

Islamophobic Portrayal of the Muslim Alien in Allan Havis's *Three Nights in Prague*

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Abstract

In conformity with the growing negative attitude of the West against Islam and Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks, there emerged waves of stereotypes that framed Muslims as 'enemy within'. The buzzword that represents the trauma of the current situation is 'Islamophobia'. This 'unfounded fears' of Islam and Muslims have been high in the agenda of many writers. The case study here involves Allan Havis's *Three Nights in Prague* (2004) which reveals the ideology of the 9/11 mastermind, Mohamed Atta , and highlights the workings of his inner consciousness. The study proceeds through giving an in-depth survey of concepts like islamophobia, xenophobia, jihad, and terrorism. It also discusses other factors that contributed in framing the alien Muslim like media, leaders' opinions, and cinema production. Then, the study traces the psychological, social and religious aspects of the protagonist in view of the Western mental image of the Muslim alien. The paper develops upon Gottschalk and Greenberg's in-depth, valuable, and re-interpretive analysis of Muslim stereotypes in the West, Edward Said's concepts of the 'other', and Jack Shaheen's evaluative reviews of the influence of the American media and cinema in embodying the Muslim alien. The ensuing attitude of the West towards Muslim in the play has been proved fragile as the basic action is entirely based on claimed news.

Key words : Muslims, Fundamentalism, Islamophobia , Xenophobia, Religion , West .

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Introduction

Since 9/11 attacks there has been a rising interest in the issues of Muslim stereotypes, Islamophobia and xenophobia. Scanty researches have been conducted and numerous articles were released on the Western fears and the way Muslims represent themselves. Muslim immigrations to Europe and America seem to draw the attention of many critics in the aftermath of the attacks. Drama has constituted one of the literary genres that treated such thorny issues.

The current paper attempts to fill in a gap in the field of Muslims' image and the development of the illogical fear towards them in the West; it also conveys a realistic delineation of the Muslim alien and uncovers the essence of his psychological make-up in conjunction with the dominating Western mental image of the Muslims. A post- colonial approach is adopted for the analysis of Allan Havis's *Three Nights in Prague* since postcolonial approach is marked by a preponderant focus on issues of marginality, ethnicity, re-narration and hybridity. To this end, the paper provides an analysis of the experience within the framework of Gotschalk and Greenber's *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy* (2008). Of particular relevance to the current context are Edward Said's and Huntington's major ideas, Jack Shaheen's *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs After 9/11* (2008), and Mohamed Nimer's *Islamophobia and Anti-Americanism* (2007)

Islamophobia in Perspective

Although the term 'Islamophobia' dates back, in its strongest sense and remarkable impact to 1980, following the publication of Salman Rushdi's *Satanic Verses* , it was during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the anti-Islam wave had been in process. The West viewed Muslims throughout a narrow perspective. At

the then time, Muslims were dubbed as 'barbaric', 'degenerate', and 'tyrannical'. These characteristics were "thought to be rooted in the character of Islam as a supposedly false and heretical theology". (Miles and Brown 27). *Satanic Verses*, concomitantly with the Iranian Leader's Fatwa, brought forth Muslim protests everywhere, burning the copies of the novel and the effigies of Rushdie. In addition, the Iranian Fatwa intensified the Western rage and contributed in rendering a more blurred and vague vision towards Islam. People in the West were not concerned with understanding why Muslims were "offended" by the publication of the novel, nevertheless, they warned Muslims that "they lived in a civilized society and should behave accordingly by following its norms and expectations" (qtd in Poynting & Mason 49). The division of how both the West and Muslims view each other is attributed to the lack of communication. For instance, the West does not distinguish the different forms of Islam; however, their fabricated image of Muslims contributes in the growth of xenophobia in Western society. Meanwhile, Muslims view the 'oxidant' as militant, colonizer, and killer; thus, the distance remains so wide to reach an accord.

Islamophobia and xenophobia gained their wide echoes and current existing status in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks. Praves Ahmad ("Prejudice" 2007) defines Islamophobia quite clearly as the "unfounded fear and hostility towards Islam"(15) that logically led to that practices of "discrimination against Muslims, exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political or social process, stereotyping the presumption of guilt, association and finally, hate crimes".(15).The term has been coined to refer to "psychological traumas" and "social and political phenomenon"(Gottschalk & Greenberg 23), and is used to "normalize unjustified prejudice and discrimination"(23). Islamophobia was similarly viewed by Anwar Ibrahim ("America and Muslim" 38) as "the irrational fear

of Islam or Muslims, subsumed on the belief that they are religious fanatics who hate non-Muslims". Consequently, Islamophobia has resulted in the general and unquestionable acceptance of five facts: "Islam is a monolithic religion and cannot adapt to new realities, Islam does not share common values with other major faiths, Islam as a religion is inferior, archaic, barbaric and irrational religion to the West, and Islam is a religion of violence and supports terrorism through its violent political ideology" (Ahmad 15-16).

Edward Said (Reader 171) explains that Islam was believed to be "a demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy, and obscurity during the Renaissance in Europe". Mohammad was what really mattered to Christians who dubbed him as a "false Prophet, a sewer of discord, a sensualist, a hypocrite, and an agent of the devil" (171). Such a fear of Muhamadenism had been the prevailing stance at the then time. Not only before 1970 had Islam regained its lost glory owing to the skyrocketing oil prices.

Besides, Said argues that in 1987 Iran started to occupy the forefront being a major oil supplier. The United States lost Shah, its unwavering ally of Tehran who was succeeded by the founder of the new extremist Islam, Khomeni. Henceforth, a new anti-Islam standpoint started to materialize and "to speak of Islam in the West today [was] to mean a lot of unpleasant things" (175).

Said, moreover, traces the reasons of this Western hostility against Islam and attributes it to more than one reason: first, Islam has been not only a "formidable competitor", but also a late challenge to Christianity. Second, for centuries, Muslim world has been of a considerable political force and was about to destroy Christianity. Third, Muslims seemed never to have surrendered completely to the West and, finally, in 1970s, the West seemed to

shudder when oil prices rose. Thus, "malicious generalizations about Islam have become the last acceptable form of denigration of foreign culture in the West" (Covering Islam xii). Consequently, media's creation of the Muslim other became a manifestation of 'mediatized rituals'.

Muslim Alien in Western Media

Based on the sense of Islamophobia and the subsequent impacts of the various media channels, the Western view of the Muslim other had been deeply installed and overgeneralized. Although this view had materialized long before 9/11 attacks, yet it is with the traumatic effects of the incident that this stance appeared in its severest form. In Western media, the argument branched out of the limits of Islamophobia to involve Arabphobia in an attempt to attribute the crime to those living in the Arab world. The fact is that "Arabs represent a minority of Muslims. Only one-fifth of the world's 1.3+billion Muslims are Arabs" (Shaheen xiii). Unfortunately, "these distinctions are often blurred in American popular culture" (xiii).

Still, Jack Shaheen, in his book *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs After 9/11* (2008), believes that "this enduring mythology that 'Muslim' is synonymous with 'Arab' has two deficiencies. The first is that this mythology evokes the diversity of the Arab world; thus, Christianity comes up to minds as there are more than twenty million Christians living side by side with Muslims while they represent the majority of the Arab-Americans. The second deficiency involves the failure to present on movie screens Muslims of other ethnicities like Turkish, Indians, and Indonesians; a fact that robs the mythological stereotype much of its credibility. Not only has Islam been a synonym with 'Arab', but also with terrorism and jihad, which is "understood in a

particular way: as traditional, unjustified, religiously based violence, mainly against non-Muslims” (Shehata,2007, 81). Moreover, A high percentage of Americans believe that Islam is a religion that encourages violence as compared to other religions; that percentage “increased from 25percent in March 2002 to 36 percentage in July 2005” (76). In tracing similar reviews, Shehata highlights a Washington Post LABC News survey which raised questions to Americans related to their sense of prejudice against Arabs and Muslims, which resulted in “27 percent said they held prejudiced feelings against Muslims, whereas 25 percent said they had prejudiced feelings against Arabs” (76).

This negative anti-Muslims discourse has been extremely rife in the American media; it has remarkably contributed in delineating and making of the Muslim other. The high percentage of the Americans who expressed prejudice against Arabs and Muslims had their media as the only source of knowledge; lacking, by so doing, the neutrality and credibility of information acquisition. Thus, “ignorance and unfamiliarity” (80) with the concept of Islam have led to that prevalent distorted image.

Even worse, the mainstream American culture abounds in negative representations of Arab Muslims; thus, “when the Middle east, Arabs, and Muslims make it into the news, it is usually in the context of negative events” (82). Accordingly, such being the case, “the kinds of things Americans hear about Islam, Muslims, and Arabs are more often negative and unpleasant” (82). In this context, Jack Shaheen refers to the most widespread works that depicted Arabs and Muslims as terrorists and religious fanatics; he enlists examples like: Jack Shaheen’s *The TV Arab* (1984), and *Reel Bad Arabs* (2001), Melani McAlister’s *Epic Encounters: Culture , Media, and US Interests in the Middle East 1954-200* (2001), and Edward Said’s *Covering Islam* (1981). In

the same vein, what has happened to America since 9/11 attacks has been of an everlasting impact that resulted in a considerable “increase in television serials about terrorism, counter- terrorism, the CIA, and similar agencies on all networks; e.g, *The Agency*, *The Grid*, *Alias*, *24*, *Threat Matrix*, and a new show entitled DHS, Department of Homeland Security” (83). Through those serials and shows, the negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims have been recurring equally and regularly; they suggested to Americans that “the Muslim family next door could be a sleeper cell committed to inflicting mass casualties against its fellow citizens” (84)

Another aspect of the mainstream culture that distorted the image of the Arab Muslims in America is that campaign of the ‘opinion leaders’ whose views had similar negative impacts on the sweeping majority of American population. An example of those leaders is that of Jerry Falwell, a Baptist minister and founder of the Moral majority whose opinion was broadcast on “*60 Minutes*” that prophet Mohamed was “a terrorist....Jesus set the example of love, as did Moses, and [he] think[s] Muhammad set an opposite example” (84-85) . A second example is that of Reverend Franklin Graham who called Islam an “evil religion that preaches violence” (85). A third type of opinion has been that of Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, who, repeatedly condemned Muhammad of being an “absolute wild-eyed fanatic” (85)

In addition, cinema production had no less impact on the vast public opinion. In his review of the movies before and after 9/11, Jack Shaheen, concludes that “in 1990, movie-land’s Arabs appeared as sex-crazed, savage, and exotic camel-riding nomads living in the desert tents” (xv), and that they, in case of no

fighting, “bargained at slave markets, procuring blond women for their harems” (xv)

A new turn of development came over the Arab stereotypes with the advent of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and “by the 1970-likely in connection with the 1973 Arab-Israeli war-reel dark Palestinians appeared not as reel displaced people, but as reel terrorists”(xv), while other Arabs began “surfacing as fanatic sheikhs: rich vengeful, corrupt, sneaky, repulsive, and almost invariably fat” (xvi).

Moreover, the issue of Iraq in the history of Hollywood movies dates back to years before 9/11; for years , numerous pre-9/11 Arab-as-enemy movies helped fuel misperceptions and prejudices”(xix). Some of those films include ‘*Adventure in Iraq*’ (1943), in which Captain Carson unloads bombs over Baghdad’s ‘devil worshippers’; in *Deterrence* (1999), the President of the USA “dispatches a nuclear bomb over Baghdad” (xix); in *The American Shield* (1992), “viewers saw a marine captain blow up a Saddam look-alike” (xix), and in *Courage Under Fire* (1996), “Meg Rayan and her troops[were] gunning down Iraqis” (xix). Thus, Iraq has been targeted as one of the forces threatening the American and the Jewish hegemony, and gradually became in the range of the American strategy of resisting terrorism even before 9/11. It is here that Havis opted to link the fate of his protagonist with the suspicious Iraqi, Al-Ani.

The Framed Muslim Alien in *Three Nights in Prague*

Allan Havis sets Prague as his dramatic setting owing to claimed political reasons that assume a good relationship between Baghdad and Prague that involved oil for weapons deal. Under this umbrella of false political allegations, the play involves four characters of different ideologies and tendencies: Mohamed Atta,

Egyptian Al Qaeda member thought to be the mastermind of 9/11 attacks, Al-Ani, an Iraqi consulate and regime's contact person in Prague who is under suspicion of spying by the Czech government, Pavel, a Czech citizen who is hired by the Iraqi consulate for odd missions, and Pavel's son, Dolni, a Czech youth who sells drugs and does sexual favors. Dramatically, this suspected milieu are employed to spot Atta's perseverance and reveal his other face; they fulfill the gap of absent soliloquys or inner monologues on the side of Atta; they are the reliable sources of information in a context in which the possibility of "disclosing his inner feelings is severely reduced" (Maertens 13)

In conjunction with the previous survey of how the West view the Muslims, the play revolves around the characters of Mohamed Atta, though the entire action is based on a an alleged meeting between him and the Iraqi consulate in 2001 according to unconfirmed reports that also claimed that Atta had received anthrax spores from Iraqi agents in Prague. However, the play reflects the internal and external portrayal of Attah whose reputation had been widely recognized as one of the 19 hijackers who bombed the two towers. Havis, in his introduction, adds that that secret meeting was observed through the surveillance of the Czech counterintelligence service, BIS, and was reported to news organizations like Washington Post and Wall Street Journal later on.

Allan Havis sets in his play with a prologue that includes Atta's will which reads as follows:

I am Mohamed, the son of Mohamed El Amir Awad El Sayed. I believe that the prophet Mohamed is God's messenger and God will resurrect those in their graves. I want my family and everyone who reads this will to fear

God and don't fall to deception and to follow God and his prophets. I don't want any women to go to my grave at all during my funeral. In my memory, I want all people to do what the prophet Ibrahim told his son to do, to die as a good Muslim. (186)

Thus, the entire portion of the play that follows is based on analyzing the psychology of Atta in view of his perceptions and on the contradiction he conducts in his communications with others. Havis, in this sense, excels in installing and adjusting the Western mind image that became of Muslims represented by his protagonist. For the sake of focusing Atta's misconducts and his deviant behavior, Havis constructs a cobweb of various characters, each of a specific interest, to reveal all the psychological sides of the mentality of a Muslim alien terrorist. Through the prologue, Havis paradoxically publicizes; rather, propagates, the duality of Atta's character and ironically refers to the Muslim traditions as viewed by the West. In his will, Attah refers to his basic belief in God and prophets, his views of women, death, resurrection, and stressed the advice of prophet Ibrahim to die as a good Muslim; such recommendations resulted in a blatant non-compliance. The remaining part of the will is used as a sequel and involves eighteen recommendations that represent the various aspects of Islamic law.

Thus conducted, Havis proceeds to identify the mentality of Atta in the light of the common Western code that "All Arabs are Muslims, all Muslims are Islamists, and all Islamists seek the destruction of the Western world" (Gauthier43).He attempts to over-cross the concept of the "incomprehensible other" (McGlothin,"Theorizing the Perpetrator"213) and cautiously approaches his character through a "degree of empathy"(Suleiman, 2) inspite of the loathsomeness of his protagonist. Similarly, Havis, through his portrayal of Atta, seems

in line with Versluys (17) who refers to the urge of a deep understanding of the ‘ultimate other’, and with Spivak’s claim that focused the necessity to understand the other to be able to find an explanation of 9/11 dilemma; she believes that “we must be able to imagine our opponent as a human being, and to understand the significance of his/her action” (94).

Accordingly, in his attempt to represent the Muslim alien, Havis has set the qualities of a proper Muslim as perceived in Atta’s will; then, began to observe and monitor Atta in practice and to portray him as a Muslim alien physically and psychologically. Atta is portrayed in terms of his religiosity, sexuality, political tendencies, terroristic activities, opportunism. To achieve this, Havis employs other characters around him as being eccentric figures who accept all improper endeavours for the sake of their interests. In like manner, Atta, as an opportunist Muslim, finds himself obliged to negotiate and bargain, even if this represents a violation of the law.

Three Nights in Prague represents Atta’s religious side as a point of departure for its entire structure. Initially, it refers to his will which is replete with religious references. In this context, the play utilizes his utterances that reveal his inclinations, particularly when he declares: “we plan to kill an entire city of infidels”.(213), in which he presupposes the infidelity of an entire population; an epithet that reeks pure extreme religious connotations. This early declaration foretells about Havis’s endeavor to represent the concept of the ‘other’ as defined by Gauthier in the sense that it “involves the recognition of the singular and self-generated identity of someone else, in particular someone belonging to a different ethnicity or culture”(36), and who is behind an ‘ultimate’ intrusion for the sake of being acknowledged and recognized.

Atta's religiosity is examined and evaluated by Al-Ani who opposes the whole scheme of Atta justifying his approach that "Al Qaeda should follow Alla's instructions", and asks Atta to "address [his] faith and cease [his] attack"(208). In this vein, Colleran (113) believes that Al-Ani fulfills the role of an antagonist through his antithetical approach, a fact that infringes the duality of 'us' and 'them' as Al-Ani, thus, represents a stereotype quite different from the fanatic and extremist Muslim.

Out of his political standpoint, Al-Ani despises the position of Al-Qaeda and blames Atta for being one of its members, but Atta defends his and his organization's stance out of his religious background:

Al-Ani: How long can you rely on AlQaeda?

Atta : We are lucky

Al-Ani: I don't think you are.

Atta: We've survived the last five years, and we'll survive the next five.

Al-Ani : Most of your men are ignorant Saudis, taking orders from an arrogant Egyptian. I think that is unsafe.....what are you ?

Atta : Devout men of Islam.(204)

In his attempts to dissuade Atta from his plan, Al-Ani underestimates the concept of martyrdom through indulging into irrelevant enquiries with Atta about his being an engineer. Atta, on his side, rejects being taken away from his plan and his religiosity and refuses Al-Ani's concept of him as recluse, not a martyr:

Ani : Why not go back to engineering, Atta?

Atta : I'm in Prague for one more night

Ani : You look lonely

Atta : I have books with me

Ani : A hermit occupies a hovel and soon hates the hovel.

Atta : A hermit is not a martyr

Ani : A martyr is not a hermit. (204)

Through the role of Al-Ani, Havis resorts to Versluys's 'triangulation' which is a "way to avoid a stark binary split of dichotomy between one side that is totally right and the other side that is totally wrong"(155); in addition, Havis's representation of the Muslim alien is characterized by an "interplay between the drive for sameness and the urge to foreground difference' (Gauthier 134). Both of Atta and Al-Ani adopted that sort of 'drive' for different reasons. Atta, in his argument with Al-Ani, defiantly and desperately defends his own scheme and his intellectual standpoint; he, moreover, spares no effort to convince Al-Ani to fulfill his promise and extend the required logistics to proceed in his plan. On the other hand, Al-Ani, although he is under surveillance by the Czech authorities for spying accusations, he similarly attempts to appear otherwise and evades any suspicious step that might involve him or his country in the plot of Atta. Accordingly, in front of each other, both tried to be different in their situations, but with others their positions varied according to the urgency of necessity: Al-Ani, for example employs Pavel for odd missions and pays him. Similarly, Atta uncovers his queer nature and asks Pave's help in cases of women; he, then, practices sex with the young boy, Dolni, but when it comes to debating his ideas, he used to declare that he is on the path of God. Thus, that interplay between the drive of sameness and foregrounding difference have been key issues in delineating the Muslim alien who wears various masks in return of his gains.

Al-Ani continues arguing with Atta over AlQaeda, annexing it with fundamentalism which became the key issue in the West against every Islamic phenomenon. He accuses Atta of being pulled by Muslim Brotherhood: “The Muslim Brotherhood pulled you in”, but Atta rejected that claim as he considered Al-Ani “barking on the wrong tree” (205); however, Al-Ani’s claim sounds believable as AlQaeda itself had branched out of the tenets of Brotherhood which have been set by Sayyid Qutb, known as the ‘father of Islamism’ and the godfather of the Muslim Brotherhood, who spoke out his anti-American principles:

That America, and its clients, are *jahiliyyah*; that America is controlled by Jews; that American are infidels, that they are animals and, worse, arrogant animals, and are unworthy of life; that America promotes pride and promiscuity in the service of human degradation, that America seeks to exterminate Islam- and that it will accomplish this not by conquest, not by colonial annexation, but by *example*” . (Amis, “Terror and Boredom” 62, emphasis in original)

In addition, Amis believes that age of terror is characterized by boredom which comprises ‘dependent minds’ who surrender their thought systems and freedom to other dogmatic powers as is the case with Islamic fundamentalism; however, the only possible solution, he believes, is turning into ‘independent minds’ capable on living out of any burdens. This is fully applicable to Atta who has never been open to discussing his principles which his superiors had implanted in him. His mind, accordingly, has become that submissive one that rejects and refutes any difference, and never attempted to develop or be ‘independent’ for fear of committing a violation of his sect’s laws

In their extended argument, both of Atta and Al-Ani represent two contrasting stances although they are deemed by the West as opposing camps that threaten the civilized countries. At the time Atta is trying to fulfill his deal with Iraq in the person of Al-Ani, the latter declares to him that ‘Al Qaeda hates all Arab governments, except Taliban’ (207); moreover, he urges him to “pick [his] fight” (207) and avoid terrorizing Saudi Arabia as this would cause worries for Iraq whose stance towards terrorism has altered as “Saddam has learned from his errors” (207). Al-Ani consolidates his argument by the fact that “Saddam is a brilliant tactician, Bin Laden is a hypocrite who speaks to the weak” (207) in an attempt to evade his country any further involvement after years of war with America. Atta, on the other hand, is entirely imbued with his leader’s ideas and fanatic policy and believes that “Bin Laden’s inspiration keeps thousands of men together on five continents” (207). Impatiently, Al-Ani concludes to Atta that they view success from different angles of vision; another case of ‘foregrounding difference’ is in question:

Al-Ani : We define success differently, Atta. You will kill children, and I cannot.

Atta : I do not kill children.....

We shall hit America like a glorious bolt from the sky.(209)

To carry out this mission, Atta has come to Prague to meet Al-Ani and complete the deal; he expresses his and his organization’s dire need for “ten vials” of anthrax or “equipment to neutralize transponders for commercial jets” (206). Consequently, Al-Ani offered to assist on a very limited scale through providing intelligence reports and sensitive maps; rather, he urged Atta to “respect [their] limitations” (207). Immediately, Atta, out of his

opportunistic and fanatic standpoint began to threaten Al-Ani in particular and Iraq in general :

Atta : we have four teams in place. They are willing to die. I will lead them. Five month from today. So this is it. A very fine grade of anthrax in aerosol. Iraq has received anticraft missiles and guidance systems from Czechs. All with export licenses for Syria and Yemen. We can expose this and embarrass you. (208)

In addition, as a reflection of his opportunism, Atta refers to other forms of Iraq's links with terrorism such as funding of Palestinians, and he demands the same; he, moreover, highlights Iraq's foreknowledge of Bin Laden's VX project that has been established on the Iraqi model. Then, Atta seriously assures Al-Ani that he did not come to Prague "for idiotic conversations, but.....to exchange favours'.(206). As such, Havis's treatment of his protagonist seems in conformity with the 'sneaky' and 'repulsive' nature of the Muslim alien which Western media made so prevalent.

Allan Havis's portrayal of Atta takes another approach to comply with the sweeping media image that Arabs are queer, deviant and sex-crazed. Regardless his religious inclination and his will, Havis's Atta is made to appear an abnormal person regarding sex. To the surprise of Pavel, Atta is ambiguous and not easy to trace; he could not understand how Atta represents that blatant type of contradiction when he asked for a woman:

Atta : I want a woman tonight.

Pavel : A woman? For pleasure or for business?

Atta : I want a young virgin.

Pavel : A virgin? How beautiful.

Atta : Smooth, and sweet between her legs....I do not care what she shaves....dark eyes, long legs, hairless body, no disease, clean. Very clean..... (197)

Instead, Pavel sends his son Dolni to Atta as he was aware of the Arabs' queerness and tells Al-Ani that Atta is "with a woman who is not a woman" (213) so that he can "feel clean to his God-Allah." (213). Moreover, Pavel refers to his son's ability to tame Atta without losing his virginity because, as he believes, to Dolni "sex is power" and in the process, he is "like a circus lion tamer" (213); then, he mockingly informs Al-Ani that his son Dolni is "the first of the seventy-two celestial virgins of Atta" (214) in reference to Muslims' belief in the reward of the hereafter. Similarly, Al-Ani dubs Atta as a "contradiction" as he initially requested a woman and ended up with a boy who represents a 'clean soul', and later spoke out that "all women will go to hell" (217). Dolni informs the police later that they had sex; an abnormal case of queerness that undermines Atta's religious dogmatism because it is prohibited in Islam. Apparently enough, this reciprocated attraction between Atta and Dolni could be interpreted on the level of their shared status of liminality at home because feminine characteristics were attached to both of them; thus, Dolni turns out to be a reshaped vision of Atta himself as Pavel has mentioned that his son "wanted to be a girl" (214)

Based on this closeness and mutual intimacy, Atta is constructed as a brazen opportunist who resorts to every possible trick to carry out his scheme and fulfill his targets; he lies and denies Dolni's accusation that he might be an assassin or a killer:

Dolni :Pavel says you might be an assassin.

Atta : He is wrong.

Dolni : Who are you after?

Atta ; I am not an assassin.

Dolni : But if you were, who would you kill?

Atta ; I'm not a killer . (215)

Psychopathic as he might seem, Atta represents the alien terrorist who is 'an ungraspable embodiment of the absolute other'(Versluys17); he occasionally displays marks of humanity as illustrated in his attempt to take Dolni with him, shows queer tendencies of sexuality, then reveals misleading inclinations towards violence and opportunism. In view of the mainstream Western image of the alien Muslim, Atta remains an alien terrorist with a fixed, deeply-rooted goal in his mind which is ignited by his corrupt faith; he is the one and the fearful other. In Dolni's words, he is

Very sick.....maybe he is buying sarin and anthrax to destroy innocents. Maybe a truck. Maybe a helicopter. He has a goal. He will succeed because he is smart and crazy. Very crazy. Very serious. And smart" (226)

Still, Atta's character could be viewed in light of his relationship with his father; he is born as the only brother to two sisters; his father, though educated, used to reproach him seeing no mannish traits about him; rather, finds him "more girlish than [his] two sisters" (216).The sediments of that tentative relationship left their negative impact upon his psychology; he began to suffer from a "sick fantasy" (217) that made him an easy prey to sexual queerness and intellectual deviation. In addition, he began to be extremely cautious towards others' behaviours and used to reconsider every tiny detail. The first of his cautious stances is when he enquired from Pavel about the possibilities of receiving travelers who look Middle-Easter in Prague, to which Pavel

reassured him that Iraqis (as representatives of Middle-Easterners) enjoy a particular status in Prague owing to the oil benefits which have been invested in black market arms deals. Similarly, when Atta received Dolni at the hotel, he saw a man with him downstairs; then, out of his cautious stance, he threatened: "I'll kill your friend if he comes to the door" (188). Above all, Dolni remains the only character who could sum up most of Atta's traits as a Muslim alien and a terrifying terrorist when he ends up reporting the police following his father's disappearance; he suspects that he might be killed by Atta:

I know who the murderer is. He still is in the city. May be for another night. I know his name and what he looks like. He has many names. This is one of his passports. ...It says Ahmed Ali Said, but that is not his photograph...he's a thin muscular man. But his eyes are reptilian . And that is not his real name. The murderer is from Egypt and has an apartment in Hamburg. He speaks German.....He is very educated. But he is a killer. (226)

Moreover, Atta does not conceal his anti-Americanism nor his anti-Semitism that represent the farthest goal to him and to his organization, and despite the mask of deception he wears, this does not prevent others to reach the truth. Thus, when Pavel began to maneuver with him whether his real mission is to "terrorize people?" (198), he cunningly denies it and claims that he is a businessman. In the same vein, when Dolni testily assures him that he expects American and the Jews to be his target, he did not deny it. Consequently, Havis's portrayal of the mind of Atta became that of a one "that becomes so saturated with a religious/political viewpoint that it is impenetrable, even to itself" (Colleran 110). Atta's dilemma incurs several losses and he failed

to make his life better, thus, the only option was to “make strangers feel his pain”, and this is propagated as “the scar in the Arab mind” (219). This sort of over-generalization could be the essence of the more sweeping accusation that all Arab Muslims “seek the destruction of the Western world” (Gauthier 43). Even if this accusation is true, nobody could refer to the real reasons why Muslims are against the West. A former US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who participated in a bombing mission in Vietnam, and turned a priest later, stated that the Americans are not hated because “[they] practice democracy, value freedom, or uphold human rights”, but they are so because “[their government denies these things to people in Third World” (Maravasti xiv). Another representative point of view that arouses the ire of Muslims around the world is that of the Israeli writer, Raphael Patai who believes that Arabs

have demonstrated an incapacity for disciplined and abiding unity...They show lack of coordination and harmony in organization and function, nor have they revealed an ability for cooperation. Any collective action for common benefits or mutual profits is alien to them. (qtd in Said’s *Orientalism*, 1977, 309-310)

No wonder then if Atta is found, in response, planning to fight against this unfounded categorization, and it is also quite logical to find Dolni referring to the nature of his coming mission: “I had a disturbing dream...a plane hits a building” (225) as a tactic of resisting an alien whose “anger is real” and in whose eyes there is a “devil”. Thus, Atta, is conclusively portrayed as an alien not only to the host country, but also to its culture and life style. Martin Amis believes that he “was not religious; he was not even especially political. He had allied himself with the militants because Jihad was, by many magnitudes, the most charismatic

idea of his generation” (“Second Plane” 6). In like manner, Jihad is considered one of the tenets of fundamentalism which represents “an irrational, agonistic, theocratic/ ideocratic system which is essentially and unappeasably opposed to its [Western] existence” (9). To transcend this adversity, Amis becomes so critical of the American attitude vis-à-vis the rest of the world”, rather, he calls for a “non-escalatory reaction” (9) in an attempt to bury or even minimize the increasing Muslim rage against the West; he crosses the borders of “nationalism, blocs, religion, ethnicities” towards a more spacious arena of humanity; namely, “species consciousness” (9-10).

Conclusion

In his portrayal of the Muslim alien in *Three Nights in Prague*, Allan Havis relied on leaked allegations for the main action of the play. Those allegations involved a secret meeting between a Middle-Eastern new comer to Prague, Mohamed Atta, and an Iraqi official, Al-Ani. The former is a representative of AlQaeda while the other stands for Iraq. Both sides are condemned of setting attacks against America, and claimed to harbor camps of extremists who threaten world peace. The play does not address 9/11 attacks directly, but indulges into the mind of the mastermind of the 19 hijackers. It is a piece of a precursor of an upcoming danger, digging deep in its causes, tactics, logistics, preparation, and its possible consequences. The mentality of Atta has been examined in matters like religion, sex, opportunism, intellectual deviation, through his arguments with the milieu around him. Havis, surprisingly, did not involve any American character in his play to achieve more credibility and to bring about a sympathetic world opinion.

Structurally, *Three Nights in Prague* is a one act play that comprises ten scenes; only four of them have Atta present while the remaining ones include the rest of the characters. The scenes that include Atta with others were devoted to debates concerning his ideology and the other aspects of his character; through them, Atta's characters is examined and evaluated in various matters; his ideas were clearly stated and were challengingly refuted. Through his approach, Atta has shown notable abilities: he seemed a persevering negotiator, a tactical deflector, and an insatiable outsider. Also, he did not reveal any willingness to back down from his mission, but dealt with everyone with caution, giving each the care he deserves.

Furthermore, Atta has evinced a great deal of emotional stability in full recognition of his status as a Muslim alien. His self-composure appeared in his heated arguments with Al-Ani, ranging from attempts to persuade him of meeting his demands, to a level of threatening him and Iraq through exposing their clandestine activities.

The remaining scenes involved the other characters in Atta's absence; they comprise discussions of how to control Atta and prevent his plot. The last scene celebrated only Dolni speaking at the police headquarter, giving full reports against Atta, representing, by so doing, the Western stance towards every Muslim alien.

Allan Havis also presented a sort of character identification through referring to Atta's relationship with his father that might be a key issue towards understanding his abnormal behaviors. Similarly, he began his play with a prologue that included Atta's will with numerous recommendations of how a Muslim should be; that prologue which added much to the sense of irony and

paradox owing to the contradiction between what is said and what is done.

Thus said, the play is a stunning precursor of a coming danger and a representation of how the West views the Muslim alien; it translated the Western media image into actions, and established the concept of Islamophobia and xenophobia.

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تصوير الإسلاموفوبيا للغريب المسلم في مسرحية ألان هيفيس: ثلاث ليال في براغ

ملخص

توافقا مع الموقف العدائي المتصاعد للغرب تجاه الإسلام والمسلمين بعد أحدث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر، ظهرت العديد من أطر التنميط التي وضعت المسلمين في موضع العدو الضمني. وقد تبين أن الكلمة الطنانة في هذا الشأن هي "الإسلاموفوبيا" التي تسببت في ذلك الموقف الإرهابي. هذا الرعب غير المبرر من الإسلام والمسلمين أصبح أولوية قصوى للعديد من الأدباء ومن بينهم ألان هيفيس ومسرحيته ثلاث ليال في براغ (2004) والتي تظهر الايديولوجية الخاصة بمحمد عطا العقل المدبر لأحداث 11-9 وديناميكيات عقله وضميره. والدراسة تطرح في بدايتها عرضا شاملا لمفهوم الإسلاموفوبيا وكراهية الأجانب والجهاد والإرهاب. كما تناقش الدراسة العوامل الأخرى التي أسهمت في تشكيل "الكائن" الغريب مثل وسائل الإعلام والأبواق السياسية والإنتاج السينمائي، وتطرح الدراسة بعد ذلك تحليلا للجوانب النفسية والاجتماعية والدينية للبطل في ضوء الرؤية الغربية للغريب المسلم. وتعتمد الدراسة في إطارها النظري على تحليل جوت ستشاك وجرين برج وآراء إدوارد سعيد عن الآخر ومراجعات جاك شاهين عن تأثير الميديا والسينما في تشخيص المسلم. وتخلص الدراسة في النهاية أن موقف الغرب تجاه المسلمين هو موقف هش نظرا لاعتماد المسرحية في بنائها الدرامي على أخبار وتسريبات مزعومة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المسلمون - الأصولية - اسلاموفوبيا - كراهية الأجانب - الدين -

الغرب