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Violence, Belief, and Viewpoint:

A Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Fictional Narratives relating to Radical Islam

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1. Introduction

Radical Islam in its various forms is now a major global force which has been partly shaped by its reaction to modern Western culture, while also simultaneously affecting it. Since 9/11, various popular American TV series, such as *24* (2001 to 2014) and *Homeland* (2011 to the present), and various novels and short stories have attempted to explore, understand, and evaluate the subject of Islamic extremism. Questions such as what motivates radical Muslims and what social, political, and theological elements have produced such extreme forms of belief have received a wide range of disparate answers.

Some of these answers may appear one-sided and simplistic, and could have the undesired effect of pushing non-Muslim and mainstream Muslim communities further apart, thereby increasing the attraction of radical Islam for some Muslims. Other explorations are deeper, more three-dimensional and balanced, and seem able to consider the issues from multiple perspectives. There is an important need to highlight these deeper, more balanced explorations, while questioning simplistic, one-sided explanations. However, how can we decide whether an exploration is, for example, balanced, or one-sided? How can we decide which fictional characters in a narrative and which moments in that narrative represent the worldview of the writer or author?

It is inevitable that opinions and feelings will sometimes differ when considering these issues. This article will therefore propose a framework of analysis that can be applied to fictional texts in order to identify and explore the view of the authors. The type of texts which will be the focus of this article will be the novel and the short story, and the aim will be to establish a framework of analysis and then apply it to three popular fictional works that explore some level of interaction between radical Islam and American society: Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), John Updike's *Terrorist* (2007), and Martin

Amis's *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta* (2008). The proposed framework will draw on *cognitive poetics*, a framework for analysing narration, viewpoint, and the construction of fictional worlds, while also drawing on research into the notion of empathy. My investigation will also be underpinned by some of the key presuppositions of *critical discourse analysis* (referred to as CDA).

Traditionally, CDA has focused on the capitalist discourse of the West (Fairclough 2006), while branching out into areas such as the discourse of the media, advertisement, politics, education, and mental health care (Clark 1992; Machin and Mayr 2012; Mehan 2006; Richardson 2006; Rodgers 2011). CDA is principally interested in how our knowledge relating to particular individuals and groups can be manipulated by the way authors represent them in texts (Van Dijk 2014), in addition to how this manipulation can be viewed as a form of social power (Fairclough 2014). It is the argument of this article that popular novels and short stories are examples of a form of social power in that the authors can use fictional narratives to manipulate the way we understand and evaluate a particular individual or group. My decision to focus on these types of texts comes from the observation that fictional narratives have a special power to be able to say things and explore situations in a way that non-fictional texts cannot. This is because the author is often able to hide behind his or her characters, and it is sometimes very difficult to establish where the ideology of a particular character ends and the ideology of the author begins. Novels and short stories are also able to create situations and narratives that can promote strong feelings of empathy with one character, while distancing the reader from another character.

A text can be analysed in a number of different ways in order to examine how knowledge is represented. For example, two common types of analysis that have been applied to texts related to religious belief include an examination of agency patterns and the usage of metaphor (Charteris-Black 2004; Richardson 2012). This article will not focus on these types of analysis, but will instead draw on a combination of empathy research and *cognitive poetics*, a framework of analysis that has been specifically designed to examine fictional narratives (Stockwell 2002; Gavins 2007). I will draw on cognitive poetics in order to explore how the worldview of the author can be tracked through examining how he or she constructs the fictional world within their text, chooses how the reader views that world, and assigns ideologies to the various characters within it. It also allows us to examine how the impact of those ideologies on the reader of a fictional text can be manipulated by the author's use of *deictic viewpoints* (for example, different types of first

or third person viewpoints) and the cultivation of empathy in the reader.

The idea of deictic viewpoints has been developed from the notion of *deixis*, which can be defined as the act of someone pointing to something in discourse (Birner 2013: 114), or, as Langacker (2008: 277) puts it, “identifying referents” relative to the context of the discourse. Some words are inherently deictic, for example: definite articles, demonstratives and personal pronouns. It is also important from the outset to provide a definition of ideology. For the purposes of this article, I will adopt a broad definition that views it as the assumptions, conceptualisations and ideas that form the basis of the way we view and represent others (Goatly 2007; Van Dijk 2001, 1998). This includes viewing ideology as not just an idea that is imposed on particular aspects of our knowledge, but also as a specific narrowing of our knowledge in order to foreground certain aspects and background others (Goatly 2007; Lakoff 1987). An example of this, as I shall argue below, would be Amis’s reduction of Muhammad Atta’s motivations and worldview to the domain of psychological dysfunction.

I will introduce the three texts in section 2 below, followed by an introduction in section 3 to *deictic shift theory*, a key component of cognitive poetics which provides a method for tracking the movement between viewpoints in a text. In section 4, I will outline my methodology for combining the analysis of deictic viewpoints with an exploration of how the author constructs his or her fictional world, in addition to how the author manipulates the reader’s access to that world and the level of empathy for particular characters within it. Section 5 will be devoted to applying my framework to an analysis of the three texts, and section 6 will discuss the conclusions of that analysis in terms of the potential in those texts for a deep understanding of radical Islam that considers multiple perspectives.

2. An Introduction to the Texts

Before I introduce the texts, I first wish to discuss my decision to focus on two novels and a short story. Novels and short stories are clearly very different types of texts, and therefore it is reasonable to argue that they should not be analysed together. However, this article restricts itself to the aim of qualitatively (rather than quantitatively) analysing deictic viewpoints in fictional narratives and arguing for particular alignments between the way characters are viewed, their ideologies, and the ideology of the author. The primary focus here is on the critical discourse analytic presupposition that texts, regardless of their

size, require choices, and those choices reflect a particular way of seeing things. In terms of this very restricted aim, I am, for example, very interested in the choices made by Martin Amis to represent radical Islam through a compressed short story that essentially follows only one character and repeatedly focuses on the theme of psychological dysfunction. It is of course possible to argue that an author's ideology is often invisible or absent in fictional texts, and that these choices are primarily literary or stylistic choices. In that case, analysing a novel next to a short story would be unfair and inappropriate. It is therefore sometimes possible and perhaps inevitable for there to be quite serious disagreements between the structure, starting points and conclusions of an analysis that is based within a CDA framework and one that is based on literary theory. It is outside the purview of this article to attempt a detailed exploration of the presuppositions of CDA, cognitive poetics (and cognitive linguistics in general), and the various schools of thought within modern literary theory. However, it is important to emphasise that the "endgame" of this article is constructing an argument about the worldview of the three authors through the choices they have made. With these points in mind, I will now turn to a brief introduction of each text.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid tells the story of an unnamed Pakistani man who engages an American in conversation on the streets of Lahore. He invites the American to a teashop and begins to tell him about his life in America, involving his study of business at Princeton University, his job at a prestigious evaluation company after graduation, his relationship with an American girl called Erica, and the subsequent breakdown of that relationship and his disillusionment with the US. The novel ends with the revelation that the American is actually a CIA agent who has been tasked to kill the Pakistani for his inflammatory remarks to the media condemning America's actions. The Pakistani man has known this all along and is in fact luring the agent to his death, justified through self-defence. The novel has three distinctive features: firstly, the entire text is framed within a first person narrative addressing the nameless CIA agent with the second person personal pronoun while avoiding any direct speech responses from the agent. Secondly, the ideological perspective of the main character is, by the end of the novel, very critical of American foreign policy and yet he is consistently portrayed in a manner that is designed to induce empathy and identification. The third feature is the absence of the Quran and the notion of religious faith from the main character's discourse.

The Last Days of Muhammad Atta is a short story that has been published as part of a collection of essays and short stories by Martin Amis entitled *The Second Plane* related

to the theme of the September 11th terrorist attack on America. It consists of a fictional reconstruction of the last day of the leader of the teams which hijacked the four planes involved in 911. It is a third person narrative yet closely tied to a fictional representation of Muhammad Atta's internal dialogue, perspective and motivations. I argue in the analysis below that there is no attempt to create any empathic connection with the main character and the key themes throughout are Muhammad's all-encompassing hatred, his obsessive compulsiveness, his zombie-like mentality and his lack of genuine religious or political principles.

The third text, *Terrorist* by John Updike, follows the life of a number of characters which include Ahmad, a young Muslim, who at the start of the story is about to graduate from high school, and Jack, the school's guidance counsellor. Ahmad is slowly guided by his Imam towards playing the role of a suicide bomber in a plot to collapse the Lincoln tunnel at rush hour. Jack gradually gets to know the youth and his mother, eventually realising the full extent of Ahmad's Islamic faith and successfully persuading him at the last minute not to go through with the plan. I argue below that the novel differs from the preceding two texts in that it both critiques and builds empathy for Ahmad's Islamic perspective as well as Jack's mainstream American worldview. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta* seem to represent perspectives on radical Islam that belong to two opposite poles, while *Terrorist* seems to represent a perspective that could be located somewhere between the two.

Having introduced the texts that this article will focus on, I will now introduce the framework that will be used to analyse those texts, beginning with *deictic shift theory* and an explanation of the terms that relate to it.

3. An Introduction to Deictic Shift Theory

Deictic shift theory (DST) attempts to map how a reader is drawn into a literary text and directed by the author to adopt a range of deictic viewpoints within the mentally constructed world of that text (Stockwell 2002: 46). In section 4 below, I will discuss the relation between ideological persuasion and DST, but it is first necessary to define certain terms that will be used throughout this article.

Projection: This term is used to denote this process of a reader being drawn into a *text world* (Gavins 2007: 46). It is a cognitive process that occurs in the minds of readers as they work through a text and involves the construction of a framework of facts, extrapola-

tions and evaluations, although it seems to be particularly powerful in fictional narratives (Gavins 2007: 10; Keen 2007: 25).

Text Worlds: This term refers to the mental representation that a reader constructs as he or she is projected into a text (Gavins 2007: 10). This mental representation consists of a fusion between particular perceptions, beliefs, cultural knowledge, memories, imaginations and ideologies of both the author and the reader (Stockwell 2002: 136).

Text World Repair: Text world repair occurs when a reader constructs an initial text world, but later discovers through further reading that his or her text world is incorrect. The consequent adjustments and restructuring of the text world by the reader is referred to as text world repair (Gavins 2007: 141-142). Authors can often deliberately mislead readers in order to create certain literary effects.

Perceptual Deixis: A key concept in deixis is the notion of the “origo” - the “zero-point”, the “egocentric centre” or the “I” in personal deixis from which the text world is mapped out (Green 2008: 127; Levinson 1983: 68). As we read a text, we are positioned by various *deictic viewpoints* which serve the purpose of *projecting* us into the text world of the narrative (Gavins 2007: 46; Segal 1995: 14-15). Deictic shift theory identifies those choices a writer makes in terms of person, time, and space, and then maps the shifts that occur as the narrative progresses and the effects these shifts can have on the reader and the reading (Stockwell 2002: 46-49).

Popping and Pushing: There are several deictic viewpoints that an author can choose, ranging from *extra fictional voice* to *first person*. The most complex to distinguish are *extra fictional voice* and *narrator’s voice*. The former voice can be defined as the author expressing an idea about the real world within the fictional narrative (Stockwell 2002: 42), for example, “...they lived in a time when a conversation about sexual difficulties was plainly impossible. *But it is never easy.*” (McEwan 2008: 3 - my italics). This voice is unbound by the temporal and narrative restrictions of the text world, as if, for a moment, the author is reaching out of his or her normal self-imposed parameters. In contrast, the narrator’s voice is integrated fully into the text’s temporal and narrative boundaries. Shifts in perceptual deixis can be described in terms of *popping* out of or *pushing* down into a deeper level (Stockwell 2002: 47-48).

Having defined deictic shift theory and explained the key technical terms involved, I will now move on to an outline of my methodology for studying the texts.

4. Methodology

Each of the following three subsections will begin with a discussion and proceed to a statement of the method that will be used to analyse the three texts in order to address one of the following three questions: *What ideologies are present in each of the texts?* *Within the texts, how does perceptual deixis contribute to ideological persuasion?* *How is empathy used to close the distance between the reader and specific characters?* I will begin below with the first question.

4.1 The Ideology of the Characters and the Ideology of the Author

In order to uncover the ideology of an author, we must first map which ideologies are assigned to which characters and how the author presents them. One presupposition here is that the accomplished author is on some level aware of the powerful relationship between a reader's level of projection into a text and the thoughts and actions of characters within that text, as well as between a reader's level of empathy for a character or a group, and his or her acceptance of that character's or group's ideological perspective. I also presuppose that the author will inject his or her own ideological perspective into the text (consciously or subconsciously, or a combination of the two) through the characters, while also evaluating that perspective positively or assuming its validity. In addition, ideological perspectives that the author disagrees with will be negatively represented and evaluated through various characters and events in the text.

A key consideration in the analysis of ideologies in narrative is the concept of *viewpoint trajectories* and *static viewpoints*. The difference between the two is that static viewpoints do not develop as the narrative progresses, whereas a character's viewpoint that evolves in response to encountering certain events or counter-ideologies is defined as a viewpoint trajectory. My argument is that for the purposes of establishing the ideological viewpoint of the author the *final* point of the trajectory is often crucial, while establishing those ideologies that the author disagrees with, the *starting* point is often crucial.

I will therefore examine which ideologies have been assigned to which characters, the relationship between characters with differing ideologies, and make the first step towards an examination of the relationship between the ideologies represented by the characters and the extrapolated ideology of the author. These will then be consolidated in the later sections covering perceptual deixis and empathy.

4.2 Perceptual Deixis and Ideological Persuasion

Within a novel or short story, deictic viewpoints can become the foundational tools of ideological persuasion or the *schematic restructuring* of a reader's knowledge (Stockwell 2002: 79-80). In terms of the possibility of a shift in a reader's opinion on a particular topic, the manipulation of perceptual deixis should not be underestimated. Segal (1995: 15) argues that once a reader has been positioned within a text world through the author's choice of deictic viewpoint, he or she then tends to interpret the text from that perspective. This argument, while leaving room for resistant readings and disagreement, suggests that some readers can be more tolerant of controversial ideas presented in fictional texts.

The *Reluctant Fundamentalist* has become a bestseller among Western readers in both America and England and has also been made into a movie despite the fact that the main character smiles as he watches the collapse of the World Trade Centre (Hamid 2007: 83). There is no comparable non-fiction text expressing happiness at the sight of the twin towers collapsing that has enjoyed this level of commercial success and popularity among Western readers. One reason for this could be that if we are successfully projected into a fictional text, we interpret events from the perspective of specific characters or a narrator, which may temporarily relax (although never completely remove) the triggering mechanism for resistant reading.

An important part of this article will involve the difference between participant-accessible and enactor-accessible texts and the way that difference can be manipulated. Third person fictional texts usually exhibit some form of narrator omniscience and consequently seek to establish an intimate and trusting relationship between the reader and the narrator based on the powerful access the reader perceives he or she has to the text world (Gavins 2007: 129). This lulls the reader into subconsciously approaching the text as if it were *participant-accessible*, or as if it were a reality that can be checked and verified by the reader, resulting in the information it provides being perceived as equally reliable and trustworthy as information in a non-fiction text (Gavins 2007: 130).

Gavins (2007: 131) goes on to argue that an author is able to achieve “disturbing ontological and epistemological sleights-of-hand” by manipulating our reading practices at a subconscious level. However, such manipulations can only be successful if the reader is “tricked” into the assumption that he or she is located within a participant-accessible text world, even though a fictional narrative is in reality only able to offer an *enactor-accessible* modal world that mirrors the ideology and perspective of the author (Gavins 2007: 131). What Gavins appears to mean by an enactor-accessible modal world is firstly a text world

where the reader is only allowed to access what the author chooses to reveal, and secondly, what the author reveals cannot be checked by the reader (Gavins 2007: 130).

Writers often deictically position the reader behind the perceptual viewpoints of narrators and characters which the writer supports. This is because of the higher possibility of a connection being established between narrative and ideological projection through familiarity. The aim of this projection and deictic manipulation is either *identification*, the merging of the character's model of reality with the model of reality of the reader, or its counterpart *otherisation* or *othering*, the increasing of the distance between the reader and character (Holliday et al 2004: 49; Jandt 2013: 22).

In order to explore this notion of identification in more detail, it is necessary to examine how empathy can be cultivated through language. I will therefore proceed to a discussion of empathy and the manipulating of the distance between the reader and a fictional character below.

4.3 Empathy and Reader-Character Distance

An author can use empathy and otherisation or othering to manipulate the emotional distance between a reader and a character. We have already seen how perceptual deixis can be used to close the distance between reader and character, but it cannot be successful without being combined with events, thoughts, and actions that arouse empathy. In our everyday experience, empathy is normally aroused through direct observation of the suffering of others. However, when a text refers to the suffering of others and potentially replaces this unmediated source of empathy arousal with an indirect, mediated source, we can refer to it as *mediated association* through language (Hoffman 2000: 49).

For the purposes of this article, empathy will be defined within the context of a fictional text world as the reader feeling what a character "feels", or, to put it in another way, an experience of "emotional attunement" and understanding (Cameron 2013: 6). This sense of attunement will also be viewed as the first step towards a more complex *empathic concern* in which a reader experiences a supportive emotion about a character's feelings and situation (Keen 2007: 5; Hoffman 2000: 88). Keen (2007: 68, 70) views "character identification" as lying "at the heart" of both processes and suggests the possibility of a cycle whereby empathy invites identification and vice versa. Hoffman (2000: 30; see also Goldie 2007: 71) also adds the dimension of context to his definition of empathy, "An empathic response ... is the involvement of psychological processes that make a person have feelings that are more congruent with another's situation than with his own situation".

If an author can therefore draw a reader into identifying with the feelings of a character, then he or she has made a crucial first step towards the possibility of drawing the reader into the ideology of that character. This would depend on the existence of strong cognitive connections between emotions and thoughts, which is exactly what we see when scholars in the field refer to notions such as “cogmotions” (Keen 2007: 27) and researchers argue for both affective and cognitive components in the experience of empathy (Cameron 2013: 6; Hoffman 2000: 87). Hoffman (2000: 221–249) even goes so far as to argue for the bonding of empathy and moral principles as a result of specific situations and the possibility of empathy causing a shift in those principles.

However, in terms of ideological persuasion, empathy does seem to have a natural bias built into it: we are far more likely to empathise with individuals in our own communities than with individuals outside of them (Gaertner et al 2013: 530; Hoffman 2000: 24). This is good news for Western texts seeking to otherise radical Islam, but bad news for those that intend the opposite. It is precisely at this point that the genre of the novel or short story comes into its own as a possible “triggering event” (Hoffman 2000: 19) that can overcome empathy’s natural bias. Fictional narratives will usually contain more opportunities for empathy than a non-fictional text on the same topic because of its emphasis on characters over information.

If researchers are correct about the effects of manipulating empathy, then this suggests that a novel or short story could be a more persuasive tool than a non-fiction text. One of the crucial elements here is the possibility of producing some sense of personal or even intimate *familiarity*, which studies have shown can cultivate empathy for individuals belonging to other groups or communities (Tausch and Hewstone 2013: 548). This is something that a fictional text containing “bridge building characters” (Keen 2007: 34) may be ideally suited to develop to a unique degree. Based on her analysis of readers’ experiences of fictional narratives, Keen (2007: 70) argues that, “spontaneous empathy for a fictional character’s feelings opens the way for character identification ... even in the face of strong differences”.

In the analysis section below I will therefore examine how empathy is used in the texts to decrease the ideological distance between the reader and specific characters, while also remaining aware that the deliberate scarcity of empathic triggers in the text could point to a deliberate motive of otherisation on the part of the author. This will be combined with my intention to examine how perceptual deixis contributes to ideological persuasion by identifying which deictic viewpoints are used in each text.

5. Analysis

This section will apply the methodology outlined in the previous section in an analysis of the three texts under consideration. The subsections will follow the topic areas of ideology, perceptual deixis and empathy set out in section 4 above.

5.1 An Analysis of the Ideology of the Characters and the Author

The Reluctant Fundamentalist explicitly presents two ideologies: capitalist and radical Muslim, although the term radical Muslim is significantly redefined. We are only given access to the radical Muslim ideology through the nameless main character who is never portrayed reading the Quran, quoting or referring to it, or observing the call to prayer. The reason why I still want to retain the term *Muslim* is because of his expressed solidarity with communities in Muslim countries. The main character refers to his consternation at the disappearance or kidnapping of “Muslim men” from their homes (Hamid 2007: 107) and refers to Afghanistan as “Pakistan’s neighbor, our friend, and a *fellow Muslim* nation besides” (2007: 113, my italics) and “trembles with fury” (2007: 114) when he hears of the US invasion. Such references seem to suggest a sense of shared cultural identity with Islam and a desire to defend it.

I wish to retain the term *radical* for two reasons: firstly, the main character expresses happiness when he hears about 9/11 (Hamid 2007: 83) and secondly, he plans an act of violence against an American CIA agent (2007: 206). I am aware that radical Islamic ideology is normally defined as a form of Islam that embraces violence in order to overthrow existing governments and impose *sharia law* (Lav 2012). However, as I shall argue below, it is possible that, for Hamid, the main character is a symbol of mainstream Muslims that have been radicalised (or reluctantly become fundamentalists) as a result of American foreign policy and prejudice. This would mean that the point Hamid may be trying to make is that we should not define Islamic fundamentalism primarily in theological terms, but in political and sociological terms. For the purposes of this article, my definition of radical Islam will therefore be broader than the usual definition.

An ideology revolving around the embrace of capitalism and materialism is represented mainly through three characters: his boss at the valuation firm, his girlfriend Erica, and the CIA assassin. In terms of viewpoint trajectories, the main character starts out as a starry eyed participant within the capitalist paradigm. However, he gradually develops hostility towards this position in response to his deteriorating relationship with Erica and

America's foreign policy decisions which result in the provocation of Muslims. This culminates in the main character's statement at the end of the novel, "... no country inflicts death so readily upon the inhabitants of other countries, frightens so many people so far away, as America" (Hamid 2007: 207). A range of more subtle negative evaluation and symbolism leads up to this conclusion.

One example of this is the description of the CIA assassin's face as being "mostly in shadow" (2007: 87). This takes on fresh significance when we consider my argument below that the CIA assassin represents the dark side of what it is to be Western. This is confirmed by a second example of thinly veiled symbolism in the "prescient" words of the main character's friend as they embark on their new careers in the American valuation firm, "Beware the dark side, young Skywalker" (2007: 43). A second example is the far more subtle symbolism attached to the main character's explanation in the first few pages of the novel. He guesses that the CIA assassin was American through his "bearing" (Hamid 2007: 2) - it is possible that the reason why the assassin is portrayed as being offended by this remark becomes clearer as the main character develops his thread of America's arrogance and international interference (2007: 113, 177, 190-191, 207).

Erica also has a crucial role in the viewpoint trajectory. The portrayal of their relationship as going well during the early period when the main character is attempting to integrate himself into American culture, and then its gradual disintegration along with the main character's disillusionment with America could be seen as a symbolic narrative representing the increasingly strained relationship between Americans in general and Muslim communities. This symbolism is further reinforced by the similarity in pronunciation between the words *Erica* and *America*.

This viewpoint trajectory is also marked by some interesting adjectives attributed to the US government and its policies, facilities and military forces focusing on notions of explicit power, invisible menace, and the cultivation of hatred. If we adhere to the rule I outlined above that the end of a viewpoint trajectory is more likely to, in some way, reflect the worldview of the author and my argument that Hamid wishes to portray Islam as a victim of the West, then the progression of the adjectives (placed in italics) in the list below may become more informative:

The *mighty* host I had expected from your country was duly raised and dispatched.
(Hamid 2007: 106)

Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into *shadowy* detention centres or worse. (2007: 107)

All America would have to do would be to inform India that an attack on Pakistan would be treated as an attack on any American ally and would be responded to by the *overwhelming* force of America's military. (2007: 163)

Your country's *constant* interference in the affairs of others was *insufferable*. (2007: 177)

An important point to note here is that I am not arguing for a simple one-to-one relationship between the end of the viewpoint trajectory and the author's viewpoint. It is possible that Hamid perceives himself to be correcting an overly positive image of America in American popular culture by focusing in on and exaggerating these negative evaluations. It is also possible that he is making the point that this is how many *other* people view America (but not him) and that readers need to be made aware of how these other people think. The point that I am trying to make is that if we consider the passages and language that I have referred to, it is reasonable to argue that the endpoint of the novel's viewpoint trajectory *in some way* reflects the worldview of the author in terms of Islam being a victim of American foreign policy. However, it is important to note that I am aware that it is impossible to definitively prove this argument. Even if we were to look for a record of Hamid's viewpoints expressed in interviews or non-fictional works, there would still be no guarantee that he wasn't using a fictional narrative to convey ideas that he would be uncomfortable making in a non-fictional context.

In contrast to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Amis's *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta* only explicitly presents one ideology with no trajectory: the radical Islamic worldview of Muhammad Atta and his team. However, an interesting qualification here is the significant difference between the underlying motivations of Muhammad Atta and the rest of his group. While his team is described as very much committed to their daily spiritual devotions (Amis 2008: 100), Muhammad Atta is portrayed in a very different way (2008: 100-102):

But Muhammad Atta wasn't like the others ... Muhammad Atta was not religious; he was not even especially political. He allied himself with the militants because jihad was, by many magnitudes, the most charismatic idea of his generation. To unite

ferocity and rectitude in a single word; nothing could compare with that. He played along with it, and did the things that impressed his peers; he collected quotations, citations, charities, pilgrimages, conspiracy theories, and so on, as other people collected autographs or beer mats. And it suited his character. If you took away all the rubbish about faith, then fundamentalism suited his character, and with an almost sinister precision ... he was an apostate: that's what he was. He didn't expect paradise. What he expected was oblivion.

In a manner similar to the portrayal of the main character in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the theological dimension is stripped away. What is very different about these two main characters is that the nameless main character of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is portrayed very much within a political and sociocultural frame of reference (for example: family, nation, cultural identity, and US foreign policy) while Muhammad Atta is depicted primarily within a psychological frame. The nameless character is led to a radical Islamic ideology through external social and political events, while Muhammad Atta is portrayed as being attracted to it through a combination of psychosis and obsessive compulsion. Again, because of the de-theologising of the character, I am tempted to search for another term for Muhammad Atta's ideology rather than radical Islamic, but it would be strange to attribute an alternative term to a man who in reality most would consider the prototype of the radical Muslim. The point is also stressed that it was precisely because of this psychological state that Muhammad Atta was selected by the higher echelons to be the team leader (Amis 2008: 98):

Muhammad Atta knew that the first thing he would be asked was whether he was prepared to die. But the Sheikh was smiling, almost with eyes of love, when he said it. "The question isn't necessary," he began. "I see the answer in your face."

There is a key difference here with Hamid's intention in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* to argue that radical Islam is not primarily an *other world* entity, but a victim's ideology forced into existence through the need for survival and self defence against the social and political pressure of post-911 U.S. foreign and domestic policy. Amis appears to argue strongly for an almost opposite viewpoint. While agreeing that radical Islam is not primarily an *other world* entity, he attempts to maintain that the ideology exists through a psychological dysfunction which is compatible with and even reinforced by the belief

system. However, there is some evidence for the idea that American foreign policy has acted as something of a catalyst in that formative process in the following two extracts: “How can you laugh when people are dying in Palestine?” (2008: 102) and, “Power was always a monster. And there had never been a monster the size of America.” (2008: 110). Despite this, Amis predominantly portrays the people of America as helpless victims of Muhammad Atta, a team leader pathologically obsessed with death (2008: 122).

One possible indicator of Amis’s own perspective in relation to radical Islam is found in his reconstruction of Muhammad’s last moments. He leaves out any theological reference and instead portrays his character as failing to experience the joy of killing that he expected and realising too late the value of life (2008: 124). This portrayal of one of the most well known radical Islamic terrorists spending his last few seconds in Western-style regret and “helpless grief” (2008: 124) seems to tell us a lot about Amis’s determination to divorce religion from radical Islam. Once again, his view appears to be that radical Islamic ideology is rooted in psychological dysfunction, not religious fervour.

In contrast to the two texts considered above, Updike’s *Terrorist* does not attempt to de-theologise the radical Islamic perspective. In this novel, the Western capitalist and radical Islamic ideologies are again both represented and predictably arranged in mutual conflict throughout the narrative, but in this case texts from the Quran and their interpretation are also placed at the centre of Ahmad’s worldview. A quote from the Old Testament (Jonah 4: 3-4) introduces the narrative, the first of numerous expositions of texts from the Quran (Surah 104) is given as early as page six (Updike 2007: 6-7), references to Christianity and Judaism are also frequent, and on one occasion Ahmad attends a Christian service (2007: 49-66).

However, one of the most interesting elements of *Terrorist* is its nuanced approach to capitalism. Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* focuses on profit and consumerism in his representation of a ruthless “fundamentalist” capitalism devoid of both international compassion and a concern for consequences, but Updike emphasises instead an almost post-ideological pathetic lethargy. He portrays it as a kind of decay of the human spirit in an environment where it gets everything it wants and yet feels exhausted and disillusioned, drowning in relativism and disconnectedness, no longer seeing the point in trying to improve or change.

Beth Levy’s weight problem appears to be a symbol of both a lifestyle that damages because it is too comfortable and the perceived burden of a person on other people and the environment. On her days off she sits in her favourite La-Z-Boy chair watching cable TV

with its numerous channels and high quality picture while eating oatmeal raisin cookies, warning herself that, “she doesn’t want to make her life any physically easier for herself than it already is; she needs every *pitiful* ounce of exercise she gets.” (Updike 2007: 120–121, my italics). When the phone rings, she has to “extricate” herself out of the chair (2007: 120), when she gets out of bed, she “*relieves* the mattress of her weight” (2007: 29, my italics). Even when she goes to the toilet we are given a sense of her environment protesting her presence, “her ablutions cause water to murmur and tremble in pipes throughout the house.” (2007: 29). Her reflections on her marriage with Jack lead to the statement of fact conclusion that, “There’s a level, she knows, at which he wouldn’t mind if she were dead. It would be two hundred and forty pounds less on his shoulders.” (2007: 122). Both she and Jack share the deep disappointment that their son, for a reason they cannot figure out, doesn’t want them to live nearby and doesn’t love them as much as they love him (2007: 33). This state of affairs is tied to religion through the internal dialogue of Jack (2007: 30–31):

Religion meant nothing to him, and as they merged into a married entity it meant less and less to her. Now he wonders if he had deprived her of something, however grotesque, and if her constant chatter and her overeating weren’t compensatory. Being married to a stiff-necked Jew couldn’t be easy.

There is the possibility of Jack and Beth’s marriage, in the form of a nominal Christian marrying a secular Jew, representing a type of post-religious modern American society outside the Bible Belt. The fact that such a society is in the forefront of Updike’s mind is demonstrated by its placement in the mind of Ahmad on the first page of the novel, “The teachers, weak Christians and non-observant Jews, make a show of teaching virtue and righteous self-restraint, but their shifty eyes and hollow voices betray their lack of belief” (2007: 3). This disillusionment with religion seems to be inextricably tied to the breakdown of the family and moral values and the obsession with technology of modern society’s youth, along with a feeling of uselessness, pointlessness, existential fatigue and disconnectedness. Just after Jack’s ruminations on their loss of religion (2007: 30–31) and their son’s love (2007: 33) and his preparations to carry “his fatigue through a long and tightly scheduled day” (2007: 29), he makes the following observation about his high school (2007: 34):

When the palatial building was erected eighty years ago, no separate space set aside for guidance was thought necessary: guidance was everywhere, loving parents innermost and a moralistic popular culture outermost, with lots of advice between. A child was fed more guidance than he could easily digest. Now, routinely, Jack Levy interviews children who seem to have no flesh-and-blood parents - whose instructions from the world are entirely imparted by electronic ghosts signaling across a crowded room, or rapping through black foam earplugs, or encoded in the intricate programming of action figures twitching their spasmodic way through the explosion-producing algorithms of a video game. Students present themselves to their counselor like a succession of CDs whose shimmering surface gives no clue to their contents without the equipment to play them.

These observations lead straight into Jack's first encounter with Ahmad during a careers interview on that "*wearily* long morning" (2007: 34 - my italics). A stark contrast is then developed between Jack's weariness and Ahmad's tunnel vision. What Updike appears to be doing is critiquing the ideological premise of his own social setting to the point where it is possible to empathise with Ahmad's radical reaction to it. He seems to be playing on the common fear of losing the existential anchor that a strong ideology and social identity can provide, resulting in the onset of pointlessness and uselessness. He also seems to be arguing that the more affluent and comfortable our lifestyle, the more vulnerable we are to this fear (cf. 2007: 205).

It appears that Hamid and Amis have produced texts that could be viewed as relatively transparent in their aims, but Updike's text is far harder to decipher because of its oscillation between competing worldviews. There is, however, one rubicon that is never crossed: at the end of the novel, even though Ahmad is forced to acknowledge some level of relativism and ultimately is unable to go through with the bombing, there is no reciprocal temptation that lures Jack from his position. At no point is Jack or Beth tempted to accept a fundamentalist point of view, despite the fact that they are both painfully aware of the negative side of their own existence. This impossibility of envisaging an ideological shift away from relativism, his seemingly contradictory lament of the loss of religion and morality, and his serious attempt at empathy for the radical Islamic viewpoint suggests that Updike himself may not believe in the possibility of any absolute religious truth, while recognising the very real existential challenge that presents. This leads to his ability to at some level empathise with the two competing perspectives he explores.

I will now move on to an analysis of how the three authors position the reader's narrative viewpoint throughout their texts and the implications of their choices and the possible intentions underpinning them.

5.2 An Analysis of Perceptual Deixis and Ideological Persuasion

In *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta* the most prominent viewpoint is *third person with access to the character's* (Muhammad's) *internal thoughts* (cf. Leech and Short 2007: 140). We frequently encounter Muhammad's mental processes, for example when he internally evaluates a journey as "dead time" (Amis 2008: 103). There are also rare moments of a narrator's voice and what appears to be an extra fictional voice. When the short story refers to the increase in boredom produced by increased airport checks as a result of terrorism (Amis 2008: 108), the observation is disconnected from any character's observation, and therefore becomes a narrator's voice. However, the statement, "There are many accounts, uniformly incomplete, of what it is like to die slowly" (Amis 2008: 123) points us outside the text world towards a participant accessible-claim, which appears to be a pop out to an extra fictional voice.

What is interesting about Amis's choice to focus almost entirely on Muhammad Atta is the lack of opportunities provided for empathising with the character. I discussed above the tendency for some authors to deictically focus the reader most of the time on those characters with ideologies he or she supports. Amis clearly does not adhere to this, and wishes us to focus the majority of our attention on a character and a worldview that is portrayed as negatively as possible. Is there a strategy here? It seems that Amis intends to challenge the idea that faith in the Quran and Allah always lies at the heart of radical Islam. While acknowledging that some radical Muslims may be theologically motivated by alluding to the devotions of other members of his team, for example, "... the others would produce their personal copy and nod and sway and mutter over it for hour after hour." (Amis 2008: 100), this is not portrayed as the core motivation at the centre of the team.

Within the narrative, there are cryptic allusions to such a motivation (2008: 101, 117), which is revealed at the end of the short story, "The core reason was of course all the killing - all the putting to death ... he didn't believe in the Devil, as an active force, but he did believe in death." (2008: 122). Amis's strategy is to deictically focus the reader on an ideological viewpoint constructed from faithless nihilism, psychosis, hatred of life and the living, and love of death, which he sees as representing the radical Islam of Muhammad

Atta.

Amis could have perhaps made his point more forcibly through the use of a first person viewpoint, but his consistent negative portrayal of Muhammad Atta suggests Amis's distaste for his main character, and therefore perhaps a desire to avoid the increased intimacy of the first person. It may also have taken away from the subconscious effect of lulling the reader into the illusion of a participant-accessible text. Amis has chosen a predominantly third person deictic viewpoint while developing a story around a non-fictional character. If we therefore combine Gavin's theory of third person fictional texts having the capability to lull the reader into believing he or she is within a participant-accessible text (Gavins 2007: 130) with the fact that the characters and events of Amis's story are derived from real people and events, then we could argue that Amis's text has powerful properties in terms of subconsciously winning the trust and belief of the reader.

It is also important to discuss at this point the possibility that Amis is not aiming here to reconstruct his idea of Muhammad Atta's real personality and attitudes. It is possible that Amis's Muhammad Atta is instead intended purely as a metaphor for radical Islam, or as a fictional representative figure inspired by a real person. One argument against this is the factual details that have been included, such as Atta's stay in Portland, Maine (Amis 2008: 95), his Colgan Air 5930 flight to Logan in Boston (Amis 2008: 98), the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System (CAPPS) that he underwent (Amis 2008: 108), and his phone call from Logan airport (Amis 2008: 114). Amis's Muhammad Atta is also portrayed in great detail, especially for a short story, with a lot of that detail focused on the mundane, such as his view of shaving (Amis 2008: 97) or his views on specific individuals in his team (Amis 2008: 114). It is of course impossible to conclusively establish that Amis's Atta is intended to be his approximation of the real Muhammad Atta. It also must be granted that Amis's narrative is full of details that obviously nobody could know, such as Atta's inner thoughts, so at best the reconstruction can only be referred to as an approximation. However, the most important point is that it is reasonable to argue, given the detail, that Amis must be aware that some of his readers will assume that he is trying to portray the real Atta, and they could therefore be more likely to view the story as a participant-accessible text.

Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* stands in stark contrast to Amis's viewpoint choices and his negativity towards and distaste for his main character. It is first of all interesting to note that the short biography of the author included with the book informs us that Mohsin Hamid is from Lahore, Pakistan, and studied at Princeton University in

America, as does the character in Hamid's novel (Hamid 2007: 3, 140). As we have seen, Hamid also opts for a first person narration throughout his novel, and the main character is never named and neither is the CIA agent he spends the length of the novel talking to. He is simply addressed formally as "sir" or through the use of the second person pronoun (e.g. Hamid 2007: 1). At no point in the text do we encounter the CIA agent's direct speech - we only "hear" what the agent says through the reporting and responses of the main character, for example: "Where are you staying? The Pearl Continental, you say? I'll walk you." (2007: 191). This choice is made all the more curious by the fact that the direct speech of other characters is routinely recorded (e.g. 2007: 7-16, 20-23) when the narrator recalls the past. These devices combine to create a very particular effect. Omitting the name of the CIA agent, extensive use of the second person pronoun and, at the beginning of the novel, deliberately sowing confusion by creating the possibility that the main character is directly addressing the reader leaves us with the sense that the CIA agent could represent the non-Muslim Westerner in general, or at least those Westerners who agreed with the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. It seems that the reader is being led through a complete circle of text world repair: we first think the main character is addressing us, then we think the "you" is a tourist, then we find out towards the end that the appearance of being a tourist was a cover for being a CIA agent, but, on reflection, we find ourselves being led back to the original idea that throughout the CIA agent may well be a representation of the implied reader.

Refusing to name the main character limits the forms of self-address to the first person pronoun, which, along with the parallels between the main character and author, add to the sense of the author speaking directly through his character. There are no explicit instances of an extra fictional voice in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, but there are several moments in the narrative - particularly when the main character is making political observations about real events - where it *feels* as if the author is speaking directly through the main character. Here is one such example focusing on the threat of war between India and Pakistan in 2001-2002 (Hamid 2007: 202):

So we waited as our September ticked by - little noticed by the media in your country, which was focused at that time on the first anniversary of the attacks on New York and Washington - and then the days started to shorten, the negotiations began to make progress, and the likelihood of a catastrophe that could have claimed tens of millions of lives receded. Of course, humanity's respite was brief: six months later the inva-

sion of Iraq would be under way.

A common strand appeared to unite these conflicts, and that was the advancement of a small coterie's concept of American interests in the guise of the fight against terrorism, which was defined to refer only to the organised and politically motivated killing of civilians by killers *not* wearing the uniforms of soldiers.

The main character is giving an informed opinion of a real world event from a Pakistani perspective that is uncontested from within the narrative. It seems possible that here we have the opinion of Hamid, given the fact that the author is Pakistani, our deictic viewpoint is positioned behind the Pakistani main character's view of the world, and the character is consistently portrayed in a sympathetic manner. This *sense* of an extra-fictional voice is even stronger when we encounter temporal shifts from the past to the present in observations such as, "It seemed to me then - and to be honest, sir, seems to me still - that America was engaged only in posturing. As a society, you were unwilling to reflect upon the shared pain that united you with those who attacked you" (2007: 190).

The impeccably polite and reasonable rhetoric of the blameless main character along with his serene control of himself and the present situation channelled through the reader's eyes continues throughout the novel, while the undercover assassin flounders in awkward silence. By removing the CIA agent's voice, Hamid is unavoidably otherising the ideology which the agent represents, while also further contributing to a constant one-way ideological persuasion. Hamid explicitly restricts the reader to evaluating him or herself from the ideological viewpoint of the main character. However, this literary strategy also has its risks. The reader could very easily react negatively to the extreme level of coercion and one-sidedness embedded in the text. Hamid therefore works hard to provide a consistently sympathetic and intelligent portrayal of the main character and the main character's patient politeness towards the assassin (representing perhaps both the implied reader and the dark side of the West), and his intense empathy for Erica (a symbol of Americans in general).

Moving on to a consideration of Updike's novel, we see that it makes use of a floating third person viewpoint that sometimes allows access to the worldview of Ahmad and other times Jack and Beth Levy. Goldie (2007: 75) argues for the importance of fictional texts for introducing readers to the juxtaposition of "diverging perspectives". He goes on to state that the best deictic viewpoint for appreciating the situation of another and evaluating his or her perspective is the third person viewpoint, especially in situations where the

individual being portrayed is very different from ourselves (Goldie 2007: 82-83). Updike does not want us to see directly through the eyes of Jack or Ahmad, instead he wants us to step back from both perspectives.

The possibility of the reader being subconsciously lulled into the belief that they are within a participant-accessible text (in the same way as in *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta*) is offset by the fact that one side of the novel ideologically criticises and contradicts the other side. There is no linear sense of a narrator's authority pervading the text, but instead an unsettling duality that is almost reluctantly resolved at the end of the novel. The unfolding narrative therefore resembles a fierce debate between the two opposite poles of relativism and the exclusivism of radical religion with frequent jumps between these opposing viewpoints. One of the key debates occurs when Jack and Ahmad first encounter each other and Jack attempts to question the ideology of Ahmad's imam (Updike 2007: 39):

“Did the imam ever suggest,” he asks, letting the chair's recoil lean him confidentially across the desk, “that a bright boy like you, in a diverse and tolerant society like this one, needs to confront a variety of viewpoints?”

“No,” Ahmad says with surprising abruptness, his soft lips bunching in a pout of defiance. “Shaikh Rashid did not suggest that, sir. He feels that such a relativistic approach trivialises religion, implying that it doesn't matter. You believe this, I believe that, we all get along - that's the American way ... I of course do not hate all Americans. But the American way is the way of infidels. It is headed for a terrible doom.”

He does not say, *America wants to take away my God*. He protects his God from this weary, unkempt, disbelieving old Jew.

This is an important conversation in terms of both perceptual deixis and empathy. Amis is careful to limit the reader's access to only one mind during each scene, but during the course of the above exchange Updike unusually allows access to both minds. We see the intentions, motivations and fears of both Jack and Ahmad as their ideological viewpoints clash. It is interesting to note that the conversation is framed on either side by a push down into Jack's mind, but the theme of loss of traditional moral values (Updike 2007: 30-34) actually prepares us for Ahmad's ideology. The exchange continues for five pages with access initially limited to Jack's inner thoughts and evaluations, until the narration abruptly switches deictic viewpoints with a push down into Ahmad's mind, viewing Jack

from a disorientating distance as “Mr Levy” instead of Updike’s usual reference to him as simply Jack or Levy (2007: 40, 42). We find ourselves being invited to evaluate the character whose insights we were just beginning to trust as “weary”, “unkempt”, “disbelieving” and “unhappy”.

The reason why Updike allows us into the mind of Ahmad and the reason why Amis allows us into the mind of Muhammad appear to be very different. It seems that Updike lets us in because he wants to challenge Western non-Muslim ideologies, while Amis is seeking to attack a particular view of radical Islamic ideologies. We see this very clearly in how Updike ends his novel. Ahmad desperately wants to protect his faith from modern America (Updike 2007: 38, 39), he wants to avoid having God taken from him, but at the very end of the novel we find him feeling weak and “spent” (2007: 307), lamenting the fact that the people around him are, “fixed upon self-advancement and self-preservation. That, and only that. *These devils*, Ahmad thinks, *have taken away my God.*” (2007: 310). It is in many ways a sad ending. This sense of sadness is also compounded by the account of Jack’s momentary acceptance of possible death during his attempt to persuade Ahmad not to detonate the bomb. The reason for his acceptance is based on the perception that his own existence is essentially useless (2007: 304).

I now turn to a consideration of how the three texts attempt to encourage readers to either empathise or distance themselves from particular characters in the narrative. I begin below with Amis’s *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta*, followed by the other two texts.

5.3 An Analysis of Empathy and Reader-Character Distance

Before I begin my analysis of the use of empathy or the blocking of empathy in the three fictional narratives, it is important to first be clear on the potential power of empathy in novels and short stories. In the section above I argued that fictional narratives could be an important source for the development of empathy. I also argued that it is possible for the development of empathy for a character to evolve into empathy for that character’s viewpoint. It is then possible for empathy for a viewpoint to develop into agreement for that viewpoint. However, it is important to emphasise that the evidence I examined is making the point that it is *possible* for this process to happen, not that it always happens or even often happens. Another important point is that even in cases where this process does happen, it is unlikely that it occurs as the result of reading one text, but as a culmination of exposure to a series of texts and discourses over an extended period of time.

Nevertheless, the *possibility* of the reader being affected by particular strategies makes it an important aspect to examine.

From the outset, any form of empathy from the average Western reader towards Muhammad Atta is unlikely on the basis of the reader's non-fictional background knowledge of who Muhammad Atta was and what he did. We have already alluded to Amis's unusual decision to deictically focus the reader on a main character which he appears to consistently *otherise*. The key to this process of *othering*, or the act of emphasising differences or even degrading an individual or group that does not belong to the speaker's group (Jandt 2013: 22), is Amis's emphasis upon Muhammad's pathological hatred: hatred for Americans (2008: 121), hatred for his fellow Muslims (2008: 101-102, 114, 120-121) and most of all hatred for life (2008: 122). It is difficult to imagine a stronger block on the possibility of empathy than a character expressing such virulent hatred. Examples like, "...he would never forget the face of the stewardess - the face of cloudless entitlement - and how badly he had wanted to hurt it" (2008: 121) forces the reader as far back from the character as possible. Amis also otherises Muhammad through his focus on the character's distasteful mental and physical dysfunctions, such as chronic constipation, that seem designed to cultivate a sense of disgust in the reader, as well as emphasising the character's own self-loathing:

Every few minutes he was required to wait out an interlude of nausea, while disused gastric juices bubbled up in the sump of his throat. His breath smelled like a blighted river. (Amis 2008: 97)

The worst was yet to come: shaving. Shaving was the worst because it necessarily involved him in the contemplation of his own face ... and yet this face, by now almost comically malevolent ... with that face, growing more gangrenous by the day. (2008: 97-98)

And his loins, between them, were contriving something very close to the sensations of anal rape. (2008: 121)

Muhammad Atta went to the men's room and released a fathom of bilious green. He was still wiping his foul mouth as he walked out onto the tarmac. (2008: 109)

Even the possibility of a reader empathising with Muhammad's faith in God is removed by Amis's portrayal of Muhammad as dismissive of religion. All this leads us to the possibility that the main character's relentless hatred is an expression of the author's hatred for that character's worldview. However, Amis does set up another opportunity for empathy, although he avoids employing it. When Muhammad visits the Imam they discuss the "crimes of America" and America's responsibility for "many millions of deaths" and the country's lack of self-knowledge concerning its own trail of destruction (Amis 2008: 110-111). Hoffman (2000: 49-51) maintains that being perceived as a victim inevitably produces empathy in the observer and here we have the possibility of portraying Muhammad as the victim of American foreign policy. But Amis leaves the connection between American foreign policy and the rise of radical Islam undeveloped, and instead has Muhammad coldly observing that America may be able to kill millions, but it is unable to "expend ingenuity in its efforts to kill the innocent" (Amis 2008: 111).

Hamid takes a different track with his main character, taking every opportunity to cultivate empathy in the reader's mind. Studies have supported the idea that negative events and situations that have an adverse effect on a character have the greatest chance of producing empathy in a reader (Keen 2007: 72). Hamid takes full advantage of this, in addition to the positive empathic effects mentioned above (Hoffman 2000: 49-51) of portraying a character as a victim. In terms of adverse circumstances, the main character depends on scholarships for his American education because his family doesn't have the money to pay his tuition fees (Hamid 2007: 9-10), he is racially abused (Hamid 2007: 133-134) and discriminated against (2007: 85-86), his family is in danger (2007: 107), and his girlfriend leaves him (2007: 128). It is also no coincidence that America and its government are intimately connected to most of these circumstances.

While Amis passes up the chance of using American foreign policy as a means to portray his main character as the victim, Hamid seems to rest his novel on it. The invasion of Afghanistan (2007: 113) and Iraq (2007: 202), the alleged American plot to encourage India to invade Pakistan (2007: 162-163, 203), which endangers the lives of the main character's family, the alleged work of the CIA within Pakistan (2007: 206, 208), which endangers the lives of the main character and his students, America's use of torture (2007: 191, 206) and the Islamophobic attacks and provocations within post-9/11 America (2007: 190) all contribute to a sustained rendering of the character as a victim.

There also seems to be another affective strategy here: the production of guilt in the mind of the non-Muslim Western reader. If such a reader is successfully persuaded by the

main character's argument then the result will be a certain degree of guilt at what the reader has passively allowed to take place, and guilt over inaction can lead to some form of action (Hoffman 2000: 102, Keen 2007: 99). However, there are some significant blocks to this process in the form of, for example, attribution of pleasure to the main character at the event of 9/11, but he strongly counters this with the symbolic relationship between the main character and Erica/America, in addition to his argument that resolving to stop America was for her own good as well as for the benefit of the rest of the world (Hamid 2007: 190).

Throughout the novel the main character is portrayed as impeccably polite (Hamid 2007: 28), intelligent (2007: 39), caring and loving (2007: 130) and initially very positive toward American people and culture (2007: 16). As his relationship with Erica begins to disintegrate in the aftermath of 9/11, we see him doing everything in his power to keep it going (e.g. 2007: 127, 159), but Erica's insanity and subsequent disappearance or suicide prevail and we find the main character being inexorably drawn *against his will* into an antagonistic attitude towards the US (2007: 113, 162-163, 203, 205-207). His desperate attempts to convey his love are consistently spurned right up until his last moments in America, when, at the airport, his last gesture of love toward Erica is misinterpreted as a bomb threat (2007: 191). We can see therefore that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a narrative that depends upon empathy to succeed in its ideological persuasion, just as *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta* depends upon an absence of such empathy.

Considering the analysis of *Terrorist* in the previous two sections, it will come as no surprise that the role of empathy is more difficult to map in Updike's narrative than it appears to have been in the texts of Amis and Hamid. Beth Levy's harmless and simple innocence and trust (e.g. Updike 2007: 32-33) has the possibility of producing empathy in the reader, but her overindulgence (e.g. 2007: 29, 120-121) is likely to produce something of an ambivalent response. Jack Levy's intelligence and insight (e.g. 2007: 33-34) and his sustained concern for Ahmad's welfare (e.g. 2007: 80, 208, 287) is countered by his infidelity (e.g. 2007: 158, 201) and apparent uselessness (e.g. 2007: 304). Even his presence in the truck at the climax of the novel does not seem to contribute, despite his verbosity, to Ahmad's critical change of heart, which instead appears to originate from the children in the car in front (2007: 307, 308). On the other hand, Ahmad is attributed with numerous diatribes (e.g. 2007: 39, 72) and thoughts (e.g. 2007: 3, 17) that would inevitably distance him from some Western readers, but he is also portrayed as the victim on several occasions (e.g. 2007: 15, 97), finally expresses gratitude towards his mother (2007: 241), is frequently portrayed as

diligent (2007: 40) and polite (2007: 34, 94) in contrast to the American youths around him (2007: 15, 97) and, in the end, refrains from killing.

In our analysis of the first conversation between Jack and Ahmad, we have already alluded to Updike's description of Ahmad's extreme faith as a form of self-protection highlighting Ahmad's fatherless vulnerability that cannot help but produce empathy (Updike 2007: 39). That conversation illustrates very well the balancing act between othering and empathising that Updike performs throughout his novel. The references to *infidels* and a *terrible doom* will inevitably reduce the average Western reader's empathy towards Ahmad (2007: 39), but this is balanced out by references to Ahmad's vulnerability - the soft lips and pout suggesting the physical qualities of a child, along with Ahmad's need to protect his core beliefs (2007: 39). Then there is the allusion to the trivialising of religion that matches Jack's previous lament about the loss of traditional moral values and identities (2007: 30-34).

In short, we can see that Ahmad, compared to Beth and Jack, is given more actions and thoughts that would decrease empathy, but, at the same time, more actions and thoughts that would increase it. Updike, unlike Hamid and Amis, appears to be once again aiming for a balance between empathising with both relativism and radical Islam while simultaneously undermining them.

I have now completed my examination of the three texts in terms of the ideologies of the characters, the manipulation of different viewpoints, and their use of empathy or othering. I will now therefore conclude this article in the next section by drawing together the key points made in the analysis and highlighting the importance of narratives that examine competing perspectives.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that the aim of critical discourse analysis is the uncovering of the assumed ideology beneath a text. I have attempted to demonstrate that, even though all the texts we have examined aim to analyse the same ideology, the analyses themselves in fact represent three very different viewpoints in relation to that ideology. Amis's short story appears to foreground the perspective that radical Islamic beliefs support and encourage psychological dysfunction, while backgrounding the theological or socio-political dimensions.

Hamid seems to take an opposite track, arguing that it is the forces of global

capitalism and US foreign policy that have created the need for communities to believe that America has to be stopped. The perpetrators of 911 and the theological dimension to Jihad are absent in Hamid's text, and the focus is instead on the argument that America has provoked a global chain reaction of hatred and deadly self-defence among formerly peace loving and sympathetic Muslim communities.

Updike is the only author out of the three that attempts a three dimensional exploration by representing and critiquing competing viewpoints from a plastic, third person perspective with consistent strategic shifts in the boundaries of its omniscience. The main criticisms of radical Islam are its tunnel vision, total inability to appreciate opposing perspectives, and dependence on violence, while the main challenges of modern Western society that may inadvertently be encouraging extremism are the dark side of consumerism and social relativism. These elements include a sense of uselessness and purposelessness, the loss of traditional moral frameworks and social identities, and the resulting unhappiness when people get everything they want.

In terms of highlighting the important issues that any exploration of radical Islam should include, I believe this study highlights three such points: firstly, the need to acknowledge and confront the process of othering, secondly, the importance and necessity of empathy, and thirdly, the recognition that both sides can be viewed simultaneously as being in some sense perpetrators and victims. Amis, for all his literary brilliance, has created a text that contains no empathy or any attempt to see through the eyes of the individuals who are drawn to radical Islam. Hamid, on the other hand, has created a masterpiece of empathic portrayal, but has done so through a sustained one-sidedness that sees only one side as the victim and systematically otherises the opposite side.

We only see a sustained consideration of competing perspectives in Updike's text, along with the acknowledgement of othering, the possibility of empathy, the role of the victim being equally shared across both sides, and a serious engagement with the attraction of the theological dimension of radical Islam. It is also important to note that some of the key elements in Updike's portrayal connect with research into the attractions of exclusive forms of religious belief. These include the important role of a perception of absolute certainty in response to a diverse and tolerant society that may inadvertently produce a sense of social and existential uncertainty (Richardson 2012; cf. Updike 2007: 39). They also include the attraction of a rigid, fixed sense of identity in the face of the erosion and collapse of traditional forms of social identity (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011; cf. Updike 2007: 30-34).

However, these points raise two important questions that need to be discussed. The first question is whether it is important for novels about radical Islam to be balanced. The second question is whether my application of cognitive poetics has made any worthwhile contributions to exploring the viewpoints underpinning these fictional narratives. The first question needs to be addressed within the context of my points in the section above that there can be multiple reasons for an author to adopt a single perspective. They may be attempting to counter what they perceive to be a current imbalance in current popular views about radical Islam, they may be attempting to raise awareness about the viewpoints of other people, or they may not be interested in ideology at all and only wish to adopt a particular viewpoint for stylistic purposes. These are of course valid choices. However, as I stated in the introduction to this article, my interest in analysing this subject area is to assess how different fictional texts about radical Islam may encourage people to develop a three-dimensional view of the complex issues involved. I would argue that this is impossible without considering multiple viewpoints and attempting to cultivate some level of empathic understanding for those viewpoints that you are opposed to. I would also argue that this is especially true when dealing with combinations of religious worldviews and violence (cf. Cameron 2013). What is particularly harmful in this process of developing a rich understanding of the other is employing strategies that attempt to otherise or block the possibility of empathy. I have argued at length in my analysis that *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* make deliberate use of these strategies.

The discussion of the second question needs to be split into two parts. The first part relates to my analysis of perceptual deixis and the positioning of the reader. A casual reader could easily make the observation, for example, that Hamid restricts us to the perspective of the main character. These observations should therefore be viewed as a preparatory foundation for further research in the form of a deeper analysis that would draw on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of agency patterns and conceptual metaphors. However, my alignment of elements of the endpoint of the viewpoint trajectories in the three texts with the views of the authors is controversial and could provoke disagreement. As I have noted in the section above, many scholars also view arguments about the power of the author to manipulate the views of some readers through the use of empathy or otherisation as controversial. These last two points are not at all obvious and can often provoke intense debate. I would therefore suggest that one possible contribution of this article is to open up a discussion about whether it is possible for these fictional

narratives to in some way influence the way certain people think and the views they hold. In addition, this article attempts to provoke a discussion on whether some fictional narratives may indeed be better than others in terms of a three dimensional exploration of emotive, charged topics such as radical Islam.

One of the most powerful characteristics of novels and short stories is that they allow us to see through the eyes of others and feel what they might feel to an extent that is impossible in many types of non-fictional texts. This means that novels and short stories can provide a rich exploration of competing perspectives, and this is the unique contribution that they can offer to the possibility of a constructive exploration of radical Islam. However, out of the three texts I have considered, it is only Updike's *Terrorist* that appears to have made this contribution.

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《SUMMARY》

Violence, Belief, and Viewpoint:
A Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Fictional Narratives relating
to Radical Islam

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There is an important need for both non-Muslims and mainstream Muslims to explore and try to understand the motivations and reasoning behind the global phenomenon of radical Islam. Novels and short stories related to radical Islam can be useful tools to encourage people to explore these issues. However, different authors have different perspectives and ideologies, and portray religious extremism in very different ways. This article therefore provides a framework of analysis for critically exploring the views of the author of a fictional text, and then applies it to an analysis of two contemporary novels and a short story which relate in some way to radical Islamic fundamentalism: Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), Updike's *Terrorist* (2007), and Amis's *The Last Days of Muhammad Atta* (2008). This framework draws on *cognitive poetics*, an approach that specialises in analysing types of narration and the construction of fictional worlds, and empathy research. It is also underpinned by one of the key ideas of *critical discourse analysis* that the authors of texts often use language to represent knowledge about something in a way that assumes the validity of their ideologies.

This article argues that Hamid's novel focuses on a de-theologised sociological and political perspective that views some forms of radicalisation as the result of negative elements within American foreign policy and society. In contrast, Amis's short story focuses on a perspective which views some forms of radical Islamic belief as a manifestation of serious psychological dysfunction, with elements of sociocultural dysfunction. I argue that only Updike's novel attempts to represent and explore competing perspectives. He empathizes with the idea that embracing extreme, absolute forms of religious belief could be an attractive response to particular elements in modern society, such as consumerism and moral and theological relativism, and the erosion of traditional Christian and Jewish identities. However, he also explores the delusional and dangerous elements of extremism. I conclude by noting some key connections between Updike's exploration and

academic research into aspects of conservative and radical forms of religious belief, while also highlighting the importance of narratives relating to radical Islam that examine competing perspectives.