This proposition to reconsider and revisit dominant narratives is also put forth by Birgit Dawes in *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel* (2011). Dawes proclaims that *Ground Zero Fiction* “opens familiar master narratives for new meanings” (16) thus linking it to the broader field of Critical Terrorism Studies. Dawes’ categorisation of *Ground Zero Fiction*, therefore, is oriented towards resisting and deconstructing the master narratives by finding alternative meanings, thereby stressing the agonistic potential of the terrorism novel. For instance, in Richard Jackson’s novel, the Professor never denies his participation in terrorist activities, however, he gives a detailed account of the political, economic and social inequities that instigated the victimised Muslims to participate in terrorist activities. Richard Flanagan’s novel also exposes how sometimes the actions of dominant authorities turn innocent people into terrorists. Similarly, in John le Carre’s novel the way presumed terrorists are projected by the government serves to defy the notion of Muslim as terrorists. Therefore, the selected novels present an alternative narrative by either contextualizing terrorist activities or by simply refuting the concept of Muslim terrorism. In the ensuing discussion, the appropriative and metonymic categories of *Ground Zero Fiction* are studied in relation to the selected novels.

Dawes’ opines that ‘Appropriative’ *Ground Zero Fiction* gives “voice to the people silenced in the wake of the attacks” (240) either because of the overwhelming effect of dominant terrorism narratives or “terrorism taboo”¹ (“Terrorism” 1). As a result, little effort, so far, has been made to understand the viewpoints of the terrorists, which produces a dire need to take off “the veil of wilful ignorance” (*Confessions* xi) and support Fathali M. Moghaddam and Richard Jackson’s viewpoint that understanding a terrorist’s standpoint does not mean agreeing or condoning it (2, *Confessions* xi). Even while studying the narratives speaking for terrorists, it is important to check whether they “opt for repetitions of the soothing master narratives, or whether they contribute to an effective

¹ According to Richard Jackson ‘Terrorism taboo’ refers to the way by which talking, hearing and understanding the terrorist’s viewpoints is thought to be a taboo. This taboo further explicates that condemning and eliminating the terrorists are the only reasonable options available for the society (*Confessions* x).

recovery of multiple perspectives” (Dawes 284). In this regard, Appropriative fiction provides alternative perspectives by looking at 9/11 from the perspective of terrorists, or those speaking for them (Alcoff 5). Jackson’s *Confessions of a Terrorist* portrays the Professor, a terrorist, as a major character which helps us in listening to his thoughts, motivations and feelings, thus breaking the long-held terrorism taboo. The Professor enables us to relate to his experience by asking various questions that why an educated person would throw away his beautiful life and end up being a “criminal,” a “fugitive,” a “killer,” and a “despised terrorist” (24). He criticises the terrorism experts who take a terrorist as someone with no history. Furthermore, he also mentions various reasons that motivated him to become a terrorist: the illegal wars (99), the agony of those who lost their loved ones in wars (63), the torture of innocent suspects (234), state terrorism (99), and the brutal killing of the Iraqi child Samir Hamoodi (232). These reasons explicitly defy the monolithic, “reductive and essentialist” (Kanwal 4) approach of the Westerners whereby Islam is ascribed to be the sole motivator of terrorist acts. The Professor instead emerges as a torchbearer of planetary humanism, who wilfully becomes a terrorist to fight human rights violation thus never regretting his choice afterwards.

The Unknown Terrorist also breaks the terrorism taboo by featuring Doll and Tariq, those turned into terrorists, as the main characters of the novel. The novel contextualises the final terrorist act of Doll by giving a detailed history of the way Doll was turned into a terrorist upon fake claims. In *A Delicate Truth*, like the rest of the two novels, the novelist has chosen to portray the protagonists who are “speaking for others (terrorists)” (Alcoff 5). Toby is the person who is speaking on behalf of the two innocent people who were perceived to be terrorists. Moreover, a few more characters (Kit, Jeb, and Oakley) play an instrumental role in highlighting the ‘occluded narrative’ (McDonald 250) about a fake Operation conducted by the American company for the sake of corporate interests. An interesting pattern could be drawn in the selected novels. In *Confessions of a Terrorist* there is a real terrorist, in *The Unknown Terrorist* the media forces an innocent person to become a terrorist at the last moment, while in *A Delicate Truth* there is no terrorist at all. In brief, the selected Appropriative fiction gave voice to a community silenced in the mainstream terrorism discourse, as the main characters of the novels, though non-Muslim by religion, speak on behalf of the Muslim community thus disrupting the “chronically one-sided dialogue” perpetrated by the repressive authorities in which Muslims are “doomed to be spoken for and represented, but never to speak themselves” (Morey and Yaqin 2).

In *Confessions of a Terrorist*, it was observed that Toker's silences served to deconstruct the Manichean binaries and unveil the way the discourses on terrorism are created by suppressing the truth. In *The Unknown Terrorist* Toker's silences unveiled the role of media in shaping and reproducing reality more plausibly. In *A Delicate Truth*, silences highlighted the double standards of the West as well as the way truth is withheld by the hegemonic structures of the world. In brief, the analysis of silences, in view of Toker's typology, exposes the way dominant terrorism narratives are constructed based on suppression of reality, making it obtuse, or suspending it absolutely to meet certain ends.

Post 9/11 Hermeneutics of Structural Silences

Other than making diagnoses of the post 9/11 scenario by giving voice to the oppressed, Ground Zero Fiction also discusses how narratives respond to 9/11 through indirect means. Metonymic fiction, in Dawes' view, does not refer to 9/11 "head on" but through an evasive strategy of "unnarration" (Dawes 95). "Unnarration" stands for the way novels located in the temporal context of 9/11 shy away from actually narrating the events of 9/11 (Dawes 105-106). Therefore, "(a)bsence is a dominant motif" in such fiction (Dawes 110). This absence or "textual silence" may arise because the narrator refuses to speak something inexpressible and traumatic. However, we argue that this "textual silence" may be strategically employed by the authors of the novels that try to expose the dominant discourses on terrorism. This strategic silence will be studied in the light of Leona Toker's concept of gaps/silences proposed in *Eloquent Reticence: Withholding Information in Fictional Narrative* (2014). She is of the view that silence or gaps are strategically deployed by the author as the author consciously suppresses information from the fabula to create a "touch of indeterminacy" (Toker 6). However, this suppression is only considered an informational gap when the reader perceives the "missing information to be of some consequence" (Toker 6).

Toker's theory of "manipulative informational gaps" endorses the view that "absence of a message is a message in its own right" (Toker 1). This idea is also supported by Cheryl Glenn who is of the view that "like the zero in mathematics, silence is an absence with a function" ("Silence" 263), that consequently inculcates in the readers a "desire to fill this vacuum" (Baratz and Reingold 231). Taking this desire into consideration, Toker's use of the term "manipulative" is significant as it relates the freedom that a reader may enjoy while interpreting the gaps and silences. These gaps are analysed under the concept of "hermeneutic code" propounded by Roland Barthes. In a hermeneutic code all those elements are

discussed “whose function is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the event or delay its answer; or even to constitute an enigma and lead to its solution” (qtd. in Toker 13). Based on the concept of “hermeneutic code,” Toker has divided these gaps into four types, which we discuss in the following discussion.

The first type of informational gap is chronological displacement which, according to Lydia Kokkola, may take place utilizing time slip techniques that is, prolepsis (flashback) and analepsis (flashforward) (217, 218). All of the selected novels exhibit chronological displacement either in the form of prolepsis/analepsis or both. In Jackson and le Carre’s novels, chronological displacement takes place through prolepsis, while in Flanagan’s novel it takes place employing both. *Confessions of a Terrorist* gives two names of the Professor at the very start, that is, Youssef Said, aka, Samir Hamoodi (Jackson 7). The reason behind his pseudo name is not revealed until two-thirds of the novel has elapsed. Moreover, this information does not seem crucial till we get to know the story behind it. The Professor relates the story of how one of the UK soldiers died because of the bomb that the Professor and his comrades had implanted in Basra, Iraq. In retaliation, a British soldier, Michael, shot an eleven years old child named Samir Hamoodi. His mother tried to file the report against the officer at the military base but the case was neither registered nor investigated. On that day the Professor promised Samir’s mother that he will avenge the death of Samir and “the world will know his name” (Jackson 231). On Samir’s brutal killing, he vowed to fight for all the nameless children of Iraq who became the victims of the global “War on Terror.” This chronological displacement, other than relating the motivations of the Professor’s terrorist acts, also tells about the new identity that he acquired by adopting the child’s name. About his new name, he says that it is his “reborn name...like when a person converts to Islam and takes a new name” (Jackson 232). This statement shows that he is a non-Muslim but he is acting on behalf of Muslims, as his new identity belongs to a Muslim.

In Flanagan’s *The Unknown Terrorist* chronological displacement is seen in the form of analepsis as well as prolepsis. Analepsis is vivid when right at the start the death of Doll is foretold (2). However, why and how she will die only become apparent only when we get to know the story that otherwise proceeds chronologically. As the novel proceeds, we come to know that Doll meets her death when she becomes the victim of the media’s hysteric search for a terrorist. When the media does not find anyone suitable to blame for Tariq’s death, they blame Doll. Initially, they wanted her to assist the police in enquiries. However,

later on “they were hunting her like a dog, a mad dog” (267). A similar instance of chronological displacement is found about Tariq, though using prolepsis. Tariq’s death is related (76) but how and why he died is not mentioned alongside. After some time it is told by mainstream media that he was a dangerous terrorist (95) till we reach Frank Moretti’s account that he was a computer programmer who used to smuggle drugs from Pakistan and Malaysia. This time Tariq was commanded to collect the cargo of smuggled men from the Australian port. However, the completion of his task was interrupted when he suddenly disappeared and was later found dead in a car. The above-mentioned instances of chronological displacement are quite significant because they highlight two interrelated aspects of contemporary society: the corruption of mainstream media and the consequent uncertainty of life in the post 9/11 world. The former aspect elucidates how the media weaves a fake narrative around Doll and Tariq to attain subjective purposes. The latter aspect is vivid enough in the novel as in just one night Tariq’s personality is transformed from a drug dealer to an al-Qaeda terrorist. On the other hand, in just four days Doll is transformed from a pole dancer to a hunted terrorist. The time-lapse in the transformation of these two personalities portrays the contingency of the lives of Muslims or those associated with them in the post 9/11 epoch.

A Delicate Truth likewise employs chronological displacement through prolepsis. The super-secret *Operation Wildlife* is described by Kristy as a sheer success with no casualties, rather everyone was ecstatic and medals were conferred upon all (le Carre 51, 50). However, the reality of the operation is revealed quite later when Jeb (the field commander in the operation) tells Paul (Kit) that the operation was “one big load of lies” (le Carre 206) as there was no dangerous terrorist and the operation was rather responsible for the death of two innocent people. This displacement hints at the hypocritical stance of the Western powers who hide the truth from the public if it goes against them.

The selected novels also reveal the way silences or informational gaps take the form of diffusion of information, primarily manifested in the form of shaded expressions, that is, expressions producing the illusion of depth and veiled expressions. The illusion of depth is produced when the narrative ruffles our confidence and tricks us into believing something that might not be true. *Confessions of a Terrorist* beautifully enacts this technique as it repeatedly forces the reader to “pause, look up from the text, and register a need for a belated readjustment” (Toker 48). It provides us with opposing clues to find out who the real terrorist is. Initially, the dominant preconceived notion prevails that

the Professor is the terrorist being interrogated. This view is supported by how Michael asks various questions and the Professor answers them, and also by the way the Professor refers to himself as an “elusive prey” (Jackson 16, 51). We do constantly get alternate clues; for instance, the conversation between the terrorist and the interrogator begins unconventionally as it is the Professor who starts the conversation as if he is the interrogator (Jackson 5). Most of the times, he leads the conversation, while the interrogator mostly agrees, disagrees or argues in response. Yet we easily dismiss such clues and hold the first opinion that the Professor is the terrorist who is being interrogated. After two-thirds of *Confessions of a Terrorist*, our confidence is ruffled because the cues of the alternate viewpoint increase in intensity as the narrative proceeds. Initially, the Professor slightly refers to the idea that Michael is the interrogated terrorist by talking about the video recording of the conversation they are having (Jackson 198). This idea gets stronger when Michael refers to himself as a “hostage” (Jackson 223) and intensifies when finally the Professor calls Michael a prisoner by saying to him that he would, “not be able to break those handcuffs...or the bolt in that desk... in a thousand years” (Jackson 228-229). This type of diffusion of information, Kokkola consents, restrains us from forming a single opinion and forces the readers “to overlook vital elements or to make inappropriate connections” (223). In this way, the original meaning of the text is shaded until the end of the novel where the tables are turned and it is revealed that it was the interrogator who was being interrogated by the terrorist. The illusion of depth thus endeavours to deconstruct the notion that only a Muslim can be a terrorist.

The Unknown Terrorist by Flanagan also exhibits the gaps created by shaded expressions. Initially, Tariq is introduced by Katie Moretti as a stylish computer programmer, followed by the same description of his job to Doll by Tariq himself (38, 76). However, soon after, the media starts televising a grainy image of the terrorist, that is, Tariq, and the footage of Tariq and Doll entering an apartment. While the media is replaying the footage again and again, the reader is led to suspect whether in reality Tariq is the terrorist. The alternate clue is provided by the presence of cocaine at Tariq’s home and his remark about it: “plenty more where that came from” (81) which suggests his profession as a drug dealer. Nick Loukakis, a cop, also approves the fact that Tariq was a drug dealer, however upon listening to the media narrative he too is baffled on not detecting the terrorist links of Tariq. Only Doll who has become the victim of false accusations doubts the story portrayed by the media about Tariq. The narrative keeps ruffling our confidence until the end of the novel when it is told that Tariq was killed by the

state to meet certain needs, probably emphasizing the idea that his transformation from a drug dealer into a terrorist could also be attributed to the government. The silent gap created by the “unprobed depth” (Toker 48) highlights the hold of the media in shaping the identities of people in contemporary society.

The works of Flanagan and le Carre also embody veiled shaded expressions in the form of sublimation². The novels also portray how sublimation may be accompanied by various degrees of solipsism that is, instrumentalisation of characters (Toker 51). Flanagan’s novel quite vividly portrays how Richard Cody embodies solipsism when he works with other people to design a fake life story of Doll. Cody is demoted from his position as an anchor to a lowly position of senior network correspondent at Channel ‘Six’. This enrages him and he vows to reinstate his position (33). In so doing, he develops a solipsistic attitude of sacrificing the life and dignity of Doll by making a fake documentary about her. However, the true goal of Cody is disguised when in front of the nation he is declared a hero who met his death while trying hard to depict the true life of Doll, a terrorist. Thus, Flanagan’s novel shows how patriotism, in reality, is the disguised form of greed and power struggle. Harmsen (113), Todd Birchall (180), Jerry Mendes (114) and various other characters also embody a solipsistic attitude to pursue sublimated goals. *A Delicate Truth* also manifests the implicit gap resulting from the process of sublimation. For instance, Crispin’s true goal is to get money (le Carre 206) which he sublimates by disguising it in the patriotic fervour to protect the nation from terrorists. This sublimation becomes explicit when Crispin embodies a solipsistic attitude, that is, to attain his true goal he not only staked the career of Quinn who had to resign from his post because of the scandal (le Carre 289), but also the career of Jeb who was fired for failing to comply with the government. These instances, in brief, portray the way sublimation silences the truth and leads to the instrumentalisation of the characters.

On the continuum of withholding information, temporary suspension of information comes after diffusion of information as it withholds information to a greater extent. Temporary suspension of information may take various forms, such as surprise gap and various other strategies related to the act of double-dealing. Two characters of Jackson’s *Confessions of a Terrorist*, that is, the Professor and Michael, seem to be unrelated to each other. However, in the latter part of the novel, the interconnection between the two is revealed that is, Michael was the person who was responsible for increasing the aggressive behaviour of

² According to Fenichel sublimation refers to the process whereby the original impulse or behaviour pertaining to socially unacceptable behaviours is transformed unconsciously into socially acceptable behaviours or impulses (qtd. in Gemes 45).

the Professor by killing an innocent Iraqi child (206). This surprise link makes the point that aggression is not due to some innate quality of the Muslims or those related to them. Instead, it is something that arises out of the reaction to the actions and policies observed by the Western countries, thus, re-echoing the observation made about cloning terror.

Le Carre's *A Delicate Truth* also embodies a surprise gap that unfolds into another surprise gap. The novel introduces us to a new set of characters that is, Kit, Suzanna and Emily, who do not seem to be connected to the previous characters who participated in the secret operation. However, this sudden shift in the scenario is resolved soon through a surprise information that Kit Probyn is the same bureaucrat from the Ministry of Defence who was involved in the operation and was codenamed Paul. This withheld information is provided using another surprise gap which is revealed in the form of an unexpected and an accidental meeting of Jeb and Kit, the co-partners of *Operation Wildlife*. In this surprise meeting, we get to know that *Operation Wildlife* was a complete failure. It can be observed that the success of the operation was never questioned until the narrative tells us about its failure. This is exactly the way a surprise gap works as Toker says that in a surprise gap we are "practically unaware of the omission until the suspended information is divulged (Toker 84). The selected novels also portray how sometimes information is temporarily withheld through double-dealing which includes the "camouflage techniques" (Toker 88), for example, finesse. According to Toker, "finesse has the connotations of evasion: one does not confront the most dangerous issue but neutralizes it or passes it by" (90). This view is in accordance with Jackson's view that "silence can be a deliberate means of distraction or misdirection from uncomfortable subjects or contrasting viewpoints" ("Ghosts" 4). The presence of this technique is explicitly felt in Flanagan's *The Unknown Terrorist*. When Tony Buchanan asks Harmsen about the person who placed the bomb, he receives an evasive reply, "(a)nything is better than another Sari Club" (272). In other words, even inventing a fake tale is fine if it is aimed at protecting the nation. Finesse is also seen in Le Carre's *A Delicate Truth* at the instant when Paul asks Kristy about Punter. She responds indirectly by saying, 'I said everyone's ecstatic, didn't I?' (50). When Paul asks again for clarity, she snubs him for asking too many questions and asks him to get into the car and go back to the airport. This instance reveals how the power structures keep their secrets through camouflage techniques like finesse. Temporary suspension of information, in brief, explicitly portrays how the weaving of "incongruent narratives together temporarily suppresses information for the sake of tension"

(Kokolla 222). However, a continuous process follows, that is, when one mystery or riddle gets resolved another takes its place (Toker 66).

The selected novels also embody gaps that remain an enigma till the end (Toker 15). Such gaps are created by the permanent suspension of information. Throughout the narrative, we keep on making conjectures about the suspended information but by the end of the novels, our hypotheses are neither approved nor refuted (Toker 130). Although the gap cannot be filled but significant attention can reveal the symbolism of the gap (Toker 144). The selected novels are quite important from the perspective of counter-narrative of terrorism because the authors have shown us how the media and the government permanently suspend information in the narratives they present to the public. But behind the scene, the authors have also provided us with a glimpse of such suspended material. In this way, the burden of interpretation that was earlier on the shoulders of the readers alone is now also being shared by the authors.

Confessions of a Terrorist by Jackson is a transcription of an audio discussion of the Professor and Michael. Two features of the novel, both about form, are particularly interesting concerning the permanent suspension of information. The first one relates to the way the document has been “sanitized”, that is, subjected to redaction (Jarvis 1) by two means: interruption of narrative and blackened pieces of information, lines, and passages. The interruption of the narrative takes place in the form of recording interruptions, loud noise, the voice of the terrorist made inaudible, scraping sounds, banging, mumbling, etc. These interruptions serve various purposes. For instance, the Professor’s voice is made inaudible when he is talking about the ironic condition of the Western terrorism experts who do not even have first-hand knowledge of the subjects they write about. The text of his speech appears as: “(a)t [inaudible] they have never [inaudible]” (Jackson 26). This instance probably signifies that the government silences the people who counter the literary/knowledge hegemony established by the so-called terrorism experts. Similarly, at another place when the Professor is talking about the narrow perception of the Westerners regarding the motives of the terrorists, his speech is interrupted by “extended white noise” (50). The passage after this interruption is a heated dialogue by Michael starting in the middle of the sentence about the way the Professor is blaming him for everything wrong that his Government did. This aggression on the part of Michael probably suggests that the Professor said something about the British government that deeply exposed him. This instance might suggest that the Professor divulged a hidden secret that offends the interrogator so that he is trying to differentiate himself from his government.

Similar instances are found throughout the novel (11, 58, 74).

The second form of redaction constitutes the abundantly scattered pieces of information that are blackened probably because of the security risk they pose. The names of the high officials and topographical specificities are mostly redacted thus “evoking associations with censorship and secrecy” (Dawes 132). Redactions are mostly seen in the speeches of the Professor and sometimes in the speeches of Michael. For example, by the end of the novel, the Professor proposes the idea that if the UK government accepts his demands then he and his comrades will suspend their campaign in the territory of the UK. However, the demands of the Professor are eclipsed for most of the time in the form of blackened lines. This redaction is the longest one in the novel spanning almost one page (220). The demands of the Professor which are not redacted mostly relate to the evacuation of Western armies from Muslim lands and making sure that the rules and regulations about human rights are followed, especially by Israel. From the content of the un-redacted speech, we may imply that the redacted speech too spoke about the idea, probably in a severe way, of ending Western domination from the world and to provide a free and fair environment to all. The novel, in brief, is replete with such redactions. Some of the other examples occur when the Professor talks about the negotiation of the Westerners with the terrorists (206); while the Professor is mentioning the names of unknown holding centres for the so-called “terrorists” (250); and when under the threat of the Professor, Michael is telling about the torture cells in Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Romania, Diego Garcia and various other places (251). This type of suspension says a lot about how risky information, that can serve to derange the hegemony of the West, is kept hidden from the public. Such gaps, in Sarah Duancey’s view, are “charged with socio-political significance: the occlusion of history, the forceful erasure of voices, and the preclusion of certain groups from attaining access to the discursive sphere” (12).

In *The Unknown Terrorist*, the true life of the Doll is permanently suspended in the media documentary that Cody makes. In contrast, the media grants her a new identity that is totally unrelated to her. This idea is substantiated by Jerry Mendes’ statement in *The Unknown Terrorist* that “(p)eople don’t want the truth, you know that, Richie?”... “People want an exalting illusion, that’s what they want. Find that sort of story, ginger it up with a few dashes of fear and nastiness, and you’ve hit gold. True gold” (Flanagan 26-27). Later on, Cody strictly follows Mendes’ advice to compose the documentary. Since “what was missing was what was unknown: the life of the pole dancer” (Flanagan 107), so

Cody completely distorts her life to make an alluring tale about a threatening terrorist. In *A Delicate Truth*, the unknown fate of Kit Probyn, Toby Bell and Giles Oakley forms the gap where information is permanently suspended. All of these characters try to become “whistleblowers” (le Carre 223) in some way. Kit is determined to become a “whistleblower” but he is threatened by the Ministry of dire consequences which scares him. So the duty to reveal the truth about the evil actions of the UK government is transferred to Toby. Toby is probably caught by the police when he is sending the secret material regarding the operation to various channels. Oakley also vanishes from the scene after providing secret material about *Operation Wildlife* to Toby. Thus, what happens to Kit, Toby and Oakley afterwards is not known. However, drawing upon three observations: the fate that Jeb met, Emily’s viewpoint that the evidence on *Operation Wildlife* would have “earth-shaking consequences in official quarters” (le Carre 223) and Diana’s proclamation that the “Foreign Office has many hellholes earmarked for discontents and whistle-blowers” (le Carre 89), it may be expected that they too become the victims of the government.

Oakley’s fate can be interpreted to some extent on the basis of his statement. The note on the file that Oakley gives to Toby said that “a corporate life does not, after all, agree with me, and I have accordingly awarded myself a lengthy posting to distant parts” (le Carre 337). Whether Oakley got a posting in reality or he plans to commit suicide as the viewpoint of Toby suggests (le Carre 342) or he went to a foreign country to save his life or he was arrested by the Government, all of these are only interpretations as none of these is sanctioned by the text itself. According to Toker, “the finality of a gap suggests that the ambiguity is an integral part of the theme” (le Carre 130). Following this argument, the ambiguity regarding the fate of whistleblowers forms one of the main themes of the novel that not only guides the reader to trace out the spots of oppression but also the way the hegemonic cultures operate (Duancey 11).

In brief, the four types of silences, arising out of informational gaps, discussed above not only reveal how the 9/11 event has been dealt with indirectly through metonymic fiction but also the way the structural indirectness of such strategies serves to “call attention to the very practices of silencing” (Dawes 134). The silences discussed above unveil the way the hegemonic terrorism discourses suppress the voice of the oppressed. Sometimes, other than signifying the spots of oppression (Duancey 11), silences also serve to resist the dominant terrorism discourses.

To conclude, through this article we disrupt the mainstream terrorism

narrative that, in view of Kristiaan Versluys, “shamelessly recuperated the events of the day [9/11 attacks] for ideological and propaganda purposes” (12). To combat such misrepresentation, various “outlaw spaces” have been devised where the stereotypical framing of Muslims is not only confronted but also resisted (Morey and Yaqin 17). In this article, we focussed on such “outlaw spaces” that construct an alternative narrative to expose the faults and follies of the mainstream terrorism rhetoric. Although in this paper we sought to unveil the biased nature of 9/11 terrorism discourse, yet by no means it endeavours to endorse tactics of terrorism enacted either by Muslims or non-Muslims. It only refutes the idea of looking at 9/11 terrorism discourse in a “de-historicized” way (Kanwal 199) that overlooks the presence of alternative terrorism narratives.

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