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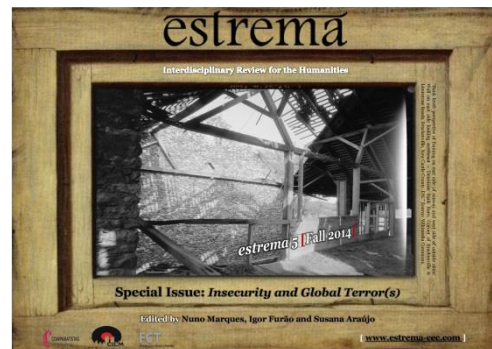
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**Editors' Introduction: "To Penetrate every Wall and Home":
Insecurity and Global Terror(s)¹**

Nuno Marques,² Igor Furão³ and Susana Araújo⁴

In December 2001, three months after the attacks on the *World Trade Centre* (WTC) on 11th September, Don DeLillo wrote that the real target of the terrorists was “the high gloss of [US] modernity ... technology ... foreign policy ... It was the power of American culture to penetrate every wall, home, life, and mind” (DeLillo 2001, 34). Let us begin this introduction by focusing on the words “wall[s] and home[s]” used by DeLillo. In light of US hegemony, how should we re-think and revisit notions of *home* and its (linguistic and physical) boundaries? How can we measure the extent of a movement that reaches “*every wall, home, life, and mind*”?

One should not forget that the word “*home*” was famously employed by the US government in the “Homeland Security Act of 2002,” introduced in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks and subsequent mailings of anthrax spores, to justify U.S. military interventions outside its national borders by effectively extending the geographic territory over which the concept of “homeland” could be applied (Kaplan 2003). As part of this new remapping of hegemonic power, the U.S. inevitably applied pressure, not only on political representatives but also on cultural agents, from other countries – not least in Europe –, as a way of reinforcing their “homeland” and its “coalition of the willing” at the same time.⁵ “Post-9/11” fiction and other art forms produced in different global sites, have thus, been addressing the tensions between a globalized “homeland,” i.e., “a space in which people were included after acts of terrorism had violently dislocated them from their ways of life” (Pease 2003, 8), and “other” (particular, concrete and local) images of “home.” This special issue departs from these tensions and their more or less critical renderings in artistic and cultural texts produced not only in the U.S. but also in a number of European countries. By collating these articles, our

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4 Center for Comparative Studies of the University of Lisbon.

5 “Bush: Join ‘coalition of willing’,” *CNN*, November 20, 2002, accessed August 21, 2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/11/20/prague.bush.nato/>.

main intention is, first of all, to bring forth a reflection on the pervasiveness of U.S. hegemonic narratives and their straightforward adoption or critical rebuttal in different geographical sites with particular attention to both sides of the Atlantic.

Secondly, this special issue aims to convey in what ways these works of art might disrupt and question notions such as “home” and “homeland” alongside notions of “terror.” In order to understand the multiplicity and intricacy of responses to post-9/11 “global homeland” we need to take into account the complex relations between media, political and artistic discourses established both in the US and beyond. The highly mediatized nature of the attacks on the WTC in September 2001, inscribed this moment as the “true global contemporary event,” of which the looping image of the falling towers became the defining symbol.⁶ Their constant repetition, on television and in other media, superimposed a global hegemonic televised reality over the concrete and territorial reality not only of the U.S., but also of other countries. In the years that followed, the media construction of this hegemonic landscape has sustained the so-called “War on Terror,” the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the intensification of surveillance methods⁷ and security measures in Western countries. If some of its ideological tropes have been straightforwardly reproduced and adopted by cultural discourse others have been criticized, rewritten and counter-narrated by artists from the U.S. and Europe.

One of the more recurrent elements of “post-9/11” art and fiction is the need to interrogate ideological narratives on security, violence, terrorism, in the face of global pressures. As Keniston and Quinn point out, considering Art Spiegelman’s *In The Shadow of No Towers* (2004), post “9/11” art forms negotiate “the space between the real and the imagined, between image and trope, and between the private realm of memory and the public realm of history” (2008, 4). The choice of writing, as opposed to the felt impossibility of doing so, in the wake of these tragic events, is identified by

⁶ Already known and extremely influential are the statements made by Habermas, Derrida and Baudrillard. Interviewed by Giovanna Borradori, Habermas stresses the role of the media, in the creation of “9/11” as a global event (Borradori 2003, 28). Also interviewed by Borradori, Derrida points the ‘prodigious techno-socio-political machine’ that uses the media to circulate the notion of “9/11” as a global event (2003, 86). Baudrillard also conceptualizes “9/11” as a global event (Baudrillard 2002).

⁷ Cf. “9/11 thus brought surveillance to the surface. The existence of a ‘surveillance society’ became much clearer to all. Not only did the existence of extensive surveillance systems become more obvious after 9/11, latent capacities were also realized Among these was a willingness to countenance the use of certain practices – detention without trial for instance – and certain kinds of technology – say, wiretapping or internet surveillance – that were previously proscribed” (Lyon 2003, 18).

Richard Gray as an exercise in freedom. In his work, Gray points out that “post-9/11” fiction can constitute direct political participation in the social responses to the tragedy. In this author’s analysis, to write is, in the aftermath of tragic events, a political activity that forces the writer to participate in the narrative of the event and assume a political positioning. This political stance is expressed in the relation of literature with the pre-established representation structures used by the media. Even if writing after the tragic event is a necessity rather than an impossibility,⁸ post 9/11 fiction can also uncritically reflect the main tropes of nationalism and trauma, as Gray points out. It is, therefore, natural that Don DeLillo’s *Falling Man* (2007) starts with one of its characters walking away from one of the falling towers. In this narrative, the WTC attacks force upon the novel’s characters a new sense of a new reality, created by the “rumble of the fall” (DeLillo 2007, 3) and a new configuration on the city landscape. The image of the body of one of the characters, wounded and dusty, and the image of the downtown area of New York covered with debris and litter, show us the impact of what will become a global narrative onto a specific experience and individual experience. As the character leaves the first tower, we are told that he walks “away from it and into it at the same time” (DeLillo 2007, 4). This paradoxical movement not only stresses the epochal moment of the attacks but also illuminates a more subtle relation between local and global realities. The “it” in DeLillo’s sentence can refer to a geographical place, identified with the local; and to a cultural landscape, identified with the global. The local will be penetrated by the global in a narrative where the mass-media and logic of late capitalism are major players. As with many other authors (including McEwan, Beigbender, Spiegelman, O’Neill, etc.), DeLillo directly engages with the symbolic image of the falling towers. While DeLillo exploits and begs reflection on its use by the media, others invest them with other meanings.

In fact, after the WTC attacks, through the constant repetition and ubiquity of violent images or messages (Virilio 2007, 21), the media have invested in U.S. hegemonic narrative tropes in such a way that it is now possible to speak of a global “war of images”⁹ and a “global war of vocabulary.”¹⁰ We can see, for instance, that the

8 Such standing would force poets to “reveal exactly where they stood in the debate between poetry and politics” (Gray 2011, 168).

9 As W.J.T Mitchel points out, “the onset of the war of images was the spectacular destruction of the World Trade Center” (2011, 3).

10 Cf. “Yet if this linguistic harvest of war was always the case, in some ways it may be even more the case in the contemporary world than before: the spread of communications, the importance of the

launching of the “War on Terror” had a significant impact on language, by “creating new words and phrases and reviving, and often redefining, already existing ones” (Halliday 2010, xi). The use of images has also been recognized for its power, “to infect the collective imaginary of global populations” by the U.S. government (Mitchel 2011, 3). In the same way, the media “stereoscopic highlighting” (2011, 3) of violent events has, Virilio argues, created its own form of “terrorism” (Virilio 2007, 21) that, due to its specific dynamic and ongoing structure, may happen anywhere at any time. Accompanied by the increase of security and surveillance methods, both insecurity and security pervert geographic frontiers. In this way, the use of violence by the media contributed to the construction of a worldwide “culture of fear” (Furedi 2002) in which global discourses on fear and insecurity superimpose local and regional realities and policies.

In its metaphorical sense, this media construct relates directly term “Homeland” used by the U.S. government as the conceptualization of a transnational post “9/11” political and cultural reality, as we mentioned above.¹¹ This term is directly related to a geographical imagination that included territories outside U.S. national geography, and legitimized the rhetoric of the preemptive war policies that followed.¹² In a new global landscape, American exceptionalism now acquired a global dimension by dislocating its physical geographical identity to an imaginary global landscape. In this sense, the international became the domestic. Artists from different parts of the globe have been sensitive to this inflection. An important trait of such a movement is, Cilano argues, the potential for 9/11 to create an international, positive identification with the U.S. as a fragile culture, as well as a reinforcement of bonds and identification of the U.S. with other countries. This potential for solidarity was, nonetheless, perverted by the “US-hegemonic responses to 11 September 2001 and the Abu Ghraib photographs [that] exemplify the ... movement from ‘solidarity’ to ‘schisms’” (Cilano 2009, 15).

‘information war’, the chaotic enticements of cyberspace, all make this, in addition to being a war for security and control of states, a ‘global vocabulary war’” (Halliday 2010, xi).

11 “In its reference to an archaic land that the colonial settlers either voluntarily departed from or were forced to abandon, Homeland represented a prehistoric pastness prior to the founding of the United States. Following 9/11, the Homeland named the space in which the people were included after acts of terrorism had violently dislocated them from their ways of life” (Pease 2009, 170).

12 Donald E. Pease states that: “This imaginary scenario and the spectacles through which it was communicated sustained the dissociation of the people from recognizably ‘American’ ways of life. Insofar as the Homeland named what emerged when the population became dislocated from the conditions of belonging to a territorialized nation, its security required the domestic emergency state to extend its sovereign policing authority over every territory across the planet” (Pease 2009, 170-171).

The five articles of this issue depart from such movement and address the presence and influence of the ideological narrative tropes embedded in the concept of “homeland” at the same time that they attempt to bring forward “other” versions of home. At the crux of this tension is the relation of this politicized transnational reality and neoliberal capitalism – an issue recurrently addressed in this special issue. It is not surprising then that terrorism and global capitalism should mirror each other in many ways. As Susana Araújo points out, “like terrorism, global capitalism can be seen to be ruled by all-pervasive operations which nevertheless remain unseen, concealed and mysterious” (Araújo 2012, 113). It is only natural, then, that the same narrative tropes of insecurity, violence and fear, recurrent in post “9/11” fiction, should also be found in narratives of financial crisis.

The relation between financial insecurity and surveillance policies is discussed in Sandra Bettencourt’s analysis of Rui Zink’s novel *A Representação do Medo*. Supporting her reading with the theoretical framework of Zygmunt Bauman, José Gil and Gilles Deleuze, Bettencourt conveys the idea of the creation of a discourse of fear and insecurity with a “liquid” quality; a discourse without an identifiable institutional origin, characterized by an increasing blurriness between fiction and reality, as well as a spectacularization of reality. Focusing on the dynamics of interception and movements between transnational policies and national realities, this article sheds light on the way Zink’s novel addresses such anxieties over national and global security practices that are directly dependent upon violence, as discussed by Christian Klöckner’s article on Breat Easton Ellis’s *Glamorama*. In Klöckner’s view, in a world saturated by the mediatization of reality, the distinction between fact and fiction becomes increasingly difficult, as seen in the bodies of the terrorist fashion models, personifying the continuous spectacularization of events that do not even put up a pretense that reality is real. As the author suggests, following the line of thought of Fredric Jameson and other thinkers, reality, thus, flattened and deprived of any content, has no true meaning except for a continuous exercise of violence that becomes systemic.

The spectacularization of violence, as seen in the Abu Ghraib photos, is discussed in Ana Romão and Susana Araujo’s paper. In their critical analysis of the photos and the implications they have on the understanding of the power structures they echo, they address the aestheticization of violence as the foundation upon which a discursive construct of the “Other” in most 9/11 Western societies can be built. They go on to argue that power structures, in the army and in politics, not only foster such

representations, but depend on them for their maintenance. By exploring the intertextualities between the photos, the documentary *The Stanford Prison Experiment* (2002) and the film *The Experiment* (2010), the authors examine how representations of both torture and self-representation in a war context are constructed.

The cultural construction of the “Other” is also made by the critical practices, as Marco Stamenkovic’s article points out and sets to debate. This article considers the concept of suicide bombing in the construction of a violent “Other” in Western cultural and political perspectives. Stamenkovic’s text focuses its analysis on the critical academic discourse itself and the part it plays in the creation of Otherness, questioning the normative discourses rooted in epistemologies of rational Western pragmatism. This critique may offer a way to unlock, both at a conceptual and ethical level, new theoretical perspectives able to express new voices. Furthermore, it may also point to a decentralization that will promote, on the one hand, a critique of the discursive power based on the Western epistemological matrix and, on the other hand, an understanding and communication with the “Other” that is not based on its normalization or rationalization, in order to provide some sense and neutralize the terror that stems from the suicidal action and threatens the vision and hegemonic position of the Europe-U.S. axis. The same point of departure is assumed by Barbara Uhlig’s article in which the importance of new art forms, such as web comics, and other media in the 2009 post-election protests in Iran is discussed. Uhlig reflects on the potential symbolic meaning of the web comic to address the way in which, through its inherent aesthetic and mimetic character, the comic arises as a representation that contains a message about the violent repression that the opponents of the Ahmadinejad regime have suffered at the hands of law enforcement. By bringing to our attention to the fact that the creation of this web comic could only have taken place abroad, Uhlig places special attention on the different roles the media may play: if, on the one hand, the scarceness of information that made it to other foreign countries bears witness to the control and manipulation that a state may exercise over its own image through its media, then on the other hand the creation of this web comic, based on real personal accounts of those who have witnessed firsthand said political violence and disappearances, seems to point to the disruptive force that these media may possess. The dissemination of verbal and visual information through Twitter and Facebook, also points to this force.

By intersecting global tensions with disparate and specific local realities, the articles in this special issue offer poignant pictures of the multiple pressures of post-9/11

security policies and their intricate relation to politicized notions of both “terror” and “home.”

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