

Clash Of Civilizations In Post 9/11 World: Portrayal Of Muslim And Non-Muslim Characters In Falling Man

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Abstract

The deadliest attacks of September 11, 2001, are remembered for the atrocities they caused, killing thousands of people, and drastically changing the global dynamics. This article intends to understand how the spirit of terrorism, in the wake of 9/11, incites fear and rage throughout the entire world while associating the "Muslims" with extremism. Keeping Bush's idea of "Us and Them", this study aims to explore the causes of the extended gap between the two civilizations of the modern day as represented in the novel *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo. It also examines how the writer exposes each character with their different viewpoints to show how they respond to the 9/11 tragedy. By using Huntington's concept of a "Clash of Civilizations" and Baudrillard's "The spirit of Terrorism," this research analyses the post-9/11 novel *Falling Man* to reveal the ideological differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. This study concludes that DeLillo, through the perspectives of Nina and Martin, explores how the 9/11 terrorist attacks were a response to American culture's hegemony, and challenges the claims that the attackers were not Muslims and that Islam does not support or condone such extremist actions. DeLillo has successfully portrayed the Muslim and non-Muslim characters thus underscoring the causes and repercussions of terrorism. In order to foster harmony and peace, we need to draw attention to the fact that our young people are turning into extremists and are trapped by the cogent discourse made by radical organizations. Thus, in order to safeguard fundamental human rights, a more distinct and peaceful civilization needs to be created.

Key Words: Clash of Civilizations, Spirit of Terrorism, 9/11 Events, *Falling Man*, Muslims/Islam.

Introduction

Islam and the West are involved in one of the most complex conflicts of our time, and both are frequently misinterpreted, especially by one another. Muslims are being perceived by the West as an extreme nation that rejects diversity and strives to impose a unitary model of Islamization across the world. On the other hand, the West envisions implementing the Western modernization model in the entire world believing it to be the only salvation, but that is impossible, especially for Muslims who

reside in more than fifty countries (Iqbal, 2019, pp. 257-58). These misconceptions have grown as a result of the 9/11 tragedy, which also fostered Islamophobia among non-Muslim communities. Following that, this gulf between the two worlds widened as a result of the US declaration of the "war on terror" and connecting it to Muslims. Moreover, the media, including literary and non-literary, plays a critical role in contextualizing and documenting these atrocities because catastrophes like these greatly affect how the general public perceives events, which in turn influences how various

societal segments react (Alatas, 2005). There is currently a significant amount of literature and research on such tragedies that have been a part of academic debates. Against this backdrop, the current article aims to study the portrayal of the Muslim and non-Muslim characters in DeLillo's post-9/11 novel *Falling Man*. Further, this study discusses the reasons and implications of the clash of civilizations between Islam and the West as represented in the novel.

The 9/11 attack, in which nineteen terrorists affiliated with the Islamic militant group al-Qaeda struck significant American sites, is one of the deadliest terrorist incidents in American history. American commercial aircraft were seized by terrorists, who then used them as targets for suicide attacks by crashing them into important landmarks. These areas include the Pentagon, the Twin towers at World Trade Centre in New York City, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. As a result, around 3000 people were killed. This large-scale death and destruction triggered the US to combat terrorism. The incident left people in a state of shock, sorrow, and outrage. During this period of menace and fear, terrorism was predominantly linked to Islam and Muslims which consequently contributed to projecting a negative image of Islam as a religion. Subsequently, in the interest of defending western civilization, President Bush declared the "war on terrorism" which instantly received tremendous public support. As a result, the post-9/11 time period is marked by hatred and acts of discrimination against Muslims. Islamophobia emerged due to the propagation of anti-Muslim sentiments and discrimination. This led to a change in security policies, and the American invasion of Middle Eastern countries i.e., Iraq and Afghanistan, to combat terrorism. According to Bukhari et al. (2019),

After 9/11, there was a major shift at the international level which led to the distortion of the

image of Islam. Islamophobia as racism against Muslims is not only in the field of education, public sphere, labor market, global war against terrorism, or the international economy but also in the rationality of belief about the definition of priorities in the world today (p. 28).

When the buildings collapsed immediately after the 9/11 attacks, the Americans thought that this episode marked the start of terrorism. However, Jean Baudrillard argues this was actually a response to American hegemony rather than the beginning of terrorism. In "The Spirit of Terrorism", he asserts "When global power monopolizes the situation to this extent, when there is such a formidable condensation of all functions in the technocratic machinery, and when no alternative form of thinking is allowed, what other way is there but a terroristic situational transfer?" (Baudrillard, 2003, pp. 8-9). During these times, it seemed to be crucial for the US to safeguard western hegemony and civilization, however, the declaration of the "War on Terror" reinforced and multiply the clashes between the West and Islam resulting in Islamophobia.

Following the Runnymede report's publication in 1997, and especially since the 9/11 tragedy, the term "Islamophobia" has been used frequently. Islamophobia is an intricate web of ideologies and discourses, that has been frequently linked to hatred and fear of Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia was defined by Quellien as bigotry, intolerance, rejection of Islamic civilization, and a strategy of portraying Muslims and Islam as an inexorable foe of Europeans. This long-standing antagonism toward Islam and Muslims, albeit tinged with fear, led to hostility eventually developing as a communal Western ethos that cast Muslims as "others." Such dichotomies of "Us and others"

have been analyzed in Said's (1978) work as well where he describes prejudice against Islam and Muslims as Eurocentric animosity toward the Arabo-Islamic populace tagging them as "Orientals vs Western" (Iqbal, 2019, pp 1-7).

The background of Huntington's idea of the "Clash of Civilizations" can also help us understand these dichotomies between Islam and the West. Nations now largely envision their interests in terms of civilizations and value systems, culture, and cultural identities which in the larger context are "civilization identities" are shaping the configuration of cohesiveness and divergence in the post-Cold war world. Countries collaborate and form alliances with nations that share the same value system but frequently engage in war with states that have cultural differences. Threats are defined by states in terms of the intents of other nations, and interpretation of these intentions is significantly influenced by cultural factors. They are significantly more prone to perceive dangers as emanating from nations whose societies have diverse cultures, making them untrustworthy for them (Huntington, 1997, pp. 29-52). In the context of the 9/11 event, the clash of civilizations happened to be between Islam and the West as Muslims and Americans or people from the West have colossal values and cultural differences. NeuMayer and Plumper in their article on "International Terrorism and the Clash of Civilizations" mention:

More importantly, existing scholarship has neglected that, for some civilizational dyads for which Huntington predicts a high level of conflict, he himself mentions terrorism, as in the clash of "Rest versus West", or even explicitly emphasizes the use of terrorism, as in the clash of "Islam versus Rest" and "Islam versus West (2008, p. 713).

The 9/11 attacks have complicated ties between the East and the West and a new discourse about secular versus religious society has begun, which is really a discussion about the clash of civilizations and cultures.

Literature Review

The 9/11 incident turned out to be a "Game Changer" in world history where it changed the dynamics of the United States and the other regions of the world, it also greatly influenced the literature written after it. 9/11 has a great impact on literature, cinema, and world politics After the September 11, 2001 attacks, numerous literary and artistic depictions surfaced. Themes relating to 9/11 are discussed in music, movies, plays, and other literary and cultural works.

The 9/11 attacks are portrayed in various movies, poems, novels, and playwrights juxtaposing pictures and facts to capture the horror, rage, and terror that the residents of New York felt right after the incident and afterward. Some of these portray the calamity in its totality, others reflect the changes in the political and cultural landscape that ensued. After September 11, 2001, writers began developing exaggerated characters and storylines that focused on this terrible event, using the terrorist attacks as their backdrop. Muslim authors, like Laila Halaby (*Once in a Promised Land*, 2007) and Mohsin Hamid (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 2008), had radically different experiences and perceived the world quite differently after the September 11 attacks than American authors, who primarily wrote about New York. They discuss the racial hate that Muslims and Arabs endured in the years after September 11, 2001, and how there were numerous attacks on Muslims, rather than revealing the specifics of the attacks and the conditions of the victims inside the Towers.

Pain and terrorism are significant themes in the majority of post-9/11 books as a

result of the trauma that the 9/11 events caused around the world, particularly in the US. Because the primary focus of our research is how the 9/11 attacks produced a politically explosive scenario, the French political theorist Jean Baudrillard has been used to analyze the text. In contrast to earlier suicide terrorism, which was committed by the poor, Baudrillard claims that the current form of terrorism is committed by the rich. He claims that the 9/11 attacks were a new breed of terrorism, in which the terrorists attack taking their own lives as well as the same artillery, rendering the dominating force unable of retaliating, even with the most advanced weapons. Don DeLillo, after the takeover of Iraq in 2003, stated that “the 21st century, which began on Sept. 11, 2001, and not at the turn of the millennium, would be called the Age of Terror” (DeLillo). The fact that these terrorists are equipped with all the means of destruction, as DeLillo says, is a very dangerous situation.

Similarly, Ingrida Zindziuviene in her article titled, “Elements of Trauma Fiction in the 9/11 Novels” examines the works *Terrorist* (2006) and *Falling man* (2007), and *Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) of famous writers like John Updike, Don DeLillo, and Mohsin Hamid respectively. Her article shows that the darkness of this event wasn’t confined to Americans only, Muslims had their own fair share of suffering. Furthermore, she declares how Islamophobia took over and Muslims were tagged as terrorists. No doubt, Western Extremism was all-time high which targeted millions of Asians in general and Muslims in particular.

Zindziuviene analyzes that the novels under discussion used Muslim characters to shed light on the egocentric behavior of western society towards them and these texts had some common themes such as inner conflict, self-destruction, feeling of being lonely, overpowering of mass media, Islamic culture, and the very concept of “Jihad.” Her

study unveiled the concept of social inequality and the stark realities of life inscribed in these texts. Moreover, the writer has concluded that the post-9/11 novels used both informational and emotional approaches which evoked hostile emotions among the readers.

Richard Cimino in his article “No God in Common:” American Evangelical Discourse on Islam After 9/11” exhibits the anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiments of evangelists and their hostility towards this particular religion. He examines evangelical anti-Islamic discourse from literature produced a decade before the 9/11 attacks and three years following the event.

In another article, “Islamophobia in Amy Waldman’s *The Submission: An Anatomy of Violence against Islam and Muslims*,” Abdul Rashid and Qamar Khushi (2019) throw light on how the 9/11 incident affected East-West relations and led to the emergence of a new Islamophobic discourse in which hatred, intolerance, and discrimination against Islam and Muslims are quite evident. According to the writers, the 9/11 incident turned out to be “a great historical rupture” that escalated Islamophobic notions in Western minds. After the incident, even the loyalties of Muslims residing in western states were questioned by certain binaries like West vs Rest, Us vs Them, and Us vs Terrorists aroused.

The researchers take Waldman’s novel *Submission* as an example to validate their stance that how the incident of 9/11 explicitly or implicitly changes the views of the people toward Islam and Muslims. The novel shows how a jury that had been assigned the task of judging blind entities of the 9/11 memorial on finding that the designer of the winning memorial is a Muslim led to endless debate and public controversy. The writers identify three main areas through which the discrimination and prejudice against Mohammad Khan, the Muslim character, in

the novel are quite evident and can be taken as a representative of the entire Muslim nation. Firstly, he identifies the choice of vocabulary and the ridiculous mode of language the jury as well as the general public use on finding out the identity of the winner as a Muslim from which racism and discrimination are quite evident. They call it Mohammad's Garden and Martyr's paradise. Secondly, the article points out how after the 9/11 incident Muslims were being stereotyped or type cast as terrorists or threats to their country. The Muslim character in the novel is identified as a political foe. They consider him more similar to terrorists than to Americans.

Lastly, the writer identifies how people claiming to be against terrorism and violence themselves were using violence against Muslims. In the novel, Mohammad is threatened to withdraw from the competition, forced to leave the place where he was born, where he had led his entire life just because he was a Muslim.

Bukhari in his article titled, "Islamophobia in the West and Post 9/11 Era" also discusses Islamophobia referring to hatred against Islam and Muslims in the post-9/11 period, primarily aiming at investigating the "process of propagation of islamophobia by Western Countries and America and their Non-Muslim Allies" (Bukhari et al. 2019, p. 23). The article shows that Muslims are criticized on the basis of their identity which was linked with terrorism in the post-9/11 time period. West also developed a stereotypical image of Muslims as promoters of violence and hatred. This was achieved by presenting various Islamic practices to be against humanity and human rights. The 9/11 incident by the radical Islamic terrorist group further strengthened the notion of Islam as an extremist religion. Bukhari et al., claim that Islamophobia is an intentional effort by the western leadership to convince the public of their unjustified prejudice and hostility toward Muslims. After 9/11, different tools were used

to spread the conspiracy against Islam. These include media, ideological dispersal and occupational models. Western media generally assumed 9/11 to be associated with Islamic terrorism. West started perceiving Islam as a threat, which is an image presented by media to the common man. This perception was shaped primarily by the media via newspapers, books, television and movies. "However, these are the things which are portrayed against Islam for the misunderstandings and wrong interpretations of a peaceful religion" (Bukhari et al., 2019, p. 25). To conclude, the West has primarily used the media to construct the beliefs of the people around the globe against Muslims. Islamophobia is promoted with an underlying mission to justify the unjust acts of the west. The main purpose of the west is to economically dominate the globe, maintain a significant influence in the political decisions of the world, and stand as a superpower in the world.

In "Literature and Resistance: Representing 9/11", Bhardwaj discusses different literary works that are representing the 9/11 attack. This traumatic incident was widely covered by post-9/11 literature. The theme of the article was to see how literature represented the traumatic experience and how the 9/11 incident changed literary writings. For this, two novels were selected; *Homeboy* by H.M. Naqvi and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer. *Home Boy* was written from a Pakistani perspective and portrays the horrific experiences of American Muslims after 9/11. The protagonist is irritated by a sense of impotence and helplessness when faced with excessive distressing treatment in the aftermath of 9/11. Victims of trauma frequently adopt a new lifestyle; these individuals frequently disappear into nothingness, implying that they will physically hide behind who they once were. The novel, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is about a child named Oskar Schell who was

devastated by his father's death. The child's attempt to understand the tragedy is similar to the struggle several people went through in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. The themes that recur throughout this book include trauma, grief, family, and the struggle between self-preservation and self-destruction. This is one of the rare literary works that succeeds in giving readers a better understanding of suffering and loss. In novels, we find the dissolution of American ideals, racial insults rupturing ties between Muslims and Americans, and the two towers' collapse's devastating psychological effects on the victims and viewers. Surprisingly, the tragedy had a profound effect on the psyche of the American people, and it appears that a novel understanding of America's national and group identity was formed in the shadow of the now-destroyed Twin Towers.

Analysis

Representation of Civilizations in Falling Man: Muslims Vs Non-Muslims

The experiences of sufferers, culprits, and bystanders are described in the latest literary style that arose following the incident of 9/11. Each character takes on a different viewpoint to show how they respond to the current tragedy. In *Falling Man*, DeLillo uses the voices of Martin and Nina to discuss global capitalism while also illustrating the incident, extremists, and sufferers of the American people.

The book is divided into several chapters, a few of which focus on one of the main characters such as Keith and his spouse named Lianna, and other traumatized people. While several chapters detail the terrorists' preparations, plans and endeavors, as well as how they carry out their plan to assault the World Power. The physical and emotional suffering shown in this book on September 11 attacks, mirrors the wrath, perplexity, and loss that the twin tower attacks caused.

DeLillo, like many other authors, pictures how the 9/11 attacks affected New

York City in the USA. The sufferers of the WTC reacted quickly as the aircraft collided with the buildings, and now the blazing skyscrapers are spewing dust, ash, and fumes. When the story opens, Keith, a representative of the West and one of the victims of the 9/11 attacks staggers outside in the twin buildings' burning ash, bloodied, battered, and covered in glass pieces in his face and hair.

It was not a street anymore but a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night. He was walking north through rubble and mud and there were people running past holding towels to their faces or jackets over their heads. They had handkerchiefs pressed to their mouths. They had shoes in their hands, a woman with a shoe in each hand, running past him. They ran and fell, some of them, confused and ungainly, with debris coming down around them, and there were people taking shelter under cars (DeLillo, 2007, p.3).

Following the assaults, Keith requests to visit his ex-wife and son, Lianne and Justin. As a result, he is brought to their apartment instead of his place. Keith's mother, Nina, forbids Lianne from attempting to patch things up, however, Lianne disobeys her and asks him to visit the hospital for medical care in the hopes that it may help them reconcile. Keith finds a briefcase in the dimly lit stairwell corridor during that hectic time when he is returning home and everyone was fleeing for their lives. He eventually locates Florence Givens, the owner, after several days of looking. Both of them discussed how they managed to survive the catastrophe, which turned into a fleeting relationship. "They took erotic pleasure from

each other but this is not what sent him back there. It was what they knew together, in the timeless drift of the long spiral down” (DeLillo, 2007, p.137).

Keith periodically disappears, which causes Lianne to become uncomfortable. She fears that, as is shown in the book's finale, her relationship with her husband will eventually crumble. Due to his brief romance with Florence, who was temporarily drawn to him, and his decision to resume his poker tournament career, Keith slips away from her. He does this to relieve his fear and to memorialize his two poker-playing pals who were killed in the tragic 9/11 attacks. He also does it to distract himself from the awful memories of those events. Keith has once more estranged Lianne and “was ready to be alone, in the reliable calm, she and the kid, the way they were before the planes appeared that day” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 236).

Keith's family is not the only subject of the book, the terrorist figures, Hammad and Mohammad Atta, who are Muslims and are responsible for committing horrific actions, also cover a significant portion of *Falling Man*. DeLillo delves into the fantasies of terrorists and describes how they plot their excursions from Hamburg to Florida before continuing to their ultimate destination, which they perceive as paradise and where they will be hailed as martyrs. The character of a performance artist by the name of *Falling Man* is also described in the book along with the tales of survivors and terrorists.

DeLillo explains what transpires to make Hammad a terrifying militant from a nervous student. Being in a foreign culture prompts Hammad to find a new companion who might assist him learn the American society and its way of life. He, because of his naivety and wariness, is entangled in the sinister schemes of the terrorist group's commander, known as Mohammad Atta who persuades him to steer him toward extremism.

The opening chapter, "On Marienstrasse," introduces DeLillo's fictional character, Hammad, who is one of the nineteen militants that assault the WTC, undermining American hegemony in the process. In *Falling Man*, Hammad's situation at the boot camp is chronicled by DeLillo. Afterward, he is first spotted at the Hamburg unit with schemers and later on in Florida, where he is learning to fly. He is eventually seen on the plane as it approaches Manhattan to explode into the WTC.

Reflecting on “Us and Them” in Post 9/11 Times

The first indication that things are about to change is a bottle that falls from the plane, despite the fact that the story starts and finishes with the twin towers collapse. DeLillo makes a comparison between the idea of space and the idea of a road in his opening metaphor: “It was not a street anymore but a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night” (DeLillo, 2007, p.3).

As Keith, the main character, emerges from the towers witnessing things collapsing, people getting hurt, and everyone being shell-shocked, the story of the novel finishes in a similar pandemonium: “They ran and fell”. As the world fell apart, it was split into two groups, "Us" and "Them." The Bush administration used this term to construct a demarcation line between Muslims and Americans: “Either You Are with us or with the terrorists.” Americans are described as conceit and self-centered in Mohsin Hamid’s book, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*: “We are America, the mightiest civilization the world has ever known; you have slighted us; beware our wrath” (Hamid, 2007, p. 47).

Whenever DeLillo uses the term, "Falling," we are reminded that everything began to collapse after 9/11. In the book, The term "Falling" refers to the performer known as "Falling Man," who impersonates victims falling from skyscrapers that bring back to the

victims, “those stark moments in the burning towers when people fell” (DeLillo, 2007, p.33). The populace, instead, rejects the show and becomes enraged, yelling at him for causing unrest among them.

According to Baudrillard, Falling Man's "puppetry of human desperation" is a result of terrorists who used the superpower's cutting-edge resources in conjunction with their own demise to trigger a disastrous incident (DeLillo, 2007, p. 33). “The radical difference is that the terrorists, while they have at their disposal weapons that are the system’s own, possess a further lethal weapon: their own deaths” (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 20).

In "In the ruins of the future," Don DeLillo also highlighted this novel method of terror,

Now a small group of men have literally altered our skyline. We have fallen back in time and space. It is their technology that marks our moments, the small, lethal devices, the remote-control detonators they fashion out of radios, or the larger technology they borrow from us, passenger jets that become manned missiles (2001, para 45).

A sequence of tense, puzzling, and chaotic scenarios is launched in the first chapter. DeLillo depicts "falling people" at various points in the book as they flee the buildings or leap from them in anguish, “They ran and fell” (DeLillo, 2007, p.3). Additionally, he records the shocking and tragic scene of a garment falling and flying through the air, “A shirt lifted and drifting in the scant light and then falling again” (DeLillo, 2007, p.4). The readers of the text as well as television watchers are terrified by this majestic and tragic sight. The 9/11 bombers, however, have no pity for the people of America. As one of the terrorists named

Hammad discusses his concerns about suicide bombings in order to get entry into heaven: “But does a man have to kill himself in order to count for something, be someone, find the way” (DeLillo, 2007, p.175). He writes a letter to his parents about his travels and job at the engineering firm since he misses them but decides not to send it because he does not want to provide a false account of his employment.

Despite being the cause of the catastrophe, Hammad was hesitant and concerned for other people, when flying the jet that collided with the first skyscraper. DeLillo put Hammad on the jet that crashes into the first tower, but he hesitates because he cares about other people even though he is responsible for the calamity. He inquires Atta saying: “What about the others, those who will die?” (DeLillo, 2007, p.176). Hammad's uncertainty enrages Amir, who is shown as cold and heartless, and he informs him that it is his duty to murder the American people since "there are no others. The others exist only to the degree that they fill the role we have designed for them”. According to these militants, “death is stronger than life” (DeLillo, 2007, p.172).

On the covering of Baudrillard's book, *The Spirit of Terrorism: And Requiem for the Twin Towers*, an interpretation of terrorism is provided:

Baudrillard sees the power of terrorism as lying in the symbolism of slaughter - not merely the reality of death, but a sacrificial death that challenges a whole system. Where the revolutionary of the past sought to conduct a struggle of real forces in the context of ideology and politics, the new terrorist mounts a powerful symbolic challenge, which, when combined with high-tech resources, constitutes

an unprecedented assault on an over-sophisticated and vulnerable West (2003, Book's Jacket).

DeLillo, while picturing Keith when he returns to his ex-wife's apartment, depicts the immediate aftermath in the streets. By depicting the skyscrapers collapsing and the sound they made, he portrays the enormous shock, "The buckling rumble of the fall" (DeLillo, 2007, p.3). The screams of the terrified victims and survivors are mixed with the wails of the hapless victims of the War on Terror, as well as the roar of the collapsing towers. The reader is as horrified and terrified as the bystanders were by the blazing skyscrapers and their subsequent downfall amid the revolting whiff of the roasting fuel of the jet.

According to Don DeLillo, the 9/11 tragedy was a protest against American culture's hegemony. He talks about the origins and effects of the September 11, 2001 attacks in Martin's voice and refers to the "narcissistic heart of the West" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 113). DeLillo's words here are in line with what he says in the manuscript. "In the Ruins of Future":

Technology is our fate, our truth. It is what we mean when we call ourselves the only superpower on the planet. The materials and methods we devise make it possible for us to claim our future. We don't have to depend on God or the prophets or other astonishments. We are the astonishment. The miracle is what we ourselves produce, the systems and networks that change the way we live and think" (2001, para 33).

DeLillo deems that the 9/11 terrorist attacks were a response to American culture's hegemony. In "The Spirit of Terrorism", Baudrillard refers to this idea as the "gigantic abreaction" (2003, p.4). According to Hammad, the prevailing culture and manner of life in the US are disgusting, "These people jogging in the park, world domination. These old men who sit in beach chairs, veined white bodies and baseball caps, they control our world" (DeLillo, 2007, p.173). He thinks that Americans had never thought that this might happen to them because they live in Utopia and are jerked awake when the World Trade Center crashes, believing that Americans never considered that this could happen to them. American supremacy is also to blame, according to Baudrillard, "the increase in the power or power heightens the will to destroy it" (2003, p.7).

The carnage and sorrow that followed the September 11 catastrophe are best exemplified by Hammad's words. His statement exemplifies the carnage, sorrow, and division that followed the 9/11 tragedy. DeLillo depicts the escape of Keith and other attack victims from the towers in *Falling Man*. They are all running in the direction of what they perceive to be a safe place while carrying injuries, feeling scared and confused about what to do in the smoke-filled surroundings. The streets are littered with personal items, such as shoes, laptops, handbags, and briefcases. In a swirl of smoke and ash, papers including contracts, resumes, and business papers fly. The feelings of discomfort, fear, and numbness are vividly depicted by DeLillo as though they were being published in a newspaper. The characters play out their parts so effectively that it seems as though they are indeed trapped in a terrible circumstance. Owing to the vivid and powerful sensory details, whoever reads the novel can envision the terrible disaster of the event, and can also picture themselves in the plane with Hammad.

The section labeled "In the Hudson Corridor." describes the scene inside the aircraft

with Hammad in the pilot's seat and prepared to strike the Tower. He is in charge of roaming the aisle holding the box cutter and keeping the eye on the pilot's cabin. His belief that he would enter paradise soon after death makes him cheerful, "Every sin of your life is forgiven in the seconds to come" (DeLillo, 2007, p.239). He focuses on his chosen victims instead of the pain the box cutter in his hand is causing him. He is not even troubled by the screams of the passengers and crew as his seat begins to vibrate just before the plane smashes the tower and things begin to fall off the galley counters.

DeLillo describes how the bottle moved on the plane's floor. The bottle rolls, arcs, and spins as the plane changes positions as it approaches the tower, stating "The plane was flying erratically," before returning to regular flight and stating "The plane was flying erratically again" (Kean, 2002, p. 6). A strong "blast wave" that hits the building as the plane collides with the tower knocks the protagonist, Keith into the wall of his workplace (DeLillo, 2007, p.239). DeLillo describes the encounter between the villain and the protagonist as a new form of "organic shrapnel" in just one statement.

A bottle fell off the counter in the galley, on the other side of the aisle, and he watched it roll this way and that, a water bottle, empty, making an arc one way and rolling back the other, and he watched it spin more quickly and then skitter across the floor an instant before the aircraft struck the tower, heat, then fuel, then fire, and a blast wave passed through the structure that sent Keith Neudecker out of his chair and into a wall. He found himself walking into a wall. He didn't drop the telephone until he hit the

wall. The floor began to slide beneath him and he lost his balance and eased along the wall to the floor (DeLillo, 2007, p.239).

Hammad takes his own life to stop his pain, which affects everyone who is a direct or indirect victim of his actions in addition to Keith. These atrocities not only traumatize Americans, but they also have an impact on the rest of the world. Hammad is reluctant to carry out the horrific attacks, but he cannot stand up to the terrorist leader Amir, who convinced him to honor his promise.

In DeLillo's narrative, other things in addition to the events of September 11, 2001, also fall, including Saddam's government and the drone missiles that fall in Pakistan's northern regions and lead to tens of thousands of terrorist attacks there.

Politics of 9/11: Changing World Dynamics

In *The Falling Man* by Don DeLillo, the 9/11 attacks have a significant impact on the global political, economic, and cultural landscape. Post-9/11 literature that has contributed to substantial changes in world politics was inspired by the catastrophic assaults on the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., Somerset County near Pittsburgh, and the Twin Towers in New York City, which killed more than 3,000 people and destroyed more than thirty buildings.

Following 9/11, Americans' attitudes against Islam and Muslims deteriorated, and they were denigrated in public. In the first ten days of the crisis, there were numerous incidences of attacks on Muslims. On September 20, 2001, in his speech to the nation, President George W. Bush who was in office at the time, exhorted citizens to be calm while pledging to confront militants using armed power. Against the countries that support militants. He declared:

We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make: Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime (para 36).

DeLillo associated terrorism with Islam when he describes a team of individuals undergoing various sorts of training to achieve their goal which is to attack the United States for its unrestrained power. Both viewpoints are supported by his fictional characters named Mina and Martin. Nina accuses Muslims and Islam of their lacking the ability to reconcile with the Western culture, "It's not the history of Western interference that pulls down these societies. It's their own history, their mentality. They live in a closed world, of choice, of necessity. They haven't advanced because they haven't wanted to or tried to" (DeLillo, 2007, p.47).

He contests both the assertions that the assailants are not Muslims and that Islam does not condone or support such assaults. He rejects President George W. Bush's "Us vs Them" strategy and underlines the need for no binary division. The theme of his essay, "In the Ruins of the Future," is appropriate given that most of the world changed "into the ruins of the future." Due to the ongoing threats made by various terrorist organizations, he believes that Americans are no longer safe.

U.S Acts of Counter Terrorism

I. Saddam Hussein's Fall in Iraq

In order to take preventive and preemptive measures, Bush made the decision to intensify the War on Terror by targeting the nations that

he believed were actively seeking WMDs. In his State of the Union address, Bush said: "First we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans and bring terrorists to justice. And second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world" (2002). In the period of two years, America and its coalition partners ousted Saddam's government on March 20, 2003. On April 9, 2003, one month later, the mainstream global media recorded the occasion when the statue of Saddam Hussein was toppled. First Saddam Hussein hid for many months and then vanished. However, on December 13, 2003, he was located underground living in a hole. On December 30, 2006, he was later executed by hanging at the army installation Kadhimiya nearby Baghdad. The fall of Saddam's regime, in the opinion of the Americans, signaled the beginning of a new era of democracy for the Iraqi people.

2. Afghan Taliban

Since 2001, Mullah Umar had been sought after by the US because he had safeguarded Osama bin Laden. In a BBC interview following the 9/11 events, he claimed: "You (the BBC) and American puppet radios have created concern. But the current situation in Afghanistan is related to a bigger cause – that is the destruction of America...This is not a matter of weapons. We are hopeful for God's help. The real matter is the extinction of America. And, God willing, it [America] will fall to the ground."

From 1994 to 2001, the Taliban's leader Mullah Mohammad Omar entitled in 1996 "ameer-ul-momineen", controlled Afghanistan. In an interview with Chris Hughes on October 4, 2001, Qari Nasrullah claimed that Mullah Umar and Osama bin Laden were close friends and that the two would incite religious tyranny in Afghanistan. He added that Mullah Umar had enforced severe Islamic law across Afghanistan, and his directives were followed there despite the fact that each province had its own ruler.

US President Bush decided to expel the perpetrators from Afghanistan because the Taliban and al-Qaeda were responsible for planning the 9/11 attacks. Since all of the 9/11 hijackers had received their training in Afghanistan, Bush requested that Osama bin Laden and any other al-Qaeda commanders who had sought asylum in the country be turned over to the United States by Mullah Mohammed Omar, the head of the Taliban. The U.S. administration chose to invade Afghanistan after Omar rejected his demand, and Operation Enduring Freedom started on October 7, 2001, with airstrikes against the Taliban and al-Qaeda sites preventing al-Qaeda from using Afghanistan as a base for terrorism. Like this, the Taliban were expelled from Afghanistan by the Bush administration and its supporters and built their own military outposts across the country. Omar fled from the scene of the American military assault and his whereabouts are still unknown. Nonetheless in 2012, it came to light that Mullah Omar had allegedly written to Barak Obama asking for peace negotiations. In addition, on April 5, 2015, a biography was published to mark Omar's twentieth year as supreme leader. In the biography, it was also stated that he was still engaged in "jihadi activities," refuting the notion that he had passed away. The biography further debunked the myth that he had died by stating that he was still involved in "jihadi activities."

3. Drone Attacks on Pakistan

After the September 11 attacks, Pakistan suffered and the authorities from the US start pressurizing the government of Pakistan to grant them permission to build air bases and grant rights to fly over its land. Pakistan was also required to provide the FBI with any information regarding the alleged terrorists. The Pakistani government assisted the US administration in detaining the Taliban and al-Qaeda since they had taken refuge in Pakistan's north.

Since the United States was not entirely satisfied with what Pakistan had performed, it

launched 386 drone missile operations against Pakistan between 18 June 2004 and 21 May 2015, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians. President Nawaz Sharif denounced the drone attacks at the U.S. Conference, remarking: "The use of drones is not only a continual violation of our territorial integrity but also detrimental to our resolve and efforts at eliminating terrorism from our country" (2013, para 04).

The repercussions of the events of 9/11 are still being noticed in Pakistan. The Taliban and al-Qaeda fled to Pakistan's northern regions after the invasion of Afghanistan. In order to eliminate the militants, the U.S. Government launched hundreds of missiles into these regions. In retaliation, Pakistan experienced a number of suicide assaults that resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of helpless civilians, including women and children. Shahid Javed Burki in his article, "Pakistan after 9/11," writes,

The Taliban reacted to these defeats by launching terrorist attacks in many urban centers, particularly in Punjab, killing more than 15,000 people over the last six years. The people of Punjab, the country's largest province – accounting for 56% of the country's population and 60% of its GDP – regard the Pashtun attacks as a form of inter-ethnic violence (2011, para 10).

Conclusion

The present study concludes that DeLillo has captured the awful 9/11 events through the horrifying scenes that were created both within the plane during the assaults and in Manhattan thereafter. Don DeLillo wants his readers to understand the circumstances that turned Hammad, a new and uneasy student in a foreign environment, into a dangerous terrorist. In

addition to telling the story of Hammad, who is aboard the plane that crashes into the first of the Twin Towers ultimately becomes a martyr in the process, DeLillo also wants readers to understand the painful experience of the Americans who were the incident's direct victims, Keith and Lianne Neudecker and other survivors of the attack.

When the plane crashes into the tower, sending Hammad, the perpetrator, off the plane into the tower, Keith, the main character, is thrown out of his office chair and into the wall. People are compelled to jump from the towers as they start to fall because they are so afraid as falling ash and smoke cover the streets. The bloodshed and damage do not stop here; instead, they cause numerous falls over the globe on the name of 'War on Terror'. In a nutshell, we may say that by toppling Saddam Hussain's government, the geopolitics of the international system is altered. The need to eliminate WMDs is cited as the justification for this upheaval, which compelled Mullah Omar and al-Qaeda to flee Afghanistan and seek refuge in various regions there and in northern Pakistan. Additionally, in order to kill extremists, the U.S. government continues to launch drone missile attacks on Pakistan's northern regions. Various strikes left tremendous destruction in these locations while killing a large number of innocent bystanders, including women and children. There have been numerous suicide bombings in various parts of Pakistan as a result. Thus, the World Trade Center attacks support Baudrillard's contention that in an effort to challenge American hegemony, terrorists have developed a new form of terrorism by merging the advanced technological capabilities of the Super Power. If we wish to achieve harmony and peace, we must draw attention to the reality that our youth are radicalizing and are being captivated by the compelling arguments put forward by radical organizations. Therefore, a more distinct and peaceful civilization is required in order to protect basic human rights. As Hamid says in his novella *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*:

“You should not imagine that we Pakistanis are all potential terrorists, just as we should not imagine that you Americans are all undercover assassins” (Hamid 2007, pg 111).

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