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Urban Anxiety in the 9/11 Novel

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Abstract:

The terror strikes of September 11, 2001 on the United States, were a staggering blow to the American national psyche. The event has reshaped America's political discussion at large. The transnational nature of the event created complex responses from numerous scholars and philosophers from various corners of the world. However, as a means of representation the event has given rise to significant responses in the literary field. This paper will discuss two novels which deal with the 9/11 attacks, and will focus on Urban anxiety expressed in these novels namely- Ian McEvan's *Saturday* (2005), and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007). These novels capture more successfully the sources of contemporary cruelty and suffering, and constitute one of the principal vehicles of moral change and progress. The city of the 9/11 novels has lost all sense of a shared public morality. Yet the city had once offered freedom, opportunity for self-discovery and self-enactment for all the inhabitants.

Keywords: city, urban, political, terror, bourgeois, anxiety, hegemony.

Introduction:

The terror strikes of September 11, 2001 on the United States, were a staggering blow to the American national psyche. Americans experienced an unprecedented tragedy which impacted both individual lives and the national psyche. The major world event made the French cultural critic Jean Baudrillard to proclaim in his "The Spirit of Terrorism" as 'an absolute event', 'an event that defies...any form of interpretation' (13, 41). It has been over a decade after the event; still the traumatic event has remained afresh in the people's mind across the world. The destruction of the Twin Towers has formed the most recognizable image of the attacks, and resulted in the majority of the casualties on that day. Although the New York was not the only target of the 9/11 attacks, this city became the focus of the world after the event. Everyone said the world will never be the same. The greatest loss of life and the most spectacular devastation of the 9/11 attacks; tumbling down of the photogenic skyline of the New York city; pictures of these burning towers immediately became and still remain the central image of the traumatic event.

Many scholars and novelists acknowledge that the events of 9/11 were unimaginable and could not be related properly. As Don DeLillo puts it in his *In the Ruins of Future*: "This was so vast and terrible that it was outside imagining even as it happened... The event itself has no purchase on the mercies of analogy or simile. That is to say, there is no way to wrap one's mind around what happened" (33). By focusing on the references to fiction the unstable distinction between fiction and reality Joseph S. Walker refers to this confusion by explaining: "There is in our time an uncontainable rupture of the boundaries between the fictional and the real that, for many, has come to seem the dominant characteristic of public culture" (336). Baudrillard echoes above idea by referring to the importance of the symbolic power of terrorism when he

proclaims 'intrusion of the real' (21), pointing to a fissure between the symbolism and reality of the attacks. For Slavoj Žižek the spectacular 9/11 attack, particularly the image of the planes hitting the WTC towers was the ultimate work of art.

However, as a means of representation the event has given rise to significant responses in the literary field. Unlike the media that witnessed and reported live on the terrorist attacks, 9/11 novels only started to emerge years after the attacks and have taken longer time to reflect. Even though novels had to wait a couple of years, around 150 novels, dealing directly or indirectly with 9/11, have been published or distributed so far in the US. The novels that have now come to be categorized under 9/11 fiction are predominantly set in New York. There are novels which represent their settings in other cities also. Thus, the cultural memory of September 11 clearly emerges from an overlap of local and global discourses. However, while reading the 9/11 novels the recurrent themes the readers would come across could be – geopolitics, cross boarder issue, transcultural issue, religion and ethnicity, and traumatic experiences. It is also considerable fact that Richard Grey finds 'a failure of imagination' in the 9/11 novel. Many recent studies have focused on the socio-political dimensions of 9/11 in relation to terrorism and Middle Eastern politics. Not surprisingly, several novels have also appeared recently that thematise directly the causes and effects of the 9/11 strike on individuals, especially the traumatic effects of the disaster and apocalyptic obsessions. In the present paper I have discussed **The Urban Anxiety in the 9/11 novel.**

Urban Condition Post-9/11:

The 9/11 fiction corresponds to a distinct genre of political novels which explore, in different ways, the sociology of the modern city in the age of terror. In this paper I have made an attempt to discuss two novels which deal with the 9/11 attacks, and focused on Urban anxiety expressed in these novels namely- Ian McEvan's *Saturday* (2005), and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007). These novels capture more successfully the sources of contemporary cruelty and suffering, and constitute one of the principal vehicles of moral change and progress. The city of the 9/11 novels has lost all sense of a shared public morality. Even before any terror attacks take place this is a society that lacks any sense of social solidarity to hold it together. Yet the city had once offered freedom, opportunity for self-discovery and self-enactment for all the inhabitants.

Majority of the post-9/11 literature is set in a disenchanted modern cityscape inhabited by middle or lower-middleclass characters; a bourgeois world of commercial transactions, sexual infidelity, status anxiety, and a relentless secular lifestyle. It leaves one with a range of responses to ambivalence, despair, solipsism, guilt, and anomie by turns dominate the mood of the secular, urban characters that inhabit these novels. The inhabitants struggle with urban anomie, financial and emotional need, and a city that beyond immediate family and friends sustains only a minimal sense of civil association. Even before the attack on the World Trade Centre, the city that once offered the prospect of freedom from conformity and opportunity has instead turned pathological. The ever present threat of violence intimates its imminent dissolution. For the majority of characters in 9/11 novels are not only middle class but they are also, in most of the circumstances, middle-aged and reflect on what they have and have not achieved. The reader is offered no resolution to this persistent bourgeois estrangement from the city. Instead a vein of metropolitan anomie is amplified by the trauma of a home invasion.

The New York city in John Updike's *Terrorist*, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, London in McEwan's *Saturday*, Paris in Fredrick Beigbedder's *Windows on the World*, Sydney in Flanagan's *The Unknown Terrorist* best illustrate the urban pathologies of post -9/11 cities. In the New York novels it is the attack on the World Trade Center that upsets established relationships, exposes their fragility, and shatters comfortable middleclass illusions.

Ian McEwan's *Saturday* is a post 9/11 novel dealing with the change in lifestyle faced by Westerners after the September 11 attacks. The novel, set in England, is both a thriller which portrays a very attractive family and an allegory of the world after 11 September 2001 which meditates on the fragility of life. McEwan describes a day in the life of neurosurgeon Henry Perowne, from the pre-dawn moment when he awakes; feeling curiously excited, and looks down on the London Square below his window through to the next dawn when he stands again at the window, chastened and passive by all that the previous day has brought him. That day, planned around the obligations and pleasures of the weekend, is unsettled first by his rising so early and seeing a burning plane streak across the skyline, then by a minor car accident, which eventually leads to an attack that endangers the entire family. In many ways, *Saturday* is a realist narrative, representing the day as a particularly troubled moment in the contemporary West, and Henry Perowne as an everyman of the post-9/11 world.

The novel also solicits a political reading. The streets of the city where McEwan sets his protagonist's professional and domestic life are dominated by a political event: the very large demonstration that took place in London on 15 February 2003 against the imminent invasion of Iraq. The U.S. invasion of Iraq, talk of politics, war and terrorism pervades Henry's life; he could almost hear the buzz of the anti-war demonstrators in the streets outside his apartment. The burning airplane in the book's opening, and the suspicions it immediately arouses, quickly introduces the problems of terrorism and international security. The day's political demonstration and the breaking news coverage of it provide background noise to Perowne's day, leading him to ponder his relationship with these events.

At forty-eight years of age, Perowne appears to be contented and well settled: he is happily married to his equally successful wife Rosalind, the lawyer, and he has talented grown-up children Theo, the musician, and Daisy, the poet. Perowne is also very successful professionally, a true medical enthusiast who believes in the importance of scientific knowledge and the insignificance of literary fiction, and who is always ready for hard work, even on Saturdays. Living in a huge and beautiful house, set in a "perfect square" (5), and driving a brand new Mercedes, Perowne represents a perfect and blessed middle-class life, one that is enviable but also ideologically annoying. As Perowne navigates London on Saturday, February 15, 2003, the day of the protest against the just beginning Iraq war, he suffers the repercussions of his inability to read his culture. The protagonist's story starts from the premise that the times 'are baffled and fearful', the disturbance of well-being as a result of 9/11, no life, no matter how secure at the surface, is safe anymore. The city of London, the prospect of a terror attack, radically disrupts the familiar daily rhythm. An urban irregularity is amplified by the trauma of a home invasion.

Upon hearing that many people have gathered to protest against the war, Perowne goes off to play his usual game of squash. Thinking about the war, he lets himself escape through, but his daughter reproaches him. As he observes the protesters, Perowne ponders Daisy's words:

You're an educated person living in what we like to call a mature democracy, and our government's taking us to war. If you think that's a good idea, fine, say so, make the argument, but don't hedge your bets. Are we sending the troops in or not? It's happening now. (188)

The novel projects Perowne's internal monologue about the continuing possibility of a bourgeois lifestyle and threat to the personal security. Henry Perowne considers London wide open, "waiting for its bomb, like a hundred other cities. Rush hour will be a convenient time," Perowne presciently observes. He continues, "The authorities agree, an attack's inevitable. He lives in different times—because the newspapers say so doesn't mean it isn't true." Perowne concludes that one should "beware the utopianists, zealous men certain of the path to the ideal social order. Here they are again, totalitarians in different form, still scattered and weak, but growing, and angry, and thirsty for another mass killing" (276-277). He is so acutely aware of the general state of things that he has the foresight to predict the London bombings of 7 July 2005, a long time before they actually happened.

As Perowne moves through this one challenging and disturbing day, two violent encounters with Baxter, an aggressive criminal, narrated through Perowne's perspective. The privilege that shields him fails when a car accident brings him into contact with the aggressive Baxter. To avoid being beaten which would make him late for his squash game, Perowne voices a diagnosis he has made instinctively. Baxter breaks into his house during a celebration of his daughter Daisy's recently published volume of poetry. Armed with a knife, Baxter forces Daisy to undress, and thus her family discovers that she is pregnant. Uncomfortable with the sight of a pregnant woman's body, and casting for a violation to replace rape, Baxter demands that she read from her book of poems. Eventually brutal Baxter has been prevented from raping Perowne's daughter by hearing his naked and pregnant victim recite Matthew Arnold's lines in "Dover Beach":

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night. (11. 34-37)

Critic Lee Siegel affirms that '*Saturday* is not a political book' (34). Rather, he writes, 'it is a novel about consciousness that illuminates the sources of politics' (38), and more specifically, 'how politics gets invented from the stuff of emotion the way mind is created out of the brain' (35). Henry's consciousness is haunted by his awareness of the mind's inherent instability, its mutability and fragility ... (36). One could say that this is a state of mind imported into our lives by the attacks on 9/11. But in the context of McEwan's world, Henry's obsessions are also the universal mental soil; the comfortable and technologically protected. But also open and vulnerable Western mind, that has allowed 9/11 to provide moral, political and intellectual pretexts out of all proportion to the events of that day. For Siegel the West represents an 'Open, vulnerable, self-conscious societies' (33) that are at a delicate equilibrium and too easily taken for stability by members of those societies. It is a sudden and devastating transformation of the everyday that radically alters the psyche, producing an awareness of uncertainty, relativity and emergency.

Kristiaan Versluys, in a more sympathetic interpretation of Perowne, analyzes his political position as "that of the hesitant intellectual, whose ability to see the two sides of a question induce indecision" (77). Perowne avoids committing himself to one political position and escapes making a clear moral decision, preferring to turn to his material possessions like his "silver Mercedes S500 with cream upholstery" (75), which seem to have

the ability to calm him and help restore his good mood and self-confidence. However it is the representation of the disturbing parallel between Perowne and the West. Perowne's material prosperity allows him to close himself off in his car, in his house, without ever becoming really involved in the moral and political decision-making.

In his response to McEwan's *Saturday* critic Richard Rorty has claimed that it is precisely the presentation of Perowne's disjunction from an effective politics that constitutes the critical capacity of the novel. 'The book does not have a politics', he writes, 'it is about our inability to have one – to sketch a credible agenda for large-scale change' (92). Indeed, for Rorty, Perowne is the perfect exemplar of the impasse between thought and action that is the reality of the contemporary West. McEwan's finely wrought character Perowne is an 'idiot' (92) in the sense that he is limited to the private sphere; he cannot actualize his thoughts in any meaningful way in the political system in which he exists. The correlation constructed between *Saturday*'s events and world affairs draws attention to the political importance of the literary scene, and readers are encouraged to relate the diverse experience of Perowne, Daisy and Baxter to the broader political challenges of contemporary Western society. From Perowne's point of view, as Versluys says, it "demonstrates the extent to which September 11 has penetrated deep into the European psyche" (68). The plot also unfolds Perowne's fears about fanatical terrorists with a violent encounter with domestic intruders. The current anxiety and threat to the security of the Perownes parallels the broader insecurity of the West in the face of Islamic extremism.

Yet, in the end, the reader is offered no resolution to this relentless bourgeois estrangement from the city. Finally the reader is left only with Matthew Arnold's bleak *Dover Beach* and the fact that Londoners, like New Yorkers and Parisians now inhabit "a darkling plain, swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night."

Don DeLillo's New York is equally fluctuating with ever present threat of violence. New York is made an extraordinary place by the attacks. According to DeLillo the 9/11 is a disaster that literally ruins the Utopian future and demolishes social constructions of technological progress and endless happiness, leaving us with nothing to look forward to, only the memory of an end. In 2001, in his "In the Ruins of the Future" described 9/11 as an event that "changed the grain of the most routine moment." The above thoughts project the author's mindset and the novel *Falling Man* is its product. The themes of loss, vulnerability, emptiness and desolation within a sea of familial dysfunction, infidelity and betrayal, and lack of sense of belongingness simultaneously constitute the core of DeLillo's *Falling Man*. We can notice a penetration of the public disorder generated by the tragedy into the ordinary life and private existences of the characters.

DeLillo's novel deals with intimate stories of human reactions to 9/11, focusing on a survivor of the attacks, Keith Neudecker, his estranged wife Lianne and their son Justin, who unsuccessfully try to rebuild their family after 9/11. For Keith Neudecker, protagonist of DeLillo's *Falling Man*, 9/11 cast New Yorkers forever in "the light of what comes after, carried in the residue of smashed matter, in the ash ruins of what was various and human, hovering in the air above" (246). As Keith emerges from the Twin Towers before their collapse, the narrator notes, "It was not a street anymore but a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night." (3) These are indeed "the days after. Everything now is measured by after" (38). Keith finds it difficult to reconcile the times of before and after, that normality and abnormality should occupy the same urban space.

The performance artist David Janiak, who mimics those falling from the North Tower on 11 September, forms the backdrop against which Keith and Lianne Neudecker play out their alienated existence. Falling Man's performances offer Lianne an uncomfortable glimpse of "something [she had] not seen" (33), reworking the horrific image of those who fell from the towers into the uncomfortable space of art and offering new dimensions of understanding. Falling Man is a reminder of uncomfortable memories, of disempowerment, trauma and death, and thus he causes outrage from spectators. His performances are resisted as a site of identification, since it would mean engaging with an image of powerlessness for the spectators. The bourgeois protagonist finds it hazardous to face the imminent collapse of public order and public morality, retreats into the fragile confines of the nuclear family. Ever present anxiety defines Keith and Lianne's relationship throughout the novel.

Lianne tries to cope with the tragedy getting through to Keith. When he leaves the ruins to go back to Lianne, we might assume he seeks that progress now, in the family comfort. Yet this is an impulse, a natural wish of belonging that brings him back home, whatever home is. He is a walking image, seen through Lianne's eyes, "standing numbly in the flow, a dim figure far away inside plexiglass" (40). However, neither of them progresses. Keith's pokers play and Lianne's Alzheimer's group are means of escapism, even before they grasp what they are escaping from. Three years after 9/11, at a demonstration against the Iraq War, Lianne attends the rally but finds, worryingly, that the "crowd did not return her sense of belonging." Their son Justin, on the other hand, represents the child's perspective of coping with the world of the adult, trying to find sense in something not even adults can wholly comprehend, as he searches the skies with binoculars for Bin Laden, or as he incorrectly understands or hears Bill Lawton. The American protagonists are lost and unaware of the world they have yet to get to know, and without a proper honest communication, they will never succeed in it, and find some sense and closure. DeLillo throws his protagonists into a world where you are not able to understand, explain or define. But this is DeLillo's main agenda, proving there is no way of achieving that, finding a way out of the ruins following the morning of 9/11.

Lianne contemplates abandoning the city after 9/11. Her more resilient mother Nora dismisses the idea:

"People are leaving, you're coming back"
"Nobody's leaving," her mother said. "The ones who leave were never here."
"I must admit I've thought of it," Lianne avers. "Take the kid and go."
"Don't make me sick," her mother said. (34)

Ironically, Nora, the morally strongest character in the 9/11 novels, subsequently dies from a degenerative disease.

Keith returns to work, but struggles with the rhythm of normal existence, finding instead a sense, if not of purpose, then of relief in the world of professional poker. Discussing their meaningless existence, Lianne observes:

I know that most lives make no sense. I mean in this country what makes sense? I can't sit here and say let's go away for a month. I'm not going to reduce myself to say something like that. Because that's another world the one that makes sense. (215)

Similarly Keith recognizes that “he wasn’t making enough money” to justify his adopted lifestyle. “There was no such need. There should have been, but wasn’t and that was the point. The point was one of invalidation” (230). Keith also reflects during a walk through the park: “The ordinariness, so normally unnoticeable, fell upon him oddly, with almost dreamlike effect” (51). His life seems to become tied to the fictional and become “dreamlike” (51). Baudrillard refers to the image of dreams in his argument that “no one can avoid dreaming of the destruction of any power that has become hegemonic to the degree the US has” (5). The fact that this dream has now become a reality creates the confusion demonstrated in Keith, where reality seems fictional, and a motif which is variously demonstrated in the novel with reference to dreams and to the dream-like nature of the American dream.

These forms of loss seem to relate to a constant state of vulnerability for the characters. Keith reflects on his memories of the attacks: “These were the days after and now the years, a thousand having dreams, the trapped man, the fixed limbs, the dream of paralysis, the gasping man, the dream of asphyxiation, the dream of helplessness” (230). Keith is greatly affected by the trauma suffered in the attacks, and he tries to counter this loss by recreating aspects of his life before 9/11 in the form of recreating the poker game which he shared with friends by becoming a professional poker player in Las Vegas. This loss is also represented through difficulties with fatherhood and the loss of innocence in children.

Keith’s role as father and husband is affected since his family firstly believes that he has died in the attacks, and when he returns alive he leaves his family again to pursue life as a poker player in Las Vegas. Lianne is left in a daze after the attacks, but the postcard “snaps her back” (8), making her conscious of the way the perpetrators of the attacks have penetrated her life when she becomes affected by an uncanny coincidence. The face of the postcard depicts “a reproduction of the cover of Shelly’s poem in twelve cantos, first edition, called *Revolt of Islam*” (8). The postcard causes her to emerge from the dream-like state which the novel characterizes after the attacks, highlighting the theme of an altered sense of reality. The moment of discovering the postcard is preceded by her noticing a shadow on a wall: “she was looking past the lamp into the wall, where they seemed to be projected the man and woman, bodies incomplete but bright and real” (8). This image foreshadows the quest of Lianne and Keith to project a new understanding of reality by trying to rebuild their marriage, but the projection of this image by artificial light, the fact that the bodies are “incomplete” (8), and the disruption of her reverie by the postcard shows how the construction of this new reality in the face of 9/11 will be unsuccessful.

The vulnerability of Keith after the attacks appears to have caused loss of his paternal power and however seems to find new power in sex, as Keith starts an affair with another 9/11 survivor, Florence. The novel presents the overshadowing presence of death for the characters, and sex seems to act as a testimony to life. Keith and Lianne experience a heightened sexual awareness when he returns to live with her immediately after the attacks, and even mundane activities are defined as sexual since they become an affirmation of Keith’s survival: “It wasn’t just those days and nights in bed. Sex was everywhere at first, in words, phrases, half gestures, the simplest intimation of altered space. She’d put down a book or magazine and a small pause settled around them. This was sex.” (7)

The children, as symbols of innocence and victimhood, seem to gain power in the novel when they gain independent narratives, and the conflict between fathers and sons demonstrated in the novels seems to stem from the father’s struggle to understand his role in the face of

terrorism. The ghost-like father-figure in the novel becomes a symbol of lost identity and lost power. Keith's son Justin has to make sense of a world where he feels vulnerable to attack and tries to understand the terrorists within his own framework.

The readers can also experience urban anxiety in the form of cultural clash between Islam and the West that pervades the novel. DeLillo highlights the incompatibility of Islam with Western modernity, introduces Muslims as violators of American style of life, a criminality rooted not in their being individual disloyalty but in their collective Islamicism. Describing the secret life of the small group of terrorist Muslims in New York, where "every cabdriver ... [is] named Muhammad" (28) the narrator says "they were in this country to pursue technical educations but in these *rooms* they spoke about the struggle" (79). The "rooms" generally refers to the prayer rooms in which Muslims gather to say their prayers and often share their memories and experiences. More pointedly, Muslims are represented as seeking refuge in enclosed spaces, especially urban, sheltering from what they consider as the corrupt West:

There was the feeling of lost history. They were too long in isolation. This is what they talked about, being crowded out by other cultures, other futures, the all-enfolding will of capital markets and foreign policies. (80)

The idea that Muslim identities are taking benefit from the fluidity of the boundaries in American metropolitan society is very well reflected in the following passage in *Falling Man*:

The men [Muslims] went to Internet cafés and learned about flight schools in the United States. Nobody knocked down their door in the middle of the night and nobody stopped them in the street to turn their pockets inside out and grope their bodies for weapons. But they knew that Islam was under attack. (82)

In this short passage, DeLillo very aptly foreshadows both the plane attacks of 9/11 by Muslim terrorists, who had learnt about flight in American schools, and more importantly answers the question of the motivation behind their terrorism being defending Islam from Western cultures and highlights the invisibility of Muslim identity in American urban fluid society as well. As a young Muslim who has the citizenship of United States, Hammad was initiated into the terrorist group by Mohamed Mohamed el- Amir el-Sayed Atta, and finally turns out to be the terrorist who headed the airplanes toward Twin Towers.

It is significant that Martin Ridnour, the only European character to appear in the New York novels, is Lianne's mother's occasional lover, who finds all this anxiety self-indulgent. Martin Ridnour's underground name is Ernst Hechinger, an art dealer. He had links, in his student past, with the West German Baader Meinhoff gang, declares America after 9/11 irrelevant. He even discovers a continuity between his undergraduate disgust with capitalism and the actions of the 9/11 bombers. "We're all sick of America and Americans. The subject nauseates us," he somewhat insensitively informs a table of mourners at Nora's funeral. Nina's physical frailty and eventual death are linked to a loss of American identity. Her increasing sense of disorientation after the attacks is presented with constant reference to her physical deterioration. Martin echoes the link when he speaks of the loss of American identity at Nina's wake: "For all the careless power of this country, let me say this, for all the danger it makes in the world, America is going to become irrelevant.... It is losing the center" (191). Ridnour's contempt for America's self-examination following the events of 11

September is a theme repeated in a number of post-9/11 novels, notably Hamid's *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and Flanagan's *The Unknown Terrorist*.

Assessing the 9/11 novels from political perspective, it becomes necessary to distinguish novelists like DeLillo and McEwan who consider Islamist terror an existential threat to the political order of the city rather than a "symbolic" response to American hegemony and its single-minded pursuit of global financial and political power. Mohsin Hamid and Richard Flanagan's assertion of violence in their novels is seemingly a fictional representation or a rational reaction against the projection of American, anglospheric imperialism. They seem to adopt a deliberate fiction of the liberal democratic order to justify an assault upon human rights at home and weak states abroad. Readers can experience the presentation of regret, indecision, and anxiety, those most postmodern emotions pervade the narrative of both the New York and the contemporary European and Australian novels. The public has become anomic. If at all life retains an idea of the good, it exists in the bonds of family and friendship. Ironically, with the exception of Perowne's marriage, selfishness, deceit, and the threat of imminent dissolution beset all the families in these novels. Infidelity and betrayal dominate what remains of family life.

However, in McEwan's *Saturday*, and DeLillo's *Falling Man* the ever present threat is real and reflects the fact that Al Qaeda launched a war against the United States and its allies on 9/11. The terrorists' threat and its corrosive impact on urban life are well demonstrated through these novels' characters who confront it with a mixture of fear, impotence, indecision, and despair. It is not entirely surprising that anxiety about urban life and its prospects should evoke an ambiguous response to those whose disgust with urban secular attachments finds its release in jihad. However, the characters in these novels, without any doubt high-class bourgeois; represent post-9/11 Europeans and Americans who remain overanxiously attached to their urbanity and their doubt.

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