

The representation of the Arabic and Islamic Identity in the 9/11 novel Lorraine Adams's *Harbor* as a case study

Awatef Boubakri*

The 9/11 attacks have affected the representation of the Arabic and Islamic identity and a great deal of research has been interested in the study of this representation. Most of this research has been directed to the study of the 9/11 political discourse showing that this discourse embeds misrepresentations of Arabs and Muslims through powerful rhetorical features. The present paper finds it interesting to study the representation of the Arabic and Islamic identity in literature rather than in politics, and in order to remain within the context of the 9/11 attacks and the issue of terrorism, it chooses to analyze one of the 9/11 novels, namely Lorraine Adams' (2004) *Harbor*. A critical discourse analysis following Fairclough's (2001) analytical procedure is applied to understand the ideological dominant discourse through the identification of the rhetorical devices on which this literary discourse is based. It is concluded that *Harbor* is based on a shocking sequencing of its backstory in a way that the reader is preoccupied with the horrifying story that he experiences while a lot of misrepresentations

are backgrounded within the discourse. In fact, this critical evaluative reading applied to the novel brings to the fore what is backgrounded in order to denounce the misrepresentation of the Arabic and Islamic identity.

1. The 9/11 political discourses

Since the 9/11 attacks, researchers (Silberstein 2004, Jackson 2005, Updike 2006) have been fully preoccupied with the study of political speeches, news reports and press conferences. These studies have been interested in the rhetoric used by American politicians and in the way they justify US interference in other countries. These studies argue that the post 9/11 American political discourses rely on rhetorical and discursive strategies.

Silberstein (2004) studies the use of language which helped to shape the public response to the events of 9/11. Right after the events of 11th September 2001, Bush and his administration called for the unity of the Americans to better face this national crisis. Language was their first means to make the public understand that this huge event was more than an act of terror; it was a war meant

against the United States; therefore, the act of terror has become an act of war and Americans themselves have become students who have been receiving lessons about Geography and Islam (Silberstein 2004: 1). Language was deployed in that time of national crisis, so it has become usual to describe the attackers as "faceless enemy" who symbolize 'evil'. As a result, America led a campaign for a war against terrorism which would pave the way for the intervention in Afghanistan and later in Iraq (Silberstein 2004: 2).

Jackson (2005) is also interested in the way language is deployed to justify a global campaign of 'counter terrorism'. Jackson shows that public rhetoric is based on the selection of words which are biased rather than neutral, in the sense that this selection imposes a particular interpretation on the public. First, the events of 9/11 are explained in relation to previous historical narratives such as World War Two and the Cold War, and it is within this context that dichotomies such

Jackson shows that public rhetoric is based on the selection of words which are biased rather than neutral, in the sense that this selection imposes a particular interpretation on the public.

Awatef Boubakri : The representation of the Arabic and Islamic Identity in the 9/11 novel

as civilization/barbarism and evil terrorists/ good Americans, recur in the discourse. Jackson concludes that "the 'war on terrorism' therefore, is simultaneously a set of actual practices – wars, covert operations, agencies and institutions and an accompanying series of assumptions, beliefs, justifications and narratives – it is an entire language and discourse" (Jackson 2005: 4).

Chomsky (2006) presents detailed historical proofs of the American policy whose administration, on most occasions, believe in the necessity to intervene in the affairs of some countries to reestablish democracy, and thus to protect America. According to Chomsky, the most important rhetorical construction is the permanent threat to democracy. It is in the name of democracy, liberty and justice that the US invaded Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11 (Chomsky 2006: 105). Another rhetorical tool is the familiar expression 'Axis of evil' which is rooted in the American history. Bush administration explains that America must

destroy the 'Axis of evil', following the will of the Lord. In order to achieve this purpose, the United States always violates international laws and treaties under the pretext of "illegal but legitimate" (Chomsky 2006: 95). According to the American administration, some decisions, like interference in some countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, were illegal because they were opposed by the United Nation Security Council and legitimate because diplomatic avenues had been exhausted and there was no other way to stop atrocities. This has been a repeated scenario in the war against Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq (Chomsky 2006: 95).

Montgomery(2005) comments on a number of works which deal with discourses around 9/11. He argues that they all rely, in their account of 9/11 discourses on binary oppositions like good/evil or us/they (Lazar & Lazar 2004, Edwards 2004, Graham et al 2004). Binary oppositions commonly characterize the rhetoric on which political discourses are usually based; however, it is not the main rhetorical device in the 9/11 political discourse. Montgomery identifies what he calls 'discursive amplification'; for instance, the terms 'bad act', 'evil act', 'terrorist act', 'act of war' (Montgomery 2005: 156) are used successively on the first then the second

According to Chomsky, the most important rhetorical construction is the permanent threat to democracy. It is in the name of democracy, liberty and justice that the US invaded Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11

then the third day of the 9/11 events in a way that “the movement from concrete, verifiable entities to large abstractions serves in practice only to mystify the underlying event by immediately embedding it in larger discourses of patriotism” (Montgomery 2005: 158).

2. The representation of the Arabic-Islamic identity in the 9/11 political discourses

Some of the researchers reviewed above have been critical of the US foreign policy and pointed to a number of consequences of the war counter terrorism. Chomsky (2006), for instance, thinks that democracy promotion has failed. He argues that the war against terrorism increased terrorism in Afghanistan and created it in Iraq. He also argues that whenever democracy was established, the US disapproved of that kind of democracy; for example, although Hizbollah and Hamas are popular parties in Palestine and Lebanon, the US describes them as terrorist and undemocratic. It has become clear that "democracy will be welcomed as long as it is of the conventional 'top-down' form that leaves elites supportive of US goals in power" (Chomsky 2006: 162).

Montgomery (2005) concludes that

Chomsky thinks that democracy promotion has failed. He argues that the war against terrorism increased terrorism in Afghanistan and created it in Iraq.

the 9/11 political discourse ignored many doubts and waged a questionable war. He explains that the main rhetorical device in the 9/11 political discourse is what he calls ‘discursive amplification’; for instance, the terms ‘bad act’, ‘evil act’, ‘terrorist act’, ‘act of war’ (Montgomery 2005: 156) are used successively on the first then the second then the third day of the 9/11 events in a way that “the movement from concrete, verifiable entities to large abstractions serves in practice only to mystify the underlying event by immediately embedding it in larger discourses of patriotism” (Montgomery 2005: 158). The use of the term ‘war’ quickly prevailed on the political scene. Obviously, it was first used as a figure of speech to describe the event, but in three days politicians started to speak about a war to be waged against terrorism. Afterwards, suspicions and doubt as to the legitimacy of the war started to emerge.

Misrepresentations of Arabs and Muslims living in the US and all over the Western world also started to emerge. Boubakri

(2012) analyses Bush's State of the Union Addressees from 2002 to 2008 in an attempt to identify the rhetorical power of these speeches. She concludes that Bush's seven speeches are characterized by the recurrence of seven framing devices and of interest to the study is hyperbole. It is the most frequent device in each speech, and it is presented with illustrations in what follows in order to clarify the way it contributes to the misrepresentation of Arabs and Muslims.

In the beginning of each speech, Bush establishes a dichotomy between "we" and "the other". This dichotomy is established through an opposition between the first personal and possessive pronouns referring to the Americans and the third personal and possessive pronouns referring to the terrorists. It is on the basis of this dichotomy that hyperbole conveys meaning. Hyperbole groups exaggeration, overgeneralization and overestimation. In 2002 State of the Union Address for example, exaggeration is present right from the beginning of the speech. Bush says that "the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers" (Bush 2002: 1). The civilized world presupposes an uncivilized world where the terrorists act. Knowing that terrorists are mostly acting in the Islamic world, Bush's utterance presupposes that the

The use of the term 'war' quickly prevailed on the political scene. Obviously, it was first used as a figure of speech to describe the event, but in three days politicians started to speak about a war to be waged against terrorism. Afterwards, suspicions and doubt as to the legitimacy of the war started to emerge.

Islamic world is uncivilized.

Overgeneralization is another aspect of hyperbole. Bush says: "Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our allies with weapons of mass destruction. Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September the 11th but we know their true nature" (Bush 2002: 3). "The other" for Bush is no longer groups of individuals called "terrorists" but also "terrorist regimes" and even "terrorist states and camps" (Bush 2002: 3). Consequently, many nations and countries are involved.

The third aspect of hyperbole is overestimation. Bush says:

We last met in an hour of shock and suffering. In four short months, our nation has comforted

the victims, begun to rebuild New York and the Pentagon, rallied a great coalition, captured, arrested, and rid the world of thousands of terrorists, destroyed Afghanistan's terrorists training camps, saved a people from starvation, and freed a country from brutal oppression (Bush 2002: 1).

In fact, Bush overestimates the results of his war on terror when he claims that his war saved Afghanistan from terrorism, starvation and oppression. In later speeches, Bush also overestimates his achievements in Iraq expressing the same idea that whenever the US interferes in an Arab or Muslim country, terrorism, starvation, oppression and ignorance are erased.

3. The representation of the Arabic

civilized world presupposes an uncivilized world where the terrorists act. Knowing that terrorists are mostly acting in the Islamic world, Bush's utterance presupposes that the Islamic world is uncivilized.

and Islamic identity in the 9/11 literary discourse

The present paper finds it interesting to study the representation of the Arabic and Islamic identity in literature rather than in politics, and in order to remain within the context of the 9/11 attacks and the issue of terrorism, it chooses to analyze one of the 9/11 novels. The 9/11 novel is fiction written as a reaction to the 9/11 attacks and its aftermaths. Its central issue is terrorism and its main characters are usually in struggle with such a phenomenon.

3.1. Methodology

This study is a corpus analysis based on Fairclough's (2001) critical analytical procedure and Stockwell's (2002) application of the cognitive phenomenon **figure/ground** to literary texts. Fairclough's critical analytical procedure contains three main steps. First, the corpus under study is linked to a problem whose aspect is sociological, political and/or ideological. Second, Structural, linguistic and/or inter-discursive analyses of the order of discourse are presented. Finally, this order of discourse is evaluated on the basis of an alternative reading.

Stockwell's (2002) notion of **figure and ground** is a basic and very powerful idea

Awatef Boubakri : The representation of the Arabic and Islamic Identity in the 9/11 novel

in cognitive linguistics. It has been used to develop general patterns across whole discourses.

The 9/11 novel under study is Lorraine Adams's (2004) *Harbor*. According to Amazon.com editorial reviews, *Harbor* tells the story of illegal Algerian immigrants in Boston, Montreal and Brooklyn. The novel opens with the adventure of Aziz Arkoun who, at twenty four, boards an Algerian tanker to Boston ending his hard journey with a swim in the icy waters of Boston harbor. He reaches the land tired and unhealthy, but he soon meets his Algerian fellows. He reaches his community only to find himself in the same dangerous conditions he left behind. The way he and his friends live reminds him of the ambiguity of his past when he was an accidental double agent for Islamist militants. The ambiguity and complexity of

In fact, Bush overestimates the results of his war on terror when he claims that his war saved Afghanistan from terrorism, starvation and oppression. In later speeches, Bush also overestimates his achievements in Iraq expressing the same idea that whenever the US interferes in an Arab or Muslim country, terrorism, starvation, oppression and ignorance are erased.

his present is increased when he discovers that he and his circle are under surveillance (www.amazon.com/Harbor-Lorraine-Adams/dp/140004233X). A critical discourse analysis aims to show that the dominant discourse of *Harbor* is based on a shocking sequencing of the backstory within the immediate discourse and that an alternative reading based on foregrounding the backgrounded reveals misrepresentation of the Arabic and Islamic identity.

3.2. The analysis

Fairclough's (2001) critical analytical procedure necessitates first to link *Harbor* to its context related here to the issue of terrorism. *Harbor* links to the issue of terrorism through its main character Aziz who works for the Irhabiya in Algeria and who is suspected and his Algerian fellows by the FBI to be a terrorist group.

The second step of Fairclough's analytical procedure is to study the order of discourse of *Harbor*. The novel is an alternation between the immediate discourse when Aziz is with his Algerian fellows in Boston and the backstory of Soumaya when Aziz works for the Irhabiya in Algeria. What is marked in the novel is the distribution of the backstory of Soumaya. In the backstory, Aziz witnesses the torture to death

of a woman by the terrorist group he found himself working with. After a large textual space of suspense, Aziz and the reader know at the same time that the woman tortured is Aziz's Fiancée, a woman he started to love but he did not meet before because she had been chosen for him by his father while he was not at home. The following table presents the distribution of the story of Soumaya in the novel::

Chapters	Immediate discourse/Backstory
1	Immediate discourse
2	Immediate discourse
3	Immediate discourse
4	Immediate discourse
5	Immediate discourse
6	Immediate discourse
7	Immediate discourse
8	Immediate discourse
9	Immediate discourse
10	Immediate discourse
11	Immediate discourse
12	Immediate discourse (The first hint at Soumaya's story)
13	Immediate discourse
14	Immediate discourse (Conversation about Soumaya saying she is dead)
15	Backstory (Aziz sees the torture and murder of a woman)
16	Immediate discourse
17	Immediate discourse
18	Immediate discourse
19	Immediate discourse
20	Backstory (Aziz's dream and love of Soumaya)
21	Immediate discourse
22	Immediate discourse
23	Backstory
24	Immediate discourse
25	Immediate discourse
26	Backstory
27	Immediate discourse
28	Immediate discourse
29	Backstory (Aziz discovers that the woman tortured is Soumaya)
30	Immediate discourse (Aziz's memory of Soumaya)
31	Immediate discourse
32	Immediate discourse
33	Immediate discourse

The distribution of the story of Soumaya in *Harbor*

The table shows that the backstory of Soumaya interrupts the events in chapters 12 and 14 of the immediate discourse. At these moments, Aziz knows what happened to Soumaya. As an omniscient narrator in the immediate discourse, although he knows

more than the reader, he does not say anything. This choice by the narrator creates suspense.

Starting from chapter 15, the backstory takes complete chapters interrupting the chapters of the immediate discourse. In chapter 15, Aziz sees the torture to death of a woman. The scene is extremely violent:

**Night was coming.
He knew this, and
yet he wished he
would be burned
into ash, before
anything else.
They had a woman.**

The distribution of the story of Soumaya in Harbor

The 9/11/ novel under study is Lorraine Adams's (2004) *Harbor*. According to Amazon.com editorial reviews, *Harbor* tells the story of illegal Algerian immigrants in Boston, Montreal and Brooklyn.

The mouth, the saliva, the pulse of the lip under her other lip. Someone had torn it. There is no e in the language.

So say evil, they told her. Say *evil*.

She was lost in *alif* and *wa* and then the sun made his left knee into reddened raw.

Kill her, go ahead.

She wanted nothing but to show herself, so that is her way.

One of them put his thumb on one part of her, then the heel of his palm into her softness below the carriage of her throat.

Literally: A wife possessing them.

A prostration is to be performed here.

He leveled himself in body and mind.

She died easily, as it turned out. Antar began with his knife to

cut back her hair between her legs. She was still breathing, because she jumped. He took the knife in her, cutting left and right, and then up, but still she would jump. So he put his boot on feeling the jittering of her.

Then we took vengeance upon them; so look into how was the end of them who cried lies.

Still, she was not still.

Someone had a shovel. He put the blunt of it on her collarbone. Her eyes were open and she said, *All the merciful, all the merciful*. He pushed into the sand. The head came in one part, away from the shoulder. And still she said *all merciful*. They began to push the knife into her stomach and out through her under her heart.

The jitter stopped. The eyes stopped open (Adams 2004:

The novel is an alternation between the immediate discourse when Aziz is with his Algerian fellows in Boston and the backstory of Soumaya when Aziz works for the Irhabiya in Algeria.

121-122).

At this level of Soumaya's story, the reader is not only curious to know who is this woman but he also develops angry attitudes towards these Irhabiya because the scene of torture is extremely violent and inhuman. As a character in the backstory, also Aziz does not know who is this woman because he knows as much as the reader.

It is only in chapter 29 that Aziz discovers that the woman tortured in front of him is his fiancée and it is only then that the reader knows too:

He looked at his mother surprisingly.

"Soumaya was murdered," she said.

"Irhabi." His father nodded.

"Many of them."

"Many of them."

Starting from chapter 15, the backstory takes complete chapters interrupting the chapters of the immediate discourse.

In chapter 15, Aziz sees the torture to death of a woman. The scene is extremely violent

At this level of Soumaya's story, the reader is not only curious to know who is this woman but he also develops angry attitudes towards these Irhabiya because the scene of torture is extremely violent and inhuman.

"They were animals."

"It knows no bounds what they did."

"They had a shovel."

Aziz remembered taking off his uniform to cover her.

He had washed face, the face he had not recognized, with water from his canteen. With moistened lemon leaves he smoothed her to her shoulders. He went to a prone figure and took his possessions. Among them was a flask of olive oil. He rubbed her feet and softened the soles. He took the remnants of her dress, and a long shawl, and began to wrap her form in them, circling underneath and across her again with his eyes shut, going only by touch.

One of Antar's men who had gone ahead had fixed on Aziz.

The narrator is keen that Aziz and the reader know the truth at the same time. The purpose is to make the reader share with Aziz this horrible experience.

Keep going, Aziz silently ordered this straggler. Keep going. But still this man looked. Let me bury her. This man still looked. Another had turned to stare.

Aziz picked up the shovel and hurried to catch up (Adams 2004: 245).

Finally, the truth is revealed to Aziz and also to the reader. The narrator is keen that Aziz and the reader know the truth at the same time. The purpose is to make the reader share with Aziz this horrible experience. The effect is not only a psychological shock but also a strong disgust for the Irhabiya. This effect would not have been strong, had the reader known the truth before Aziz or right from the beginning. The way the truth is revealed is also significant. When Aziz's father says that Soumaya was killed by an Irhabi, his mother corrects him by saying Irhabiya, the plural form of Irhabi. This is to involve Aziz who was in fact a member of the Irhabiya group who

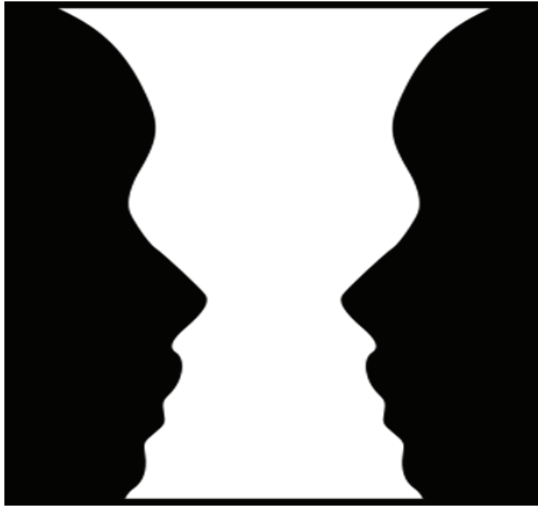
killed Soumaya; more significantly, Aziz was the one who buried her leaving the shovel in her grave, and this shovel is the sign by which Aziz later recognizes that the woman tortured is his fiancée. It is an effective way to stress the ugly image of the terrorists.

The distribution of the backstory of Soumaya shows that this story is the cornerstone of the novel. The sequencing of the backstory of Soumaya creates suspense, psychological shock and a strong disgust for the terrorists. Consequently, the order of discourse of *Harbor* is based on a shocking sequencing of its backstory. This rhetorical device helps to understand the ideological dominant discourse which is linked to the issue of terrorism, and even enhances the negative attitudes towards terrorists.

The third step in the critical analytical procedure is to evaluate the order of discourse on which *Harbor* is based. For this purpose, Stockwell's notions of figure/ground are

The distribution of the backstory of Soumaya shows that this story is the cornerstone of the novel. The sequencing of the backstory of Soumaya creates suspense, psychological shock and a strong disgust for the terrorists.

applied.



This image has two scenes; it can be seen as two human profiles facing each other and the background is white or as a white vase on a black background. What we perceive depends on what we bring to the fore.

In *Harbor*, the reader gets preoccupied with suspense as to the story of Soumaya in a way that this backstory becomes the figure of the novel. The alternative reading consists in turning the ground into the figure; in other words, it brings the backgrounded to the fore. In this respect, the reader is preoccupied with the horrifying story of Soumaya that he experiences, while a lot of misrepresentations are backgrounded within the discourse. In what follows these backgrounded misrepresentations are brought to the fore:

- Misrepresentations of Algerians:

The misrepresentation of Algerians recurs in the novel; for example, while swimming on his way to the harbor, Aziz was recalling some events in Algeria, one of them is how he got his suit. Adams says: **“He was. He ran. His jumpsuit, stolen by his father to match the uniforms of the crew, was sopping. Again the command went to his body: You are not cold.”** (Adams 2004: 5). It is a negative representation of the Algerian father. In fact, in this very difficult moment while Aziz is struggling and facing death, the idea could have simply been that the father was intelligent enough to obtain a uniform similar to those of the crew in order for his son not to be arrested. However, it is an opportunity to express this idea in this right moment in a way that it seems backgrounded rather than foregrounded in the stream of the discourse.

In Harbor, the reader gets preoccupied with suspense as to the story of Soumaya in a way that this backstory becomes the figure of the novel. The alternative reading consists in turning the ground into the figure; in other words, it brings the backgrounded to the fore.

In the novel, any person or event or system coming from Algeria is dangerous.

An alternative reading however, brings to the fore this detail and shows that it is a framing device. Another misrepresentation is related to Algerian parents who are happy to have sent their children to the United States because it is **“One less to feed”** (Adams 2004: 50). Another example shows that when Aziz was a child, he stole money from his father and hides it in the Qur’an (Adams 2004: 175). As a conclusion, Algerians are represented as careless and reckless.

- Misrepresentation of Algeria

The novel is composed of instances where the country of Algeria is misrepresented. When Aziz reaches the harbor of Boston, an Egyptian American family helps him, but when they discover he is an Algerian, they develop a negative attitude towards him. Adams says: **“It had been a miracle that he had heard Arabic soon. But it was to be his undoing. Because anyone who spoke Arabic knew what Algeria was.”** (Adams 2004: 18). It is the origin of mess, violence and terrorism **“[b]ecause the Algerians, they are very dangerous. They are crazy”** (Adams 2004:

18). Moreover, Americans who know Algeria just link it to the political conflict taking place there. Adams says:

Charlie knew Algeria. No one before Charlie knew Algeria. The first girlfriend waitress thought it was near Panama. The second one thought it was Nigeria. But Charlie, he knew the Groupe Islamique Armé, the Front Islamique de Salut, the Front de Libération Nationale (Admas 2004: 107).

How comes that the only American among the persons Aziz knows has this representation of Algeria in mind. Moreover, Charlie is a lawyer, a member of the American elite; therefore, the representation seems reliable. In the novel, any person or event or system coming from Algeria is dangerous. This misrepresentation of the country gives the FBI the right to put into question any Algerian who lives in the United States, and this is what

Misrepresentation of the Arabic and Islamic identity also implicates that Arabs and Muslims live in dilemma.

The more dangerous misrepresentation of Islam in this novel is when Algerians themselves are represented as people who develop a negative attitude towards Islam because of what they experience in their country.

happened at the end of the novel.

- Misrepresentation of Islam

The misrepresentation of Islam is the most recurrent in the novel because of the recurrence of the scenes of violence exercised by those who speak under the name of Islam. Adams says: **“Daily the press ministry printed Algerian newspapers that said the massacres – boys mutilated, mothers decapitated, bodies plowed in ditches – were the work of terrorists, the ruthless, fanatic, always increasingly desperate Groupe Islamique Armé”** (Adams 2004: 66). More horrible scenes are presented in detail in the novel; all of them are attributed to the Groupe Islamique. It is true that this is what happens in Algeria, but this representation of Muslims will be overgeneralized by readers who do not know that this Groupe Islamique is the minority among the Algerian Muslims.

The more dangerous misrepresentation

of Islam in this novel is when Algerians themselves are represented as people who develop a negative attitude towards Islam because of what they experience in their country. Rafik is one of them; Adams says: **““Believers”, Rafik said, “love death. I would rather wonder, my friend, than believe.”**” (Adams 2004: 71). If a Muslim thinks that all believers love death and love to kill, Islam will be connect to death and terror by all other people, especially the Westerners who consider themselves the first victims of terrorism. Adams says: **“They pulled him up. A bearded one clapped Aziz to his chest. Bearded: the sign of Islamists. They were *irhabiya*”** (Adams 2004: 118). Aziz, an Algerian, recognizes Irhabiya by one of the signs of Islam which is the beard; this gives an excuse for the westerners who classify bearded men, men with mustache and men wearing turbans into the class of terrorists.

Another misrepresentation of Islam is when the principles of Islam are mentioned at moments when the Irhabiya are exercising their terror on the innocent. Adams says:

The significance of the story of Soumaya stems from the fact that the order of discourse of this novel is based on the sequencing of this story.

Antar's men were also fasting – and Ahmad began his work ahead of them. He had no respect for those who kept the fast or for the *djeddat* who had delayed feasting to keep watch over the babies. He cut their throats, the *djeddat's*, one by one, so some saw their fate played more than one time” (Adams 2004: 159).

The fast is one of the cornerstones of Islam. It is sacred, but when the novel included scenes where the terrorists are fasting and killing people at the same time, and their victims are fasting too, a kind of disgust and doubt is developed by any reader Muslim or not Muslim as to the efficiency of the principles on which Islam is based.

With the huge amount of disgust for terrorists, the reader is unable to question these representations which are in fact misrepresentations because not all Algerians are reckless, and not all Muslims are terrorists.

- Misrepresentation of the Arabic and Islamic Identity:

Misrepresentations implicating ignorance, overgeneralization and misunderstanding by others are recurrent in the novel. In the following extract, Linda who is an FBI agent is speaking with Heather who is a friend of one of the Algerians:

“I think he has bombs in that storage unit,” Linda said with satisfaction. “I think he’s planning to blow up Boston.” “Because he’s Muslim,” Heather asked. “That’s ---” “He’s Arab, isn’t he?” “Yeah. He’s both. I mean, do you know the difference?” “Arab, Muslim--- however you slice it, trouble.” (Adams 2004: 2007).

Misrepresentation of the Arabic and Islamic identity also implicates that Arabs and Muslims live in dilemma. By the end of the novel Aziz is wondering: **“The French taught us to torture,” Aziz was telling Ghazi. “Now we do what our grandfathers died fighting to stop. The generals torture us for being terrorists. The terrorists kill us for not being terrorists. What are we?” (Adams**

2004: 277).

4. Conclusion

Harbor is based on an alteration between the immediate discourse when the main character Aziz is in Boston with his Algerian fellow and the backstory when Aziz is still in Algeria where he experienced horrible moments with the Algerian Army and then with the Groupe Islamique Armé. In spite of this alternation, what is foregrounded is the backstory and more specifically the story of Soumaya.

The significance of the story of Soumaya stems from the fact that the order of discourse of this novel is based on the sequencing of this story. Not only is the story of Soumaya divided into sequences in the chapters concerned with the backstory but also these sequences are interrupted by the chapters concerned with the immediate discourse. Furthermore, the first sequences of this story are mentioned in the first chapters concerned with the immediate discourse with important information missing, raising suspense. The effect of this sequencing is more than raising curiosity and suspense. In fact, when the reader realizes at the end of the novel that Aziz's memory of the woman tortured in front of him is but the memory of his fiancée, the woman chosen by his father and he has not met yet, he faces a psychological

shock and develops a strong feeling of disgust for the terrorists.

Consequently, *Harbor's* order of discourse is based on an influential framing device based on discourse sequencing which evokes in the reader a psychological shock because of the story of Soumaya and a great disgust for the Algerian terrorist groups. The reader is so overwhelmed by the story of Soumaya; in the first place, he is curious to know about Soumaya, and in the second place, he is preoccupied with the horrible surprising truth revealed by the shovel, the material proof which makes Aziz sure that the woman tortured in front of him before is Soumaya. While the reader is overwhelmed by this story, there is an opportunity to express a number of ideas which seem to be unimportant compared to the basic story. These ideas, however, embody a number of representations of the people, the country and Islam in Algeria. With the huge amount of disgust for terrorists, the reader is unable to question these representations which are in fact misrepresentations because not all Algerians are reckless, and not all Muslims are terrorists.

Notes

- **Awatef Boubakri** is an assistant of English at the University of Gabes

Awatef Boubakri : The representation of the Arabic and Islamic Identity in the 9/11 novel

Tunisia. I obtained my Master in Applied Linguistics from the Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis and my Doctorate of English in Linguistics from the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of Sfax. My research is centered on the application of linguistic insights to literature and focuses, for the moment, on the study of the 9/11 literary discourse from cognitive-linguistic perspective.

References

- Adams, L. (2004) *Harbor*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Boubakri, A. (2012). *The Discourse of the "9/11 Novel": When Stylistics, CDA and*
- Chomsky, N. (2006) *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research. In
- R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 121-
- Jackson, R. (2005) *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter Terrorism*.
- Montgomery, M. (2005) Discourse of war after 9/11. *Language and Literature*, 14: 149-180.
- Silberstein, S. (2004) *War of Words: Language, politics and 9/11*. London: Routledge.
- Stockwell, P. (2002) *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

