



Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and the Heterogeneous Dialectic

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Abstract:

Falling Man by Don DeLillo is taken by most critics as either a discourse on 9/11 tragic events, or a text dealing with a society in crisis, or a work on terrorism and trauma. Though these leitmotifs are pertinent and explicit, other implicit, dialectic issues receive less attention. Critics also do not incorporate into their analyses DeLillo's "In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September." This article forms—in many perspectives—the background and the core from which *Falling Man* appears. In both the article and the novel, DeLillo considers 9/11 an occasion upon which to fathom the global situation he finds typically unfolding in New York City where a group of Oriental terrorists assault Occidental citizens. In this paper, I analyze both the novel and the article as textually intersectional works exhibiting a specific type of heterogeneous dialectic between characters of two camps: the Western represented by American figures and their world, and the Eastern represented by the terrorists and their world. "Reflections" and *Falling Man* probe and explore ongoing ideological debates that preoccupy these camps; but the article is narrower and personal, whereas the novel is more universal and impersonal. Contriving heterogeneous dialectic per se, the novelist scrutinizes each body's conditions and voices his comments and reflections about them. He tackles them neither through an Orientalist approach nor an Occidentalist mentality. Rather, he neutrally positions himself in the middle between the East and the West.

Keywords: the West, Don DeLillo, *Falling Man*, heterogeneous dialectic, the East, 9/11.

Introduction

The “singularity” of 9/11 tragic events designates a watershed in the twenty-first century. Its unprecedented consequences in terms of political, military, and violent actions inaugurate global responses have altered the world ever since; war on terror, the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War, and Islamophobia are but a few aftermaths. That day has ushered in subsequent echoes and caused a new literary genre to emerge accordingly; or as Martin Amis puts it, that day “has given us a planet we barely recognize” (21). Don DeLillo (b.1936) demystifies this new “planet.” Three months after the tragic attacks, he critiques the incidents in an essay that sounds occasionally passionate and personal: “Reflections,” where he points to the historical magnitude of 9/11 for, “in its desertion of every basis for comparison, the event asserts its singularity” (3). He responds to the impacts of the tragic events in his own style (Taylor 184). But what persists is that DeLillo foregrounds certain notions and remarks in “Reflections” that Nina, Martin, and other personae contemplate in *Falling Man*. The novel addresses the traumatic incidents of the attacks of that day (Tolan 12). The title, “Falling Man” may be an appropriate metaphor for a condition brought about by the events; it articulates the falling of (traditional) values and meanings within different characters and their large-scale worlds. The absence of a definite article (or indefinite) of the title highlights the generalization of dominant separations between the East and the West; the writer adds an infinite aspect to the “Man” (for the verb to-be is missing) and consequently, he is not only granting the story live and perpetual implications, but attaching increasingly modern tropes to it. He has already mentioned the same meaning in “Reflections” in which he discloses that “our world, parts of our world, have crumbled into theirs, which means we are living in a place of danger and rage” (1). The incidents open a new, daunting era between the East and the West. The terrorists’ choice of attacking the United States embodies a unique version of the West. By its political, economic, and military superpower, the United States represents its own paradigm of the Western world governed by American values and ambitions—Americancentrism. The terrorists, on the other hand, typify their own version of the East with all its complicated and everlasting havoc. The novelist closely observes these bodies through lenses of elaborate heterogeneous dialectic, and matches it with a narrative and its confluence of related details. It starts with a romantic attempt of an ordinary couple, Keith Neudecker and Lianne Glenn to return to each other after the tragic events; the story introduces another couple: Nina Bartos, Lianne’s mother, and Martin Ridnour (aka Ernst Hechinger), Nina’s lover. Hence, the novel does not present any classic figure of American literary rhetoric (Veggian 110). Then it shifts to the East by tracing a group of Arab terrorists who plan and carry out the tragic attacks on the World Trade Centers, introducing two prominent names: Hammad and Amir (Mohammed Atta).

The setting of the book, or what DeLillo comes to call “the architecture of a book,” constructs a pillar of the part of the heterogeneous dialectic for it entails structural and dialectic divisions, reflecting DeLillo’s pervasive heterogeneousness. “I want to give pleasure through language,” he explains in an interview, and resumes “through the architecture of a book or a sentence and through characters who may be funny, nasty, violent, or all of these” (Cited in Ruppensburg & Engles 77). The novel consists of three major parts: part one has five sections; part two four; and part three five. But the three sections: “On Marienstrasse,” “In Nokomis” and “In The Hudson Corridor” incorporate no numbers and—with the exception of “In The Hudson Corridor”—deal inclusively with the Arab body; DeLillo does not count them in his successive numbering of the parts. Moreover, heterogeneous dialectic involves ideological and political intersections and argumentations of the two bodies that offer readers various information and details about each party’s political, social, and religious issues and discussions. It is through the arguments held among personae of both sides that the novelist delivers his thoughts; these dialogues and interactions become arenas where dialectical debates take place. For this, the novelist adopts heterogeneousness that separates silently and epistemically the two bodies and confines them, each in its own closed milieu.

Heterogeneousness

9/11 has dwarfed human interactions and turned a logical sequence of narration absurd. Instead, DeLillo employs a type of sporadic narrative that matches the status quo, shapes that narrative in a discourse, and invests in that discourse stylistics of heterogeneous dialectic. He uses this type of discourse as an index, a marker that refers strikingly to the confluences of confusion, misunderstanding, and hatred between the disputed worlds. This type of narrative has an episodic form (Veggian 107). He composes disharmonious parts and sections, starts with vague titles, includes loosely connected and interconnected interactions, and relying on flashback and stream of consciousness, DeLillo is preoccupied by the impact of postmodernity (Gray 617). Heterogeneous dialectic, therefore, permeates the internal structure of the novel and splits the two bodies and makes from this a *fait accompli* to announce and emphasize. It dismantles the singularity of each one and effaces any plurality of them—a paradigm reference to contradictions in ideology, intellectuality, and mentality. Hence, each one has its version about the ‘Other,’ and what prevails is the felt absence of the Other that exists deliberately in an obscure (and distorted) condition.

Heterogeneousness is employed within a particular body as well. The American side does not express intimate rapport or convergence of a homogenous society; Lianne and Keith are separated and their relationship suffers suspicion, mistrust, and betrayal. Their relationship with Justin cannot be a healthy one either. The basic family institution DeLillo portrays sustains but human failure and separation; or as John Carlos Row has observed, this relationship comes into an impasse—dysfunctional family life (Olster 122). On the other hand, the Arab community breeds isolated individuals who are cut off from their families and surroundings, willing to die; they are suicidal. And in order to render this lack of communication teleological, objective, and neutral, on the third-person omniscient point of view. By using this narrative technique, he enters the worlds of the two bodies and each character’s psyche; this practice allows him to be free in time and place and to comment on the significance of events (Harmon 352).

Starting with Americans, DeLillo exploits the individual panic and horror of a single character. Keith—stepping away from fallen towers—came to recognize his situation and was “barely aware that he wasn’t using his left arm, that he’d had to put down the briefcase before he could take the bottle. . . He closed his eyes and drank, feeling the water pass into his body taking dust and soot down with it” (DeLillo 5). Astonished and surprised by the distraction, Keith went out of that dust, mud, and ruins to Lianne’s apartment. But he was in shock.

He tried to tell himself he was alive but the idea was too obscure to take hold. There were no taxis and little traffic of any kind and then an old panel truck appeared, Electrical Contractor, Long Island City. . . It wasn’t until he got in the truck and shut the door that he understood where he’d been going all along. (6)

The novelist insinuates that the outbreak of terror and devastation with their dramatic and horrible aftermaths cannot unite families and individuals; characters remain alone. Keith returns to Lianne for the sake of a shelter yet soon finds out that the family cannot offer such a place for he and she remain aloof and their reunion fails (Versluys 24; Hornung 178). But Keith belongs to a lost, derelict world, before the onslaughts and after them. Even when he resumes his family life, he fluctuates in his behavior and thinking. This includes a casual relationship he has with another African American survivor, Florence Givens; the affair proves to be futile for Keith who finally drifts to the aimlessness of competitive poker—an analogy for the life he experiences.

After more than seventy-seven pages of the novel, readers begin to see and read about the Arab students (appearing first in Germany and then in the U.S. where they carry out their devilish plans). By postponing their appearance, DeLillo turns readers irritably impatient about this delay and makes of them a jury waiting for the arrival of Arabs. Arabs seem, however, Westerns in residency, education, and clothes. Thus, DeLillo introduces them as exposed subjects of hybridization where they integrate themselves within the fabric of the Western settings. Nevertheless, intellectually and emotionally they are different:

they stood in the entrance way watching the cold rain fall, younger man and older, after evening prayer. The wind sent trash skidding along the sidewalk and Hammad cupped his hands to his mouth and exhaled six or seven times, slowly and deliberately, feeling a whisper of warm breath on his palms. A woman on a bike went past, pedaling hard. (77)

The metonymic allusion to “prayer” is not a casual one here for it unveils the dogmatic stance of the men. They are still holding “prayer” and preoccupied with their existence. Although they live abroad, they still follow and foster extremist ways of thinking and embed the same attitudes: “they were all growing beards. One of them even told his father to grow a beard. Men came to the flat on Marienstrasse, some to visit, others to live, men in and out all the time, growing beards” (79). Ostensibly aggressive and primitive, they lived in Hamburg where the satanic seeds bloomed and multiplied: “the talk was fire and light, the emotion contagious. They were in this country to pursue technical educations but in these rooms they spoke about the struggle. Everything here was twisted, hypocrite, the West corrupt of mind and body” (79). And most of their times were spent in talking, discussing, and preparing themselves for some blueprints.

They looked at videos of jihad in other countries and Hammad told them about the boy soldiers running in the mud, the mine jumpers, wearing keys to paradise around their necks. They stared him down, they talked him down. That was a long time ago and those were only boys, they said, not worth the time it would take to be sorry for a single one. . . . The world changes first in the mind of the man who wants to change it. The time is coming, our truth, our shame, and each man becomes the other, and the other still another, and then there is no separation. (80)

The Arab terrorists are also aloof. DeLillo depicts one of the terrorists (presumably Amir) in “Reflections” as “living a certain kind of apartness, hard and tight” (2). This “apartness” compels them to converse with each other only because they share a common goal, focusing on their devilish attacks and excluding other daily talks and interactions. And the outer world appears for them corrupt and rejected. Still, each party is presented and embodied in its isolated milieu and expresses its and thoughts. To dissect this, the following sections tackle each one separately.

The American Body

Having begun the story *in medias res*, the novelist captures readers’ suspense and brings them in the heart of the 9/11 tragic worlds. He derives from the actual, continuing clash between the two bodies a beginning, and emphasizes his “placement of this terrorist attack in the storehouse of transnational memory [which] allows him to show the like-mindedness of terrorists all over the world” (Hornung 180). Fiona Tolan has argued that

the move into the twenty-first century resulted in a period of anxious reflection on the myriad developments, advancements and challenges of uncharted future. These millennial anxieties were both halted and reinforced by al-Qaeda attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001, subsequently often referred to by the epithet ‘9/11.’ (230)

DeLillo invests the initial psychological syndromes of the shock and its traumatic memories Americans alarmingly experience. The first heterogeneous words of the novel recall states of ambivalence and ambiguity—“Bill Lawton,” which is used as a title of the first part. As the novel progresses, “Bill Lawton” is disclosed to be the actual terrorist, Osama Bin Laden. The misspelling and mispronunciation serve a functional purpose: they unveil an ambivalent disposition of the American side; the writer clarifies the fact that the American people show no interest in their enemy; they simply are indifferent. The contextualization of “Bill Lawton” with sad, slow descriptions of devastation and loss of the opening pages reveals indeed a cynical point about the Americans. In that morning, the Americans’ world turns to be quite fragile and far from secure.

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. (3)

This surreal image has already been drawn in "Reflections." Commenting on a scene one of the survivors (Karen) confronts, DeLillo writes

from the window she saw people running in the street, others locked shoulder to shoulder, immobilised, with debris coming down on them. People were trampled, struck by falling objects, and there was ash and paper everywhere, paper whipping through the air, no sign of light or sky. (3)

This is how DeLillo terrifyingly views his world in which he "establishes a mood of uncanny sadness that permeates the novel" (Randall 120). Gradually readers draw an image about that world. Keith, Lianne, and their son, Justin, represent ordinary citizens and reactions; although Lianne is highly educated, her knowledge is limited: "Lianne's studies were meant to take her into deeper scholarship, into serious work in languages or art history. She'd traveled through Europe and much of the Middle East but it was tourism in the end, with shallow friends, not determined inquiry into beliefs, institutions, language, art, or so said Nina Bartos" (46).

Yet, the dialectic partially ignores these characters and focuses instead on Nina and Martin. DeLillo selects these two figures from two differing social and cultural backgrounds. One can say then the novelist "undertakes a dialogue with American cultural institutions and their discourses" in which he dramatizes "dialectical relationship between, as well as the myriad shapes, meanings, and consequences of American magic and dread" (Osteen 1). Readers are told that "Nine Bartos, had taught at universities in California and New York, retiring two years earlier, the So-and-So Professor of Such-and Such, as Keith said once." While "Martin Ridnour was an art dealer, a collector, an investor perhaps. . . He spoke with an accent and had an apartment here and an office in Basel. He spent time in Berlin" (9; 42). But as it is shown, Nina suspects everything, doubts every detail, and trusts no one. In a discursive conversation, she asks and advises her daughter to take care of herself. "'Be careful. He [Keith] was in grave danger, I know. He had friends in there. I know that too,'" Nina warns. She goes on in this manner and tells Lianne that "'and Justin. Having a father around the house again.' Lianne answers by saying "'the kid is fine.'" Yet, in a discursive maneuver, Lianne suddenly alters the topic: "'Nothing is next. There is no next. This was next. Eight years ago they planted a bomb in one of the towers. Nobody said what's next. This was next. The time to be afraid is when there's no reason to be afraid. Too late now'" (10). These discourse pieces DeLillo embraces show characters' present, turbulent psychology, and optimize the personal complex interplay of perceptions and reality in time of phobia and calamity. Lianne's words typify the very mouthpiece of the insecure, frightened Americans. Linda S. Kaufmann regards these gestures temporal abeyance that haunts characters (Olster 148).

On the other hand, Martin represents a cosmopolitan, businessman, and an outsider voice that contrasts with other voices. The novelist exploits these merits and therefore, lets Martin stand between Western and Eastern worlds and evince them from his objective, detached point of view. During the 1960s, Martin was affiliated with a radical group, Kommune I, that was against the West German state and so he somehow had a mysterious history. But DeLillo makes Martin's discourse vital for Martin as it rationalizes his threads with sophisticated and elaborate realistic arguments. Therefore, Nina and Martin's somehow diverse opinions and differences reflect personal, objective judgments. These personae represent those Americans who attempt to comprehend both their country's policy and the other body's enigmatic intentions. Their interactions distinctively elucidate two kinds of ideology.

The West-East dialectic is intensely initiated by Nina who starts to attack the Eastern people by arguing that "'It's sheer panic. They attack out of panic'" (46). "'This much yes, it may be true,'" Martin replies, "'because they think the world is a disease. This world, this society, ours. A disease that's spreading.'" He

refers to the American centric values that the terrorists reject. Nina extends the argumentation by affirming that the attacks reflect barbarian, savage killing of innocent peoples. She says, “there are no goals they can hope to achieve. They’re not liberating a people or casting out a dictator. Kill the innocent, only that.” Nina believes that the objectives of Arab terrorists are just to “kill.” DeLillo voices same ideas early in “Reflections:” “Kill the enemy,” he writes, “and pluck out his heart” (5). Nina thinks that Arabs act aimlessly, alluding to a point which seems to be vital: behind the actions and works Arabs do stands a leadership which is responsible for what is occurring in the Orient. Meanwhile, Martin’s opinions are seamed by a great deal of political denotations and ideological connotations. His argument stems from a deep dissection of American interferences in the Middle East, seen as aggressive and unwelcomed: “They strike a blow to this country’s dominance. They achieve this, to show how a great power can be vulnerable. A power that interferes, that occupies.”

Through Nina and Martin, DeLillo offers a plausible, feasible condition prevailing in the United States. This condition refers to the absence of understanding and even meaningful communication between the West and the East. “Reflections” brings same proclamations where DeLillo directs the awareness to “the sense of disarticulation we hear in the term ‘Us and Them’ has never been so striking, at either end” (2). Their dialogues become soliloquys of each character’s perception about what s/he believes and considers to be true and right. Martin emerges dialectically more forceful and firmer in his words and argumentation than Nina. He widens them and goes on to mention facts that pertain to both worlds: “one side has the capital, the labor, the technology, the armies, the agencies, the cities, the laws, the police and the prisons. The other side has a few men willing to die” (46-47). Martin’s stance gives a key definition of both parties: the first enjoys highly advanced stages of developments—and civilization, the second is rather in decline. DeLillo also emphasizes the notion of technological progress in “Reflections.” He declares that “technology is our fate, our truth. It is what we mean when we call ourselves the only superpower on the planet” (5). Consequently, these two bodies take two clashing directions: capitalist liberalism versus extremist religiosity.

Discussions between the two main characters develop into hot arguments in which DeLillo conveys his thoughts intensely and readers can notice how “the novel is at times essayistic and arguably rather pretentious in its scenes” (Randall 130). Martin rejects Nina’s views. “Forget God. There are matters of history. This is politics and economics. All the things that shape lives, millions of people, dispossessed, their lives, their consciousness” (47). Martin could be alluding to the Arab-Israeli conflict as there are thousands who are really “dispossessed” of their land, property, and even identity. Second, he tends to link politics with economics, a point of crucial interest. Turning passionately once more, Nina captures both religion and ignorance that drive Arabs: “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” (47). Nina repeats her opinions but in different ways. “Reflections” tackles this theme too. “We are rich,” DeLillo asserts and adds “privileged and strong, but they are willing to die” (1). Nina really categorizes the core of the matter into two directions: the underdeveloped East/Orient against the prosperous (American) West/Occident. Between the two—and this is seemingly permanent—stands a huge gap that cannot be bridged. Thus, Nina’s Orientalist descriptions and judgments remind readers of the judgments, notions, and presuppositions held by early colonizers when they headed toward the Orient. Martin replies that “they use the language of religion, okay, but this is not what drives them.” Nina repeats her words: “Panic, this is what drives them.” He ends the argumentation with salient remarks; believing that the attacks target the whole nation, security is far from being maintained, and alarmingly indicates: “but this is not an attack on one country, one or two cities. All of us, we are targets now” (47). This bold warning given here enforces a claim that Martin is DeLillo’s mouthpiece who delivers political threads (Randall 130.)

Being quite convinced about it, Nina repeatedly underscores the religious convictions of the terrorists. In a lengthy talk, she stresses how these men arouse and maintain their faith:

But we can't forget God. They invoke God constantly. This is their oldest source, their oldest word. Yes, there's something else but it's not history or economics. It's what men feel. It's the thing that happens among men, the blood that happens when an idea begins to travel, whatever blind force or blunt force or violent need. How convenient it is to find a system of belief that justifies these feelings and these killings. (112)

Martin is ready to respond. "But the system doesn't justify this. Islam renounces this." And he seems to burst in a manner of anger and uneasiness.

'Don't you realize how bizarre that is? Don't you see what you're denying? You're denying all human grievance against others, every force of history that places people in conflict.'

'We're talking about these people, here and now. It's a misplaced grievance. It's a viral infection. A virus reproduces itself outside history.'

Martin becomes very intense and then articulates such important issues that his body language mimics them. In a form of a third-person narrative, DeLillo finalizes the issue: "Martin sat wrapped in argument, one hand gripping the other, and he spoke about lost lands, failed states, foreign intervention, money, empire, oil, the narcissistic heart of the West. . ." (113). This is DeLillo in his highest states of observing. He juxtaposes the Orient with the (American) West and then depicts each party's condition where the Orient has "lost lands, failed states, foreign intervention," while the West has "money, empire, oil, the narcissistic heart." This extract is echoed in "Reflections," pointing to the American centrism. DeLillo illustrates it in this personal, passionate wording:

But the primary target of the men who attacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre was not the global economy. It was America that drew their fury. It was the high gloss of our modernity. It was the thrust of our technology. It was our perceived godlessness. It was the blunt force of our foreign policy. It was the power of American culture to penetrate every wall, home, life and mind. (1)

The last comment comes from Martin, too. In a rapid exchange, he summarizes the matter pertaining to the Arabs: "They want their place in the world, their own global union, not ours. It's an old dead war, you say. But it's everywhere and it's rational." Nina reacts impatiently, "fooled me." "Don't be fooled," he replies and asks her "don't think people will die only for God" (116). Martin's dialectic leads some critics like Duvall to think that Martin empathizes with the impulse of Islamic terrorists (10). It can be argued that Martin incarnates DeLillo's objective, impersonal attitude; through Martin many radical and sharp threads DeLillo manages not only to present, but to ponder and further probe the issue. The American figures hold various judgments and notions about the Eastern conditions and circumstances, to which we now turn.

The Arab Body

The main incidents and places involving the Arab characters in the novel resemble indeed the actual ones of Al-Qaeda members. The novelist registers authentic and valid accounts of movements and maneuvers of the extremists. Providing actual details about the plans and regions where terrorists really operated, DeLillo writes facts and evidence rather than assumptions and speculations. This objectivity adds authenticity to the discourse of the novel. On a wintery day in Hamburg—the story thus goes—Arabs appear studying various disciplines and frequently meeting in an apartment. Gradually, their atrocious intentions are terrifyingly revealed. Later, they appear again, but this time in Florida.

The heat on the Gulf Coast was fierce at times and Hammad liked it. They rented a little stucco house on West Laurel Road and Amir turned down an offer of free cable TV. The house was pink. They sat around a table on day one and pledged to accept their duty, which was for each one of them, in blood trust, to kill Americans. (171)

These Arabs lament their past heritage and history. They can no longer bear their present and are willing to do anything just to shun life and people. They spend part of their lives outside Arab lands and gain some

advanced Western learning and knowledge, but they turn all this into their devilish plans. In spite of the fact that they are exposed to various practices of hybridization, they take a bold reaction against and resist it.

Falling Man depicts the East through a group of terrorists and this new version of DeLillo's is neither wrong nor fake. The striking fact about the Arab body is that this group persistently typifies all Arabs and Muslims—a phenomenon that DeLillo tries to highlight in 2007 and which becomes afterward a reality as reports of mass media reveal small, fundamentalist, terrorist groups mainly in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, or generally across the globe. This version denotes hegemonic, political, and religious implications; and it sweeps the world and has been piecemeal established. Thus, Amir and his gang typify a faction that makes itself the spokesman of Arabs and Muslims. "They surely see themselves as the elect of God whether or not they follow the central precepts of Islam," DeLillo writes about these groups in "Reflections" and continues, "it is the presumptive right of those who choose violence and death to speak directly to God. They will kill and then die" (5). Such a gang takes from political dilemmas of its region pretexts to launch horrible, atrocious works. Thus, Hammad embodies an Orientalist incarnation of an Islamist terrorist (Veggian 107). Amir, Hammad, and others formulate powerful groups that react wrongly against their conditions; they are 'lone wolves' They use and abuse Islamic faith to accomplish their aims and decree their own interpretations and ideology against the Other; their violent fundamentalism constructs the Other (Dewey146). They manipulate faith and modify it into a weapon that terrifies the Other. Amir unveils a slogan: "Islam is the world outside the prayer room as well as the *sūrah*s [verses] in the Koran. Islam is the struggle against the enemy, near enemy and far, Jews first, for all things unjust and hateful, and then the Americans" (79-80). In these lines, Islam is no longer a religion of tolerance and peace, but of strife, hatred, and terror.

The Arabs are severely tortured and haunted by their unpromising present and unknown future. They come to the West, DeLillo writes, to gain scientific and technological education, but:

Everything here was twisted, hypocrite, the West corrupt of mind and body, determined to sliver Islam down to bread crumbs for birds. They studied architecture and engineering. They studied urban planning and one of them blamed the Jews for defects in construction. (79)

By using the technique of contrast, the novelist is juxtaposing opposite ideas and concepts side by side. For instance, he puts "educations, architecture and engineering" together with "struggle, corrupt and defects." No doubt then this paradox is functional and informative: it is meant to dismantle the contradiction and confusion Arabs manifest and how they are torn between two contradictory paths—namely, education versus destruction. But the destruction motive wins eventually. And to accomplish this, they will destroy both the Other and themselves collectively. The novelist promotes, therefore, a situation that now the East demonstrates obviously; the words speak for themselves: "there was a feeling of lost history. They were too long in isolation. This is what they talked about, being crowded out by other cultures, other futures, the all-enfolding will of capital markets and foreign policies" (80). Described as peripheral, marginalized, and underdeveloped, this(neo)Orient emerges increasingly politicized and is overshadowed by various hybridizing approaches. The quotation then introduces a genuine definition of the present East. Moreover, and most pertinently, a sense of a dystopia runs throughout the depictions and dialectic of DeLillo. This dystopia eloquently sums up some pivotal remarks. First, the East witnesses a shift in focus of international scholarly research and interests from its beauty, knowledge, and spirituality to its politics, complicated issues, and terrorism. Second, the Arab world is under the yoke of disorientation that threatens its identity. Third, Arabs and Muslims are exposed to "foreign policies" and falling under the domination of foreign agendas and circumstances; Arabs do not act but they are acted upon.

The Arab side deals with the Other as a unified and mono-ideological body that threatens them day and night. In this vein, Hammad puts a question: "What about the others?" The answer comes immediately in which "Amir said simply there are no others. The others exist only to the degree that they fill the role we have designed for them. This is their function as others. Those who will die have no claim to their lives outside the

useful fact of their dying” (176). As with the American body, Amir deepens the conditions of misknowledge and absence of communication between the East and the West.

Amir and others are spiritually degenerating and physically falling for they are losing sight of the East and losing their humanity. They show their ambitions and intentions of fighting and killing; and at the same time, they get rid of their glorious, Oriental past. They struggle against their stagnant, declining present and dwell in a world of their own, detached from the Oriental (past) glamour and charm. On the contrary, they propagandize a distorted ideology and mentality where “Hammad in a certain way thought this was unfair. But the closer he examined himself, the truer the words. He had to fight against the need to be normal. He had to struggle against himself, first, and then against the injustice that haunted their lives” (83). These lines display the inner conflict and struggle which lurk in the remote nooks of the character’s psyche. Hammad undergoes a conflict he cannot dismiss. It is a feeling that agitates him. Nevertheless, Hammad and others believe in their mission and desperately want to accomplish it; their apartment is almost holy:

They read the sword verses of the Koran. They were strong-willed, determined to become one mind. Shed everything but the men you are with. Become each other’s running blood. Sometimes there were ten pairs of shoes outside the door of the flat, eleven pairs of shoes. This was the house of the followers, that’s what they called it, *dar al-ansar*, [house of adheres] and that’s what they were, followers of the Prophet. (83)

For such a faction Islam embodies the most important element. It is the pillar, the foundation that sustains them. They hold Islam as the sole religion that is correct. This sensation of being religious renders them monsters.

Hammad had begun to understand that death is stronger than life. This is where the landscape consumed him, waterfalls frozen in space, a sky that never ended. It was all Islam, the rivers and streams. Pick up a stone and hold it in your fist, this is Islam. God’s name on every tongue throughout the countryside. There was no feeling like this ever in his life. He wore a bomb vest and knew he was a man now, finally, ready to close the distance to God. (172)

The novelist is attempting to know the motive behind the satanic blueprints of these terrorists. He finds that religion stands as the main cause since it offers such a faction the right to kill both themselves and others. In this way, this socio-religious element represents the foundation in determining the merits of the Arab body. Thus, DeLillo supports Nina’s opinion.

DeLillo neither depicts the final minutes of the crash of the airplane with the World Trade Center, nor gives much attention to it. Rather, he lets readers imagine what happens next. In this way, DeLillo dwarfs the terrorist attacks and the reason behind this is that he is more interested in grasping the circumstances of the characters who happen to survive that tragic event than depicting the last moments of innocent passengers, employees, and terrorists. He may be said to have avoided describing violence, focusing instead on the present and upcoming conditions existing between the American West and East. Duvall confirms this and argues that the novel is “mediation” between events in which literature and politics mingle (9). DeLillo, however, writes the last moments of the Arabs in this way: “the vest was blue nylon with crisscross straps. There were canisters of high explosive wired into the belt. There were slabs of plastique high on his chest. This was not the method he and his brothers would one day employ but it was the same vision of heaven and hell, revenge and devastation” (178). The words “revenge and devastation” enclose much of the Arab side. The Arabs hold these concepts as emblems since they are preoccupied “revenge,” and seeking it in the first place just to bring about the desired “devastation.” “They share the codes and protocols of their mission here and something deeper”—one reads in “Reflections”—“a vision of judgment and devastation” (2). As John Carlos Rowe has pointed out, these radicals send a message through their devilish acts, a work directed against the supremacy of the United States and Western Civilization in general (Olster 122). With the terrorists’ suicidal actions, DeLillo ends his depictions and statements about the Arabs. The Arab figures and conditions accentuate nothing other than desperate and lost people. This body’s heritage shrouds in oblivion.

Conclusion

For DeLillo, 9/11 is not a passing skirmish, but rather a momentous occasion that designates the prevailing atmosphere between the West and the East. In “Reflections,” he approaches the “singularity” of events in a subjective and personal manner; however, in *Falling Man*, (which is the dialectical sequel of the article) he ponders it in an objective and impersonal treatment of an attentive perusal. Abandoning a flow of narration and harmony—cultivating the heterogeneous dialectic as an alternative—the novelist exhibits detached discourse and affirms that neither camp understands the other. As its heterogeneous narrative patterns clarify, communication and understanding between the Americans and the Arabs are lost. Moreover, DeLillo’s dialectic stance conceives a recent version of the East and the West; the United States represents the active West. Nina and Martin foreground revealingly different judgments and threads on their country’s foreign policy. Nina’s judgments represent local opinions and emulate domestic fears, but Martin’s embody more international contemplations on both bodies; he raises ideological criticism of Americancentrism. Both of them recognize, however, ideological, political, economic, and cultural disparities between them and the other body. On the other hand, the novelist excludes all aesthetical and cultural merits of the East. Amir and Hammad stand for minor, fundamentalist groups that confiscate the opinions and thoughts of the majority; they manipulate Islam to accomplish their devilish purposes. By the hands of these fanatics the East is blurred—a point *Falling Man* proves and illuminates. DeLillo registers the menacing, looming features of “a planet we barely recognize.”

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المستخلص:**الرجل الساقط دون ديليلو والجدلية غير المتجانسة****مثنى محمد سلطان الجنابي**

غالباً ما تُؤخذ رواية "الرجل الهاوي" للروائي دون ديليلو من قبل النقاد على أنها نص يدور حول أحداث الحادي عشر من أيلول أو نص يتناول مجتمعا وسط أزمة أو على أنه عملٌ أدبيٌّ يدور حول الارهاب والصدمة النفسية. كل هذه التسميات والموضوعات جلية للعيان، إلا أنه هناك موضوعات ضمنية وجدلية أخرى لا تزال غير مطروقة. ومن جانب آخر، لم يتطرق النقاد لمقالة ديليلو والتي تحمل عنوان "في وسط أطلال المستقبل: تأملات الإرهاب والضياع تحت ظلال أيلول" حيث تشكل هذه المقالة النواة التي من خلالها تنبثق رواية "الرجل الهاوي"، ففي كلا العملين يعتبر ديليلو أحداث الحادي عشر من أيلول مناسبة مهمة لفهم أسباب هذا الحدث العالمي، حيث تهاجم مجموعة من الإرهابيين الشرقيين مواطنين غربيين. في هذا البحث المعنون "رواية الرجل الساقط لديليلو والجدلية غير المتجانسة" يتم تحليل كل من المقالة والرواية على أنهما عملان متداخلان نصياً ويتبين أنه هناك نوعا معينا من الجدلية الغير متجانسة بين شخص كلا المعسكرين سواء الغربي المتمثل في الشخصيات الأمريكية أو الشرقي المتمثل في المجموعة الإرهابية. إن المقالة والرواية تسبران وتستشرفان مناظرات فكرية أيديولوجية عميقة لكلا الطرفين. حيث يعنى الروائي النظر في أحوال المعسكرين معتمداً على الجدلية الغير متجانسة ومن ثم يبنى عليها تعليقاته وآرائه وأحكامه، فهو بذلك لا يتناول التحليل عن طريق المنهج الاستشراقي (التعميمي) ولا عن طريق العقلية الاستغرابية (المتعالية)، بل يناهض نفسه عن ذلك ويتخذ موقفاً حيادياً بين كلا المعسكرين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الغرب، دون ديليلو، الرجل الهاوي، جدلية غير متجانسة، الشرق، الحادي عشر من أيلول.

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