

Critical Studies on Security

Anxiety and the Creation of the Scapegoated Other

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Abstract

This article examines how anxiety saturates the neo-Orientalist driven thesis of new terrorism, especially in how both anxiety and new terrorism are related to the unknown. Of particular importance is the description of al Qaeda as an amorphous and thus unknowable threat by Western academics and the media, which reifies the discursive neo-Orientalist binary of the West versus Islam. Scholars of International Relations are increasingly engaging with emotions and their impact on binary and hierarchical structures. Emotions operate relationally as they are the articulation of affect. The emotions discursively constitute identity and community structures, helping to inform ideas of self and other. The more specific study of anxiety reveals similarities, but anxiety also operates differently from other emotions as it is focused on future potentialities. Thus, terrorism and anxiety are co-constitutive in their conceptual dependency on futurity and uncertainty that sustain the neo-Orientalist binary.

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Beginning with Neta Crawford's (2000) seminal piece and continuing with Christine Sylvester's (2012) focus upon the experiences and experiencing of war, how emotions discursively constitute and structure communal hierarchies has become increasingly important to international relations (see also Edkins 2004; Fierke 2004; Solomon 2012;

Hutchison 2013).¹ The feminist community emphasizes the study of emotions towards ethics (Nussbaum 2001), international politics (Crawford 2000), and understanding community trauma (Edkins 2004; Fierke 2004). Poststructuralists have also emphasized the importance of emotions in hierarchical structures (Bleiker and Hutchison 2008; Solomon 2012; Åhäll and Gregory 2013) and both theoretical approaches focus upon emotion as a discursive practice. A person is reliant upon language to make his/her emotions intelligible to themselves and other people thus “emotion...belongs to a social world” (Fierke 2004, 480). Emotions are therefore relational (see also Edkins 2004; Sylvester 2012), a constitutive element of theorizing emotions that Sara Ahmed (2006, 10) refers to as the “sociality of emotions.” As such, emotions help to build identity and constitute groupings, allowing for hierarchical structures of in- and out-groups to emerge (Hutchison 2013).

This article relies upon emotion-based discursive structures to uncover the anxiety in the fight against terror and how it feeds into the binary construction of the US-self against the radical Islamist other after 9/11. While it has been noted previously that in the aftermath of 9/11, US society became fearful and anxious (Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg 2002)— the public was anxious about further attacks (Kaiser, Vick, and Major 2004); and politicians were anxious to appease the public (Lum, Kennedy, and Sherley 2006)— understanding how anxiety operates socially has not been explored in-depth. Thus, this article investigates how the politics of anxiety constructs radical Islamist terrorists as the ultimate scapegoat and justifies violence against them, particularly the assassination of

Osama bin Laden. The sociality of anxiety quickly establishes in- and out-groups with particular identities and ways of thinking. Accordingly, the impulse to resolve anxiety leads to scapegoating (see Kerr 1988)—or blaming the out-group for a disproportionate responsibility in a present crisis.

Anxiety creates and maintains the very binary upon which the US/Western response to terrorism is currently situated—the neo-Orientalist discursive binary of the rational, progressive US against the irrational, less progressive Muslim world (as discussed in Nayak 2006; Shepherd 2006; Nayak and Malone 2009). In this case, the global Muslim community began (if not continued) to bear the brunt of social anxiety about terrorism (Puar and Rai 2002, 120; Morey and Yaqin 2011; Esposito 2011). This convoluted binary is constituted through “sticky words” (Ahmed 2004, 11) and thus anxiety in general is related to fear and worry, but it is also sticky with indeterminacy, uncertainty, and unknowing-ness (see Massumi 2005; Ahmed 2004, 67). These happen to ‘saturate’ the object of terrorism, particularly radical Islamist terrorism as posed by al Qaeda. Thus, words and phrases used to describe the threat of al Qaeda and bin Laden are also used to describe or determine anxiety, such as amorphous, indeterminate, and/or evocative of futurity (for the treatment of the al Qaeda threat see Devetak 2005; Jackson 2008; and for the discussion of anxiety see Kerr 1988, 47). These sticky words fed in to the discursive hierarchy of the War on Terror allowing for violence, particularly the assassination of bin Laden, to become a resolution for the felt anxiety.

This article argues that the politics of anxiety differentiates between self/community and others, making the other a repository for the anxiety in a way that constructs them as scapegoats, which justifies violence between self/selves and others. It will begin by exploring the theorizing of emotions within IR, particularly the way that articulated emotions contribute to building self/other identities. More specifically anxiety is an emotion that creates relational ties, one that structures in- and out-groups thereby generating a hierarchical structure. Further, anxiety over terrorism in the US after 9/11 developed alongside a neo-Orientalist view of the radical Islamic threat. The article will establish the relationship between anxiety-terrorism-neo-Orientalism by looking at the use of anxiety-related words by Western academics and media that saturate the object of radical Islamist terrorism. More importantly, this article will establish that Osama bin Laden was perceived as a threat to the US due to the anxiety that saturated terrorism. His assassination was seen as a way of resolving this anxiety. Therefore, emotions are fundamental to how security concerns are shaped and how they are strategized and (presumably) resolved.

EMOTION LADEN: DISCURSIVE HIERARCHIES AND STICKY WORDS

International relations scholarship has paid increasing attention to the role of emotions in politics (see Crawford 2000; Bleiker and Hutchison 2008; Åhäll and Gregory 2013; Hutchison 2013), therefore this paper argues it is important to look at the impact of anxiety upon the discursive construction and reification of self/other groups. This article acknowledges the importance of problematizing masculine rationality/feminine emotionality binary (see Pateman 1980, 22, 24, 26; Elshtain 1981; Nussbaum 2001, 16,

22; Ahmed 2004, 3), but extends the argument outside of this. Like Martha Nussbaum's (2001, 2) articulation of the importance of emotions to ethical theorizing, this article holds that emotions need to be recognized for their impact on an individual but also for their impact on community.

While feelings/emotions may be experienced internally they are associated with external behaviors that are dependent upon being recognized by others, which is "cognitively and culturally construed and constructed" (Crawford 2000, 125). Ahmed (2006, 10) refers to this as the sociality of emotions: the self and its community are constituted by how "we respond to objects and others." Karin Fierke (2004, 480) draws out the discursive element further. She argues that we may "assume" some experiences, such as pain, "exist independent of language," yet these are "fundamentally dependent upon language for their meaning." Articulating an emotion "presupposes the existence of a grammar" that includes the word for it and reveals the "place of this word in relation to others" (Fierke 2004, 480). Taking this one step further, emotions, "such as compassion, shame, or humiliation presume a relationship" between individuals. Therefore, "[t]he experience of emotion may be individual, but if expressed, it is expressed in relation to others, in a language understandable to them" (Fierke 2004, 480). Emotions are given meaning, impact, and importance through discourse and this in turn orders the emotions as well as the effect of them.

It is the very sociality of emotions that leads to the creation of insider and outsider groupings (see Hutchison 2013). Emotions are oriented towards an object: "emotions

...are ‘about something.’ The ‘aboutness’ of emotions means they involve a stance on the world, or a way of apprehending the world” (Ahmed 2004, 7; see also Nussbaum 2001, 26-7). Thus, our emotions about a particular object will either unite or divide us from others. It is well known that discourse constructs hierarchies—“[d]iscourse is the primary site for the exercise, not of consensual reasoning, but of power” (Epstein 2013, 502)—and it should be equally recognized that emotions are integral to the creation of social constructions and social structures (Solomon 2012, 912). For instance, Ty Solomon (2012, 913-4) argues that emotions are discursive reality of affect (subject to human’s linguistic limitations), thus discursive structures and binaries are informed by emotions. Affect is an “‘indeterminate’ stat[e] of mood that remain[s] outside of discourse” (Solomon 2012, 918) that is sometimes identified with “influence” and “sensation” (Åhäll and Gregory 2013, 118). Affect becomes a “discursive reality” when people articulate it via “recognizable emotional signifiers” (Solomon 2012, 909, see also 918), thus emotions are the limited linguistic conceptions of affect. While the “affective experience... is diminished once the body is socialized into language” (Solomon 2012, 914), it is nonetheless important since “affects and discourses *infuse* each other” (913). Therefore, it is not so easy to tease out affect/emotion from discourse and then from the hierarchies that they build and uphold.

These emotion-laden discursive hierarchies are informed by what Sara Ahmed calls ‘sticky words.’ Emotion moves through a community/social grouping through the circulation of the object of that emotion. This object becomes “sticky, or saturated with” emotion “as [a] sit[e] of personal and social tension” (Ahmed 2004, 11). The articulation

of emotion “generates” an object (Ahmed 2004, 13). For instance, Ahmed (2006, 13) uses the statement, “The nation mourns,” to illustrate how the nation is imbued with emotion and constituted by this emotional attribution. Furthermore, as an object of an emotion is circulated between individuals, the words that are related to a particular emotion are also dispersed resulting in a transference, where that particular emotion is now “stuck” to those other words (Ahmed 2004, 13). Additionally, when a nation ‘mourns,’ it may be mourning some bodies over others or some mourners may be more important than others. As a result mourning may relate now to other words and emotions—sadness, anger, and grief—as well as to the hierarchy of which bodies or social groupings matter more (Ahmed 2004, 13). From this, one can see how emotions and related words adhere to a particular object as well as how these discursive practices reify and construct hierarchies.

This previous work on emotions in international relations leads to several general conclusions. First, emotions are relational and inform community identity. This identity can contribute to the creation of insider/outsider status, which is inherently hierarchical. Secondly, emotions center upon and thus saturate particular objects. As these objects circulate, the emotion follows. Thus, words that ‘stick’ with the emotion-saturated-object feed into the emotion-laden discursive hierarchical structuring. As the next section will demonstrate, this can be seen in the operation of anxiety generally as well as in anxiety’s specific relationship with terrorism as an object of emotion.

The Sociality of Anxiety

Some researchers on emotion divide emotions into ‘basic’ and ‘complex’ categories (see Power and Tarsia 2007). Basic emotions, such as anger, disgust, anxiety, happiness, and sadness, are the more immediate emotions a person may feel, but from these complex emotions follow (Power and Tarsia 2007, 20). For instance, the more complex emotion of fear stems from anxiety (Power and Tarsia 2007, 20). Other studies have reversed anxiety and fear, believing fear is a basic emotion from which the more complex emotion of anxiety forms, relating both to nervousness, tension, and worry (see Power and Tarsia 2007, 21-2). Whether fear or anxiety is more complex is not necessarily important to this study because what this scholarship does is establish a psychological and discursive relationship between anxiety and fear, as well as nervousness, tension, worry, and vulnerability (see Holloway and Jefferson 1997, 256; Power and Tarsia 2007, 20-2). It is from the relationship between basic and complex emotions that one can identify anxiety-related words in which their usage indicates how saturated an object might be with anxiety.

Furthermore, multiple studies across disciplines including psychology (Kerr 1998, 48; Bowen 1993, 361-2; Power and Tarsia 2007), political science (Huddy et al. 2005; Druckman and McDermott 2008), sociology (Ahmed 2004), and social theory (Massumi 2005) articulate anxiety alongside particular words that reflect the object-of-anxiety’s relationship with indeterminacy, unknowing-ness, and uncertainty. In fact, anxiety is differentiated from its related emotions precisely for these reasons. Fear is about a specific object’s approach to the subject whereas anxiety becomes fixated on the futurity

of the event or the activity of the object itself (Ahmed 2004, 67). This makes anxiety less about the subject-object interaction and more about the unknowable future activity of an object, which may result in the “overestimation of risk,” “a sense of uncertainty, [and a] lack of control” (Huddy et al. 2005, 593, 595). Anxiety continues to manifest around perceived/actual objects, such as threat (see Ungar 2001, 281) or, as will be argued later, risk (Daase and Kessler 2007).

Multiple authors have provided evidence of the anxiety that existed within American society after 9/11. Pyszczynski et al. (2002, 91) found that anxiety was present amongst 72 percent of Americans who believed another attack was imminent and amongst the 40 percent of Americans who thought that they or family members would be victims of a terror attack. Further Kaiser et al. (2004) correlated the level of anxiety with a desire for revenge against the (radical Islamist) terrorists. These studies demonstrate that anxiety operates like all other emotions: relationally, that anxiety was wrought by a fear for community, as well as centered on an object (terrorist threat) that subsequently constituted a hierarchy of the US-self against the terrorist-other. Yet, anxiety also operates differently than fear—anxiety is more diffuse in its focus on possibilities and futurity (Kerr 1988, 48; Massumi 2005, 35; Ahmed 2004, 67). It is important to recognize that the future-centeredness of anxiety means it is an emotion that lingers and feeds off of uncertainty.

Psychiatrist Murray Bowen’s (1993) family systems theory gives some profound insight into how anxiety involves the futurity of an event and how this impacts the sociality of

anxiety, leading to scapegoating. When a system encounters constant anxiety, or chronic anxiety, the response is to turn inward in a desire for “oneness”—or efforts to think and act alike (Kerr 1988, 50; Bowen 1993, 177-9; Ahmed 2004, 71). Such unity, however, is unstable because the anxious group becomes increasingly less tolerant of difference (Kerr 1988, 50; Bowen 1993, 178). This leads to the creation of a scapegoat as a repository for all negative events (Kerr 1998; see Bowen 1993, 443). A scapegoat is derived from how “anxiety and fear create the effect of borders” (Ahmed 2004, 76) leading to articulation of a self/collective to be protected from an-other. Othering happens when humans allow the differences seen in other people, whether it is gender, class, race/ethnicity, religion, etc., to constitute an absolute, dehumanizing difference between the self and other (see Bronfen 1992, 182; Volf 1996, 77). In the aftermath of 9/11, Muslims became the scapegoated other in the US and the West due to the disproportionate fear of radical Islamic political violence (Tuastad 2003; Cole 2011, 128; Morey and Yaqin 2011, 18-9). The next section will show how this was owed to felt and shared anxiety over the object of terrorism.

The very power of terrorism is based upon the perceived indeterminacy of its threat—that the ‘terrorists’ might strike again at any time, in any place, creating anyone as a (potential) victim (Schmid and Jongman 2006, 5; Braithwaite 2013). The events of 9/11 provoked one of the strongest and complex “global economies of fear” (Ahmed 2004, 72), which interplays with anxiety in this instance, leading to an “ontology of insecurity” where security can only be maintained through the continued articulation of who/what is to be secured (76). In arguing that there is an object of security, such as the self,

collective, or state, there must be something to be made insecure. This returns us to the importance of the scapegoat (see also Holloway and Jefferson 1997, 260). In the War on Terror, this has become the radical Islamist other and

“[k]nowing” [this] Other is integral to protecting and securing what one “knows” to be true about the [US’] Self (i.e. the Self is good, normal, enlightened, progressive, and right and the [Muslim] Other is backwards, barbaric, primitive, and dangerous) (Nayak 2006, 46).

Thus, it is important to study terrorism further as an object of anxiety and to determine what words and phrases saturate terrorism as the object of US anxiety in particular.

THE STICKINESS OF ANXIETY: DISCURSIVE NEO-ORIENTALIST BINARIES AND THE NEW TERRORISM THESIS

This section will clarify the relationship between anxiety and the object of radical Islamist terrorism, particularly as emotions and words associated with anxiety, such as fear, indeterminacy, and uncertainty, are often used by Western academics and the media to describe terrorism. The anxiety-driven discursive creation of scapegoats is witnessed in neo-Orientalism, which identifies the irrational Muslim other as a security threat to the rational Western self (Nayak 2006, 43). In practice, Orientalism is a discursive construction used by the West to claim an authority over Arabs/Arabia (Said 1979, 7; Said 2004, 61). Neo-Orientalism offers an update to include critical examinations of gender, sexuality, and the conflation of Muslims with Arabs (Akram 2000, 8-9; Nayak 2006, 43). Moreover, neo-Orientalism constructs Muslims as fundamental religious fanatics resistant to progress and education, differentiating Muslims from liberal, progressive, and tolerant Westerners (see Nayak 2006; Shepherd 2006; Hellmich 2008;

Gentry and Whitworth 2011). This bias infuses the new terrorism thesis, which holds that future terrorist events will be (and have been) driven by large-scale attacks dependent upon fundamentalists (such as radical Islamist violence).

Terrorism and Neo-Orientalism

Terrorism studies and attitudes towards terrorism have been influenced by neo-Orientalism since at least the mid-1980s (see Rapoport 1984; Jackson 2007). It is mainly witnessed in the new terrorism thesis first articulated in the 1990s by Walter Laqueur (1996; 2000) and Bruce Hoffman (1999; 2002). They argued that terrorist tactics, which used to avoid mass casualties, were evolving into events of a large-scale casualties and destruction—triggering Western anxieties that terrorists would use WMDs. The new terrorists justified large-scale attacks through radical, religious ideologies (Jurgensmeyer 2000; Stern 2003). After the rise of al Qaeda in the late 1990s, culminating, of course, with the 9/11, Madrid, and 7/7 bombings, new terrorism became tied to radical Islam and the “amorphous” (as will be discussed below this is an adjective related to anxiety) al Qaeda network (see Tuastad 2003; Hoffman 2003 and 2004; Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010).

In his 2003 article, Dag Tuastad traces how neo-Orientalist academic scholarship influenced the Bush administration in the aftermath of 9/11 (Tuastad 2003, 592; see also Nayak and Malone 2009, 257). The discourse of the Bush administration relied upon both neo-Orientalism and the new terrorism thesis to set the US apart from and above the

radical Muslim other as the enemy in the War on Terror (Puar and Rai 2002; Hellmich 2008; Solomon 2012, 910). Neo-Orientalism coming out of the US is an extension of the historical progression of American exceptionalism. The War on Terror is one more way for the US to show itself as a beacon of progress and liberalism in the world (Nayak 2006, 44; Nayak and Malone 2009, 254-5, 261). Thus, while the West is one way of constituting a collective the US constructed an even more particular self/collective identity (Nayak 2006, 46; Nayak and Malone 2009).

This literature and construction of the radical Islamic threat relies upon several premises that are associated with anxiety. The very basis of the ‘new terror’ threat had to do with the potential of a previously unseen type of attack—mass casualties and widespread destruction that could happen anywhere, at any time, to anyone. The new terror threat is dependent upon being an amorphous threat, which then imbues the conflation of new terrorism and neo-Orientalism in anxiety. It is also reliant upon a fear and distrust of the other that threatens not just US/Western security but Western ways of being. The anxiety stems from a conception of self, community, and nationality that are bound up with Western/US values that are all seen as uniformly different from the other’s identity (Puar and Rai 2002; Tuastad 2003; Kochi 2009)—and these differences pose a threat and a danger that the self cannot afford to give into (see Kerr 1988, 37).

Sticky Terrorism: Anxiety and neo-Orientalism

Brian Massumi's (2005) articulation of terrorism identifies how it is saturated with anxiety. For Massumi, the threat of terrorism after 9/11 was "unknowable," lacking specificity and determinacy. As an object terrorism was all but formless: "If it has a form, it is not a substantial form" (Massumi 2005, 35). Sara Ahmed's examination of anxiety and terrorism within the sociality of emotions helps to further this point. She finds that 'terrorist' has become sticky with Islam, Arab, fundamentalism, repressive, and primitive (Ahmed 2004, 76). These, of course, are words essential to reifying the discursive neo-Orientalist binary. She also draws attention to the "the narrative of the 'could be' terrorist," which reflects the potentiality of anxiety. The narrative holds that terrorists are construed "as...shadowy figure[s]" permeating their activity with "an unspecifiable may-come-to-pass" (Ahmed 2004, 79). This "unknowing-ness" is important for multiple reasons. First, it reveals the attachment of anxiety to terrorism. Anxiety is rhetorically and emotionally attached to uncertainty and the unknown. Second, neo-Orientalist anxiety has passed to new terrorism. Unknowingness became part of the way to construct and implement action by the US in the War on Terror. Third, this shadowy quality surrounds the descriptions of bin Laden, as the master terrorist hiding in mountain caves.

The usage of 'amorphous' to describe the al Qaeda network in the decade after 9/11 is particularly telling. Massumi's quote from above is, in essence, the definition of amorphous: "having no specific shape; formless" according to dictionary.com. It is a word both sticky with anxiety but also with new terrorism and al Qaeda. Scholarship roots the amorphous nature of the network within new terrorism due to the risks: counter-

terrorists could not be sure of where the next attack would happen and from what direction because of the extensive reach of the al Qaeda network.

Several key terrorism studies scholars (Hoffman 2003 and 2004; Sanderson 2004; Jackson 2006) rely upon the adjective to describe al Qaeda's transformation from a centralized command structure to a network. Sanderson's (2004, 56 & 59) use highlights the new terrorism threat: the change of terrorist group structures from centralized to "amorphous" (56) presents a "dramatically increasing...challenge to government efforts at combating these groups" (59). The 'amorphous' network structure is explicitly linked with the religious frame of new terrorism when Jackson (2006) contrasts al Qaeda—as an "amorphous ideological movement for global jihad" (241)—with the "small size and tight organization" of "'classic' left-wing groups in Europe" (242). Amorphous is associated with the perceived 'new' challenges of al Qaeda—presenting its difference not just due to group structure but also stemming from ideological framework. Amorphous here signals the anxiety over the unknowns change brings. Similarly, amorphous is embedded within a series of rhetorical questions Hoffman poses to demonstrate how little is known about al Qaeda in the aftermath of 9/11:

Is [al Qaeda] a monolithic, international terrorist organization with an identifiable command and control apparatus or is it a broader, more *amorphous* movement tenuously held together by a loosely networked transnational constituency? Has it become a franchise operation with like-minded local representatives independently advancing the parent organization's goals or does it still function at the direction of some centralized command nucleus? Is al Qaeda a concept or a

virus? An army or an ideology? A populist transnational movement or a vast international criminal enterprise? All of the above? None of the above? Or, some of the above? (*italic emphasis added*)

While Hoffman is using ‘amorphous’ to discuss al Qaeda’s possible structural transformation, it is a singular word embedded in a series of examples of unknowns and part of his challenge to the perceived uncertainty, or arguably, the anxiety.

An echo of this can be found in Donald Rumsfeld’s rather famous statement from a Department of Defense briefing in February 2002:

... because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult ones.

Embedded in this are implications of both anxiety and neo-Orientalism. Implicit in the usage of “our country and other free countries” are Western ideals, situating the “unknown unknowns” (if not all of his categorizations) as stemming from outside “free countries,” i.e. the non-West. But more so, anxiety is implicit throughout Rumsfeld’s focus upon the vulnerability of the unknowingness.

Daase and Kessler's (2007) excellent deconstruction of Rumsfeld's statement focuses on the epistemological and practical reality of these un/known categorizations, particularly for risk assessment and security policy. While Daase and Kessler did not use the language of emotions or even discuss anxiety, the implications of it are throughout. They assert "uncertainty" is "the central problem of foreign and security policy today" (Daase and Kessler 2007, 412). Decision-making today, particularly risk assessment, is not based on "firm knowledge" (412) especially as terrorism (the "primary security concern") "requires bold new strategies because of its shadowy character and its incalculable dangers" (412). Basically, the unknowingness of terrorism is the "risk" (412, 413, and 418). Terrorism is especially illustrative of Rumsfeld's "known unknowns" because of its constant imposition on future security (Daase and Kessler 2007, 424). Furthermore, terrorism is a pernicious known unknown as it is difficult to "trace new developments and spontaneous changes in motivational structure." So while terrorism is not predictable a new attack is always probable (Daase and Kessler 2007, 424). The wording used in the deconstruction—uncertainty, shadowy, incalculable—aligns with near perfection to Ahmed's list of terrorism-centered anxiety words.

Killing bin Laden

Moreover, this anxiety over the uncertainty of the terrorist threat is very present in discursive constructions of Osama bin Laden's leadership.² If al Qaeda was constructed as amorphous and indeterminate, then as its leader bin Laden was constructed as even more so. For instance, a Google search on 12 September 2014 for the terms "bin Laden amorphous" resulted in 9,890,000 hits. Further reading of the articles that were returned on the first page of the Google search was also revealing: the discourse that is related to anxiety is often also immediately accompanied by neo-Orientalist language.

For instance, a 2004 *Economist* article declared al Qaeda to be "amorphous but alive" in its headline, detailing that another attack by al Qaeda was a certainty but, due to its "ideological franchise," where these would come from is unknown. Referencing al Qaeda members as "jihadis," it argues that they "draw their strength from a common pool of self-righteous anger at what they see as the humiliation of Muslims at the hands of West." The looming threat stems from a neo-Orientalist understanding of emotions attributed to (all) Muslims: the article implies to its Western readers that the anger is misguided as it is only these particular people who see this humiliation. It decontextualizes the violence from any post-colonial issue while still reifying communal boundaries between the West and Islam.

² Richard Devetak (2005) demonstrates how the indeterminate qualities that surround constructions of al Qaeda also were used to construe bin Laden as a 'ghost' (as opposed to the construction of Saddam Hussein as a 'monster').

A website, titled “Understanding the Conflict: Terrorism,” hosted by *The Seattle Times* visually and rhetorically links bin Laden and al Qaeda with all terrorism. At the center of the page is a picture of bin Laden, which is accompanied by a brief description of him. Underneath this picture, the viewer can then explore “Al-Qaida” or “Terrorist Groups.” Before clicking on the links, the website offers brief descriptions. Al Qaeda is described as an “amorphous” “international terrorist network.” The descriptor for “Terrorist Groups” declares that terrorists, without differentiating between fundamental Christians, national-separatist, or Marxist groups, share a “vision of holy war [that] excludes any possibility of compromise.” Thus a reader moves from bin Laden to the anxiety related conceptualization of ‘amorphous’ al Qaeda to the neo-Orientalist idea that all terrorists uncompromisingly wage (Islamist) holy war—removing reason and the idea that one could negotiate or talk with ‘terrorists.’

Such conceptualizations lead to this idea of the terrorist as monstrous (see Puar and Rai 2002). In fact, the CIA created a doll of bin Laden that first appeared to be a normal action-figure but heat from skin contact would alter the appearance of his face into a red-faced green-eyed demon (Goldman 2014). While the CIA never distributed these toys to children, it feeds into the idea that bin Laden was a terrifying, inhuman threat. Anxiety-laced-neo-Orientalism surrounds bin Laden. He is described as an “elusive” “master terrorist,” hiding out in the “badlands on the borders of Pakistan and Afghanistan” (Reid 2009). The master terrorist label ascribes some sort of mythic/mystic power to bin Laden that has roots within a neo-Orientalist framing. Robert Fisk’s 1993 interview with bin Laden for *The Independent* begins by describing bin Laden:

With his high cheekbones, narrow eyes and long [gold-fringed] brown robe, Mr Bin Laden looks every inch the mountain warrior of mujahideen legend.

Chadored children danced in front of him, preachers acknowledged his wisdom (Fisk 1993).

Bin Laden then is a monster, a mystic, a terrorist beyond all others. He leads a shadowy organization and equally hides in the shadows of Afghanistan-Pakistan's mountains.

Anxiety and fear over bin Laden and al Qaeda culminated in his assassination in 2011.

Within days of the attacks, posters were seen in Manhattan depicting bin Laden being sodomized by the Empire State Building with the caption "The Empire Strikes Back" (Puar and Rai 2002, 126). While this is of course deeply gendered and homo-erotic-phobia (for a deeper discussion see Puar and Rai 2002), it is indicative of a need for revenge. In the aftermath of 9/11, many Americans expressed the sentiment for revenge as a product of their anxieties over the attacks (Kaiser et al. 2004). In fact, revenge produces similar neural activity to the rush from drug use, reducing anxiety (Jaffe 2011). Anxiety also dissipates when victims of either crime or terrorism feel that justice, retribution, or revenge have been achieved (Hafer 2000, 171; Kaiser et al. 2004, 505). The anxiety produced by 9/11 and the perceived need to retaliate against Muslims makes problematic 'sense' in this light (Morey and Yaqin 2011, 18).

When bin Laden's death assassination was announced on 1 May 2011, celebrations that grew increasingly raucous broke out in front of the White House and on the streets of New York. These reactive celebrations were visual reminders of how much bin Laden, as

the ultimate terrorist, had been dehumanized. His dying was not the death of a human, but the death of a person constituted as a supernatural figure—the ultimate other (see Puar and Rai 2002, 118-119; Devetak 2005, 624). Thus his death was simply the provision of security and the resolution of anxiety to those who hated him. Mark Thompson, writing for time.com (2011), stated his death “represents sweet vindication.”

On 3 May 2011, two days after the assassination, the *New York Times* asked readers to respond to the following questions: “Was his death significant in our war against terror? And do you have a negative or positive view of this event?” Each of the 13,684 respondents plotted their answer onto an interactive graph³ that is divided into four quadrants. The left-right axis weighs the emotional response, ranging from negative on the left to positive on the right. The up-down axis measures the significance of his death, with most significant at the top and insignificant at the bottom. Where a respondent plotted him/herself is marked with a blue square, hovering over the square with a mouse reveals the comment; when people chose the same square, the blue is darker. The upper-right quadrant (a positive response to a ‘significant’ death) contains the most blue squares overall as well as more darker blue squares. This was also the most interesting quadrant to this paper because these responses tended to be pleased by the victory/revenge of his assassination. To quote a few: “This was emotionally important for many Americans... Justice in whatever form it was done, was needed;” “I see no negatives to our actions. Highly significant because it showed that none of these people are safe...” But many in this quadrant were also worried about the possibility al Qaeda retaliation. Together these

³ The URL is: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/03/us/20110503-osama-response.html?_r=0

comments speak to how anxiety operates: that revenge is felt to be a salve to anxiety only to have anxiety continue due to possible future attacks.

Indeed, the persistence of anxiety can be read in a CNN blog post by William Bennett and Seth Leibsohn two days after the assassination. They reflected that his death was “a welcome victory and much-hoped-for news in our long fight,” before discussing the threat of new terrorism. In this frame, his death was not enough: “unless and until [his death] is seen as a new beginning and a new seriousness in our war against radical Islam, more Americans will be killed.” Addressing the al Qaeda threat seriously means the US recognize that al Qaeda has “metastasized” beyond bin Laden through the network and that bin Laden’s death has created a vacuum for “who knows what kinds of leaders” (Bennett and Leibsohn 2011). In their anxiety over the future potential or retaliatory attacks by al Qaeda, Bennett and Leibsohn clearly delineate their community (the US) against the cancerous radical Islamic threat that al Qaeda is.

THE POLITICS OF ANXIETY: THE INEVITABILITY OF THE SCAPEGOAT

As Crawford (2000) suggested, politics are informed by emotion. Hence, security is informed by emotion (see also Åhäll and Gregory 2013). If the purpose of critical security studies is to challenge epistemological considerations of security, this article then argues that it is not just emotions but the specific emotion of anxiety that should be of significant importance to security scholars and practitioners. Anxiety is something of a unique emotion; in and of itself, it is a bit indeterminate and amorphous due to its

relationship with other emotions—fear, worry, uncertainty—as well as its future-centredness.

The current fascination with the new terrorism thesis is anxiety-centred if not anxiety-driven. New terrorism captures its audience through the idea that these raging, religious fanatics can strike anyone, anywhere, at anytime, killing an unknown mass quantity of people. This is the very definition of anxiety. The indeterminate quality of anxiety drives a need to scapegoat others, which is seen most clearly in current affairs in the War on Terror and the continuing fallout from it. Hence, anxiety is not just an emotion that stands alone and has no place in politics and security. It underpins how risk is perceived and dealt with, particularly in the way that such perceptions lead to the creation of scapegoated others from which the self must be protected. Anxiety also drives a desire for revenge because it is perceived to be a way to preserve the self. The targeting of bin Laden was just this. He was the ultimate, neo-Orientalist other made monstrous and mythologized. Yet, most importantly, anxiety is not so easily resolved. Even in the discussions of bin Laden's death, the anxiety returned in ways that were discursively linked to a neo-Orientalist bias.

Neo-orientalism is a discursive construction and it is a construction that aligns with anxiety not just within this moment over terrorism. It is a construction larger than terrorism—it is an anxious construction about the Western self versus the Muslim other. It is an all too easily accessible construction used in the colonial moment and now in a post-colonial moment to maintain the status-quo hierarchy. Anxiety surrounds this

powerful structuring—as a pre-linguistic reaction to external stimuli it forms the self; as a verbalized emotion it secures the self to a community; and the articulation of anxiety builds the social hierarchy, binding anxiety with the binary of neo-Orientalism—granting permission to use violence against the scapegoat.

The anxiety fed neo-Orientalism rests on a flawed premise of complete self/other differentiation. It is not possible to live without challenges to the self because humans are relational and communal (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000, 5). Living in community means that humans are vulnerable to each other—each person’s security rests in another’s goodwill. Therefore human life is one of mutual dependency (Levinas 2006, 29, 64; Butler 2006, 2009). There are different ways to react to this vulnerability. One is to recognize the creative dynamic that comes with living in community; another would be to give into the anxiety and fear that vulnerability might generate (see Gentry 2013, 51).

There is a different way forward. For Levinas (2006, 28) mutual vulnerability demands a ‘liturgical’ response—for the powerful to sacrificially relate to another. The West, with its military strength and more robust economy, is not accustomed to vulnerability. What the 9/11, Madrid, and 7/7 attacks demonstrated was that these strengths did not preclude attacks. Protecting citizens is of primary importance yet virulent responses may be pointless exercises by simply feeding into the tit-for-tat game. The anxiety wrought by terrorism must be conscientiously dealt with—not reacted to. Levinas’ liturgy ends (the useless) retaliation and revenge by asking for a different conceptualization of a powerful self and a rehumanizing of the scapegoated Muslim other.

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