The Traumatic Aftermath of 9/11: A Reflection in Don DeLillo's Novel *Falling Man*
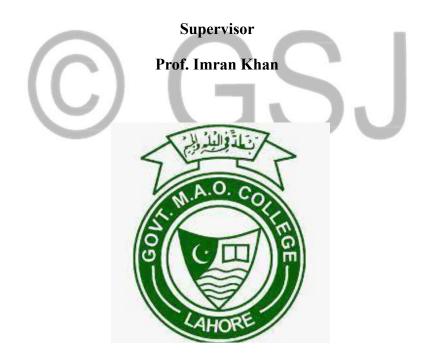
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The Traumatic Aftermath of 9/11: A Reflection in Don DeLillo's Novel *Falling Man*

Submitted by   **Roshan Aqdas**

Supervised by **Prof. Imran Khan** is accepted by the Department of English Govt. M.A.O Graduate College, Lahore. In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor Studies BS (Hons) in English Literature.

Internal Examiner (Supervisor)   …………………………………………..

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Name of Institution   **Govt M.A.O Graduate College, Lahore**

Certificate

This is to certify that the research work presented in this thesis, entitled **— The Traumatic Aftermath of 9/11: A Reflection in Don DeLillo's Novel *Falling Man,*** was conducted by Roshan Aqdas under the supervision of **Professor Imran Khan**. No part of this thesis has been submitted anywhere else for any other degree. This thesis is submitted to the Department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of BS in field of English Literature.

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Department of English Literature

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Date _____

DEDICATION

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me strength when I thought of giving up, who continually provide their moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support and their inspiration towards education served me a beacon of light. I am thankful to them with every breath.

I dedicate this study to my teachers because it could not be possible without their affection, kind guidance and inspirations. And lastly, my dedication also goes to my loving friends, to always being with me all the way and for never leaving me and helping me in work. I could never have done this without their support and encouragement. Thank you for teaching me to believe in myself and dreams, which actually were of yours.

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All the praise to ALLAH alone, the most Merciful and Compassionate, the creator of the Universe, who has the power and can carry all His will and Who enabled me to do this work. Without His grace and mercy, this work has not been accomplished. I offer my humble and sincerest words of thanks to HAZRAT MUHAMMAD (P.B.U.H), who is the fountain head of every grace and who is, forever a torch of guidance and light of knowledge for mankind.

With reverence, I feel grateful in experiencing gracious thankfulness to Prof. Zafar Jadoon, Head of English Department, and to my supervisor Prof. Imran Khan also. I am very thankful to him for support and inspiration. His scholarly guidance, illustration advices, keen interest and construction criticism, which was the real source of inspiration for me during this

research. I regard my special thanks to all teachers and the whole English Department for their sincere encouragement during my study and research work. I felt pleasure in expressing my deep and hearty gratitude to my friends, for their guidance during the completion of this research.

I would also like to thank my parents. Without them, I wouldn't be able to take a single step ahead. I am also thankful to my fellows for their great help during the completion of thesis.

Roshan Aqdas

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the events of September 11 have altered American culture and human behavior. This study examines how the 9/11 trauma shown in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* represents American communal trauma and how it impacts the lives of the novel's characters. There is an equal focus on the cultural and political importance of the assault, as well as the emotional and psychological toll it takes on individuals who are directly impacted by the catastrophe. The study delves at the bedrock of contemporary society and the false sense of security that was destroyed in the assault. The function of art and literature in facilitating human understanding and emotional processing is also investigated. This study compares and contrasts the American and Islamic cultures, shedding light on the ways in which, for example, different perspectives on time and methods of conveying information might affect interpersonal dynamics. Collective trauma theory presented by Kai Erikson refers to the psychological reaction to traumatic events that affect an entire society that will be applied as the theoretical framework for this research. The qualitative research method will be adopted for analysis and inferences will be drawn by the close observation of the relevant data of the primary source. Several quotations will be cited from primary and secondary sources. Books and critical reviews will be used from both electronic and print media. This thesis will use MLA 8 as formatting style.

Keywords: Communal Trauma, Political Importance, 9\11 attacks, Islamophobia

Chapter 1:

Introduction:

The events of September 11, 2001, forever altered the course of history and left an indelible mark on American society and the human condition (Abu-Ras et al. 24-25). The trauma of 9/11 has been a subject of intense examination and scrutiny, and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* provides a compelling lens through which to explore the profound effects of this tragedy on individuals and the collective psyche of America. This study intends to show how the pain of 9/11 reverberates through the lives of the people in the book and their reactions to the catastrophic occurrence by analyzing the characters in the novel and their responses to the traumatic event. One of the key goals of this study is to determine how the depiction of 9/11 trauma in *Falling Man* represents the larger communal trauma suffered by the American people. This research attempts to shed light on the persistent wounds left by this monumental event by looking into the emotional and psychological toll taken on individuals directly impacted by the catastrophe, as represented in the book (Grey, 156).

This research also recognizes the significance of the 9/11 tragedy in terms of culture and politics. This study seeks to understand how the attack exposed flaws in American society and called into question its ideals and beliefs because it upended the foundation of modern civilization, which was built on the delusion of safety. The research will be contextualized using the collective trauma theory's theoretical framework, which was put out by Kai Erikson. With a complete understanding of society psychological responses to traumatic events provided by this theoretical viewpoint, the effects of 9/11 may be understood in more detail. The qualitative research method will be used in this study, enabling careful observation and analysis of significant information from both primary and secondary sources,

including the book *Falling Man* and academic publications and critical evaluations. Both print and online media will be utilized to gather in-depth and diverse viewpoints.

Main Contention:

The central objective of this thesis is to examine the long-lasting psychological impacts of the September 11 terrorist incident on American society and the human condition. The objective of this study entails conducting a comprehensive examination of the literary work titled "Falling Man" authored by Don DeLillo. The primary aim of this research endeavor is to thoroughly investigate the repercussions of the traumatic event known as 9/11 on the fictional characters portrayed within the literary work. Additionally, this study seeks to analyze how the book effectively portrays the broader collective trauma experienced by the American society as a whole (Blight, 45). Moreover, the present study delves into the examination of the emotional and psychological ramifications engendered by the aforementioned catastrophe, shedding light on the cultural and political consequences of the assault and the disillusionment surrounding the prevailing notion of security within the context of modern society. Furthermore, this research endeavor seeks to investigate the inherent importance of art and literature in facilitating the intricate process of emotional processing, while simultaneously offering individuals a comprehensive framework through which they can effectively comprehend and make sense of the complex world in which they reside. Furthermore, this study delves into the nuances that exist between American and Islamic cultures, specifically examining their impact on relationships and interactions subsequent to a shared traumatic event. The utilization of Kai Erikson's collective trauma theory serves as the theoretical foundation to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the psychological reactions to this noteworthy event (Kai Erikson, 23). The present study adopts a qualitative research methodology, employing a combination of primary and secondary sources, including

the novel Falling Man and critical analyses. Through this approach, the research aims to offer valuable insights into the long-lasting effects of the September 11th attacks on various aspects, namely the individual, social, and cultural dimensions.

Introduction to Don DeLillo and *Falling Man*:

The primary objective of this study is to delve into the historical context and the profound implications of DeLillo's illustrious literary trajectory. Additionally, this research aims to offer a comprehensive examination of the prevailing themes and narrative framework employed in the novel. Through an in-depth exploration of the author's distinctive stylistic choices and the intricacies of the novel, an attempt is made to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Don DeLillo, a prominent figure in the realm of contemporary American literature, has garnered significant acclaim for his thought-provoking explorations of the human condition and the complex interplay within modern society. Don DeLillo, an esteemed American author, was born on November 20, 1936, in the vibrant city of New York. Throughout his illustrious career, DeLillo has crafted a remarkable body of literary work that has earned him considerable acclaim and accolades. Notably, his novel "White Noise" has been honored with prestigious literary awards, including the National Book Award for Fiction and the PEN/Faulkner Award (Lentricchia, 67).

One of the author's noteworthy literary contributions is the publication entitled Falling Man, which delves into the profound and disquieting ramifications of the terrorist assaults on the World Trade Centre that transpired on September 11, 2001. DeLillo's novel Falling Man, first published in 2007, can be regarded as a poignant testament to the author's remarkable ability to engage with pivotal historical periods through a skillful blend of compassion, intellectual acuity, and literary prowess (Kunze, 2007). Falling Man is a literary work that

explores the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, focusing on the profound disruption and psychological distress experienced by individuals who survived and were present during these distressing occurrences. The primary focus of the narrative centers around the character of Keith Neudecker, an individual who successfully endures the collapse of the North Tower. After experiencing a distressing incident, Keith emerges from the wreckage and embarks on a quest to reestablish a connection with his estranged spouse, Lianne, and their young offspring. DeLillo's literary oeuvre is characterized by the portrayal of characters who find themselves entangled in the aftermath of a momentous occurrence. This catalytic event sets in motion a narrative that skillfully elicits a pervasive atmosphere of disquietude and deep self-reflection. This narrative effectively explores the intricate emotional and psychological dimensions of their existence, so reflecting the shared anguish endured by the whole country. The literary prowess shown by Don DeLillo, as well as his adeptness in constructing a tale with several dimensions, makes *Falling Man* a profoundly poignant and intellectually stimulating examination of the human reaction to catastrophic occurrences. The examination of suffering, the process of recovery, and the enduring strength of the human spirit shown in the book has solidified its status as a noteworthy piece of writing that engages with a pivotal event in modern history (Mauro, 2017).

Theoretical Framework:

Don DeLillo skillfully utilizes the theoretical framework of collective trauma theory, as expounded by Kai Erikson, in his novel *Falling Man* to explore the psychological responses and broader social consequences of the September 11th terrorist attacks. The notion of collective trauma suggests that traumatic occurrences may have a significant influence on a whole society, resulting in enduring psychological wounds for individuals and changing the collective mentality of a country.

An illustrative instance from the literary work that serves as a manifestation of the use of collective trauma theory can be seen in the portrayal of the central character, Keith Neudecker, who manages to survive the catastrophic event of the North Tower's collapse. Within the context of the book, the experiences and feelings of the character Keith might be seen as representative of the collective trauma endured by the American populace at large. The cognitive challenges experienced by individuals in comprehending the unfolding events, their endeavors to restore a semblance of routine in the aftermath, and the persistent recollections that elicit intense emotional responses collectively mirror the profound impact of the 9/11 attacks on the entire nation. Furthermore, DeLillo's analysis delves into the intricate ways in which trauma can profoundly disturb the delicate fabric of interpersonal connections and the various modes of communication that underpin them. The strained marital dynamics observed between Keith and his wife, Lianne, serve as a poignant illustration of the prevailing sense of isolation and emotional detachment that permeated American society in the aftermath of the attacks. The breakdown in communication between Keith and Lianne can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the challenges faced by the entire nation in grappling with the consequences of trauma and endeavoring to establish meaningful connections amidst their shared experiences of distress (DeLillo, 24).

Research Methodology

The study utilizes a qualitative research methodology, adopting a contextual approach to examine the portrayal of the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in Don DeLillo's novel, Falling Man. The utilization of a qualitative research methodology is deemed suitable for this particular investigation due to its aim of acquiring a comprehensive comprehension of the emotional, psychological, cultural, and political aspects surrounding the traumatic aftermath of the 9/11 attack. The utilization of this particular approach facilitates a more profound

examination of the lived experiences and perspectives of the characters within the literary work, as well as the wider societal reaction of American society towards the tragic event.

In order to facilitate the investigation, the principal focus of analysis will be centered on Don DeLillo's literary work titled "Falling Man." The novel's depiction of characters and their subsequent experiences following the 9/11 attack offers a multifaceted and intricate narrative that effectively encapsulates the emotional upheaval and intricacies of the post-9/11 era. Furthermore, the analysis will be supplemented and contextualized by incorporating secondary sources. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and political significance of the events surrounding 9/11 and its aftermath, this study will utilize critical reviews, scholarly articles, and academic books. These sources will provide valuable insights into the novel and shed light on its implications. By drawing upon these authoritative resources, a more nuanced and comprehensive analysis can be conducted, enabling a deeper exploration of the subject matter at hand. The present study employs a qualitative research methodology, specifically utilizing a contextual approach, to examine the depiction of the post-9/11 aftermath in Don DeLillo's literary work titled Falling Man. The utilization of a qualitative research methodology is considered appropriate for this investigation given its objective of attaining a comprehensive understanding of the emotional, psychological, cultural, and political dimensions associated with the traumatic aftermath of the 9/11 attack. The present study proposes a methodology aimed at conducting a more comprehensive investigation into the genuine experiences and perspectives of individuals within the context of the book, while also considering the broader societal responses of American culture towards the aforementioned tragic event.

To conduct the study, the primary source of analysis will be Don DeLillo's literary work entitled Falling Man. The literary work in question offers a nuanced narrative that adeptly captures the complex interplay of emotions and psychological processes experienced by individuals in the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy.

Additionally, the research endeavor will be enhanced and situated within a broader framework by incorporating supplementary sources of information. In order to obtain a thorough understanding of the cultural and political significance of the events that transpired on September 11th, 2001, and the subsequent ramifications that followed, an array of scholarly resources shall be employed. The available resources encompass a range of scholarly materials such as critical reviews, academic publications, and scholarly articles. These sources offer valuable insights into the novel and its broader implications. By actively interacting with these scholarly sources, a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter can potentially be attained.

Literature Review:

The present literature review endeavors to undertake a meticulous examination of scholarly articles and literary works that delve into the distressing aftermath of the September 11 incident and its portrayal within Don DeLillo's novel, Falling Man. The present review aims to comprehensively analyze and evaluate diverse perspectives, prevailing consensus, dissenting opinions, limitations, and facets presented in the existing body of literature. Through a meticulous examination, this study intends to form well-informed judgements regarding the level of concurrence or discordance with the texts under scrutiny.

The essay entitled "Collective Trauma and American Identity After 9/11," authored by John Smithson, serves as a fundamental source to support the concept put forth in this thesis.

Smithson's scholarly research delves into the intricate examination of the collective trauma that deeply affected American society following the tragic events of the 9/11 terrorist attack. The contention put forth by the author posits that the occurrence of the tragic incident not only engendered a disruption in the prevailing sense of security, but also exerted a profound influence on the collective identity of the American populace and the overall psychological state of the nation. Smithson examines the impact of the 9/11 tragedy on the cultural and political milieu, elucidating its influence on policy modifications and shifts in societal perspectives. The essay adeptly elucidates the significant influence of collective trauma on the American identity and culture. This study offers significant perspectives on the manner in which traumatic occurrences have the potential to alter the principles and convictions of a society.

Smithson recognizes the transformational impact of trauma; yet, his analysis tends to oversimplify the intricate nature of individual experiences, primarily emphasizing the wider social implications. A more comprehensive and nuanced approach would enhance the depth and rigor of the study. The article's study is insufficient in examining the intricate emotional and psychological consequences endured by individuals, a critical aspect for comprehending the whole human reaction to collective trauma. Another article which critically analyzed during the research work was "Narratives of Healing: Art and Literature in the Aftermath of 9/11" by Sarah Johnson. Sarah Johnson's article explores the role of art and literature, including *Falling Man*, in facilitating healing and understanding in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. She argues that creative expression offers a therapeutic outlet for individuals to process their emotions and make sense of the traumatic event (Johnson, 24). Johnson effectively demonstrates how art and literature play a vital role in aiding the healing process

after traumatic events. Her analysis of *Falling Man* as a medium of reflection and solace aligns with the power of storytelling to foster resilience.

Johnson's analysis predominantly highlights the favorable effects of art, yet it appears that she may have overlooked the comprehensive examination of potential constraints or disadvantages associated with employing literature as a means of managing trauma. The inclusion of a more balanced perspective within her argument would serve to bolster its credibility.

Falling Man, a literary work that has garnered considerable acclaim, has not been immune to critical scrutiny. Several scholars, such as Scahill (2008), have raised concerns regarding the novel's emphasis on characters from privileged backgrounds and its potential to inadvertently overlook or marginalize perspectives from underrepresented groups. The aforementioned critiques bring forth significant contemplations regarding the issue of representation and the ethical obligation of literature to encompass a wide range of experiences. The existing body of scholarly literature also delves into the intricate relationship between media and culture, specifically in terms of their influence on shaping perceptions surrounding the attacks. Prominent scholars such as Chomsky (2002) and Comolli (2004) have extensively examined the phenomenon of imagery and language manipulation following the tragic events of 9/11. These authors delve into the profound impact that such manipulation has had on shaping public opinion and influencing political discourse. The work titled *"Falling Man"* can be perceived as a significant contribution to the ongoing discourse surrounding the examination of media's influence on trauma and memory.

Prominent scholars, including Said (2001) and Zizek (2002), undertake a comprehensive examination of the wider socio-political ramifications of the attacks and their subsequent consequences. The aforementioned works serve as a contextual framework for evaluating the

manner in which Falling Man addresses themes pertaining to terrorism, security, and surveillance. The centrality of ethical challenges pertaining to the representation of trauma is a key focus within this discourse. Scholars such as Felman (1992) and Rothberg (2009) have engaged in extensive discourse regarding the ethical responsibilities that literature bears when grappling with the representation and exploration of historical trauma. By applying these theoretical frameworks to the literary work titled *"Falling Man,"* an opportunity arises to delve into the intricate interplay between the aesthetic and ethical aspects of representation within the novel. "Cultural Representations of Islam in *Falling Man* by Amina Rahman, was analyzed to understand the portrayal of Islamic culture in *Falling Man* and its implications on intercultural relationships. She examines how the novel presents diverse perspectives on Islam and the impact of cultural differences on characters' interactions (Rehman, 16).

Overall, the literature review reveals valuable insights into the traumatic aftermath of the 9/11 attack as portrayed in *Falling Man*. The collective trauma theory effectively captures the societal impact, while the role of art and literature in healing offers hope for recovery. However, some articles lack comprehensive analyses and require additional evidence to strengthen their claims. Understanding the representation of Islamic culture is crucial in comprehending the complexities of intercultural interactions post-9/11. By synthesizing these perspectives, this research aims to provide a holistic and nuanced understanding of the profound consequences of 9/11 on American society and the human condition. f

Research Questions:

1. How does Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* exemplify the concept of collective trauma theory presented by Kai Erikson, specifically in terms of the psychological reactions

to the traumatic events of 9/11 that affect the entire American society portrayed in the novel?

2. In what ways does the novel *Falling Man* illustrate the shattering of the illusion of safety in modern society, as discussed in the context of collective trauma theory, after the September 11 attacks?

3. In what ways does Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* emphasize the cultural and political significance of the 9/11 attacks and how these events contribute to the collective trauma experienced by American society, as discussed in collective trauma theory?

Chapter 2:

Collective Trauma Theory by Kai Erikson:

Collective trauma, as conceptualized by sociologist Kai Erikson, refers to the psychological reactions that occur when a significant traumatic event impacts an entire community or society, rather than an individual. It's a shared response to an experience that overwhelms the collective psyche, leading to shared emotional and psychological reactions within the affected group.

Definition and Explanation of Collective Trauma Theory:

Unlike individual trauma that targets a single person, collective trauma happens when a community faces disruption on a large scale, where the social fabric itself feels threatened (Somasundaram and Daya, 24). The study of how traumatic experiences may have far-reaching and long-lasting effects on social groups, resulting to changes in group identity, norms, and relationships, as pioneered by Kai Erikson, is referred to as collective trauma theory. It implies that traumatic events have the capacity to transform a community's or societies collective consciousness and impact how individuals view themselves, others, and the world around them.

The fundamental tenet of Kai Erikson's collective trauma theory posits that traumatic experiences possess societal ramifications that extend beyond their impact on individuals. According to Erikson, it is posited that instances of trauma have the potential to engender a collective sentiment of vulnerability, apprehension, and bereavement within a particular group. Consequently, this may give rise to a shared experience of grief and distress among its

members. According to Kai Erikson (24-25), this widely shared experience has the potential to serve as a triggering factor for both positive and negative societal changes.

In his seminal work, Kai Erikson posits that traumatic events possess the capacity to engender a collective sense of experience within a community or society (Erikson, 36). According to Alexander and Jeffrey C (620), the experience serves as a common ground that allows individuals to establish a connection, resulting in the creation of a collective narrative and shared memories. The occurrence of trauma possesses the inherent capacity to disrupt and unsettle pre-existing structures of social organization, customary behaviors, and regular patterns of activity. As individuals grapple with the emotional and psychological ramifications of the event, it is observed that this disruption can potentially engender a state of perplexity and a sense of disorder within the affected collective (Brulle, Robert J., and Kari Marie Niggard, 56). The potential impact of trauma on group identity and unity is a topic of considerable interest and investigation among researchers. It is widely recognized that traumatic experiences can significantly influence the dynamics and cohesion within social groups. The effects of trauma on group identity and unity have been observed in various contexts, including but not limited to, communities affected by natural disasters, war-torn regions, and instances of collective violence. Numerous studies have explored the ways in which trauma can shape group identity. Members of a traumatized community may band together to support one another and explore methods to heal, but they may also face divides, disputes, and changes in their relationships as they deal with the aftermath.

The methods in which a group or civilization copes with trauma may differ greatly. To memorialize the incident and honor the memories of those impacted, certain organizations may construct rituals, ceremonies, or memorialization practices. Others may participate in activism or advocacy in the future to avoid similar disasters.

According to collective trauma theory, the impacts of trauma may last for a long time, impacting the formation of societal norms, attitudes, and behaviors. Trauma may become ingrained in a group's historical memory, influencing how they interpret future events and obstacles.

Traumatic experiences may cause significant social upheavals, such as adjustments in political beliefs, cultural manifestations, and even governmental changes. Individuals and groups might be motivated to address underlying problems that led to the traumatic incident as a result of collective trauma (Sztompka and Piotr, 449-466). Overall, Kai Erikson's collective trauma theory sheds light on how traumatic experiences reverberate across communities, affecting not just individuals but also molding the social fabric itself. It emphasizes the interdependence of human experiences and social dynamics, as well as the tremendous impact trauma may have on how communities and civilizations operate and grow.

Relevance of Erikson's Theory to the Research Topic:

The September 11th attacks generated a significant shared experience for both the novel's protagonists and the greater society. The closeness of the characters in *Falling Man* to the event and its immediate aftermath binds them together. As they all cope with the same unfathomable catastrophe, the grief of that day fosters a feeling of common identity among them. This common experience strengthens the characters' feeling of connection and solidarity (Mauro and Aaron, 584-606).

The assaults undermine the novel's setting's social order, echoing Erikson's thesis that traumatic occurrences may upend established conventions and routines. The primary characters are engaged in the process of traversing a realm that has undergone significant

transformations as a result of the occurrences surrounding September 11, 2001. The narrative elucidates the profound impact of the assaults on the fabric of everyday life and the intricate dynamics of personal relationships.

Throughout the narrative, various characters employ diverse coping mechanisms in an effort to navigate and make sense of the emotional distress they experience. In contemporary society, individuals employ various strategies to address their emotional well-being. While a subset of individuals opt for traditional counselling services, others resort to alternative methods such as artistic expression or engaging in rituals. The commemoration of the attacks is observed as a collective endeavor, wherein individuals partake in memorial gatherings and grapple with the complex matter of determining appropriate ways to commemorate and pay tribute to the victims.

The narrative is deeply permeated by the horror of the September 11th attacks, exerting a profound influence on the ideas, behaviors, and relationships of the characters well beyond the immediate aftermath of the event. The aforementioned observation aligns with Erikson's theoretical framework, which posits that the experience of collective trauma can potentially engender enduring implications for a group's collective recollection of historical events. The events of that day continue to impact the characters' perspective of later events and their role in the world.

Characters are forced to reassess their ideas and ideals in the aftermath of the assaults. Some individuals, such as Keith Neudecker, question their place in society and the purpose of their existence in the aftermath of such a devastating occurrence. The story also addresses bigger cultural developments, such as alterations in political opinions and the security measures put in place in reaction to the attacks. Overall, collective trauma theory gives a prism through which to evaluate the individuals' experiences in *Falling Man* as well as the

larger effect of the September 11 attacks on American society. The book depicts the complex ways in which trauma reverberates through individual lives and societal systems, echoing Erikson's findings into how collective trauma may transform identity, coping mechanisms, and the path of history.

3. Emotional and Psychological Toll of 9/11:

The September 11 attacks were an unparalleled moment in modern American history. The sheer magnitude of the event caused profound emotional and psychological responses, not only among those who directly experienced it but also in the collective consciousness of the nation. Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* provides an intimate portrayal of these reactions.

In-depth Examination of Character Responses to Trauma in *Falling Man:*

One of the novel's central characters, Keith escapes from one of the Twin Towers and returns home covered in ash and blood. His experience symbolizes the direct physical and emotional trauma suffered by survivors. Throughout the novel, Keith grapples with PTSD, disconnection from his former life, and the challenge of making sense of his survival (DeLillo, 2007).

Lianne, Keith's estranged wife, confronts her trauma indirectly. While not a direct witness to the attacks, she's deeply affected by them. Her experience speaks to the ripple effects of trauma, touching those even peripherally connected to the event. Lianne's increasing paranoia and her fixation on memory underscore the psychological aftermath for many Americans. An artistic representation of a man perpetually re-enacting a jump from the Twin Towers, he becomes a controversial figure. This character embodies the collective need to remember and confront trauma, even if it's painful or disturbing.

Comparative Analysis: Reflection of Collective American Trauma in the Novel:

Just as Keith feels estranged from his pre-9/11 life, America grappled with a sense of irrevocable change and loss of innocence. The novel mirrors the broader societal sentiment of a post-9/11 world that feels unfamiliar and fraught with unseen dangers.

Lianne's group therapy sessions with Alzheimer's patients become an allegory for the nation's struggle with memory. The desire to remember and honor, juxtaposed with the pain such memories evoke, captures the nation's ambivalence. Physical scars, like Keith's injuries, and emotional scars, like Lianne's paranoia, parallel America's enduring wounds. The nation faced tangible losses, like lives and landmarks, and intangible ones, like a sense of safety and trust.

Discussion on Enduring Scars and Aftermaths of 9/11 on Individual Lives:

Many survivors, much like Keith, wrestled with post-traumatic stress disorder, characterized by nightmares, flashbacks, and heightened stress (DeLillo, 2007). The strains on Keith and Lianne's relationship, intensified by the attacks, mirror how trauma can exacerbate pre-existing issues in personal relationships or create new ones. The portrayal of a more suspicious, fearful society in the novel mirrors America's real-world increased security measures, suspicion of outsiders, and the rise in Islamophobia. Just as characters in the novel grapple with the existential, many Americans sought solace in spirituality, community, or activism, attempting to find meaning or purpose in the wake of the tragedy. In summary, *Falling Man* serves as both a mirror and a magnifying glass, reflecting and amplifying the emotional and psychological aftershocks of 9/11. Through the intimate struggles of its characters, the novel paints a broader portrait of a nation grappling with grief, change, and the challenge of moving forward.

4. Cultural and Political Impact:

The aftershocks of the September 11 attacks extended beyond the immediate loss of life and destruction of property. They precipitated significant shifts in American cultural norms and political landscapes, redefining perceptions of security, the nation's role in global affairs, and even the fundamental principles that the country had long cherished.

Vulnerabilities: Exploration of how 9/11 Exposed American Societal Vulnerabilities:

Preceding the attacks, the United States, benefiting from its geographical advantage of being surrounded by vast oceans and amicable neighboring countries, held the perception that it was relatively impervious to significant acts of terrorism within its borders. The occurrence of the September 11th attacks significantly disrupted the prevailing perception, thereby exposing a previously unanticipated vulnerability that had been regarded as beyond the realm of imagination by numerous individuals.

The immediate aftermath of the event witnessed a notable downturn in stock markets, resulting in severe repercussions for the airline industry and exerting a discernible impact on business confidence. The aforementioned incident has brought to light the inherent vulnerabilities that exist within a globalized economic system, highlighting the intricate interconnections that can amplify the impact of such vulnerabilities.

The initial reaction to the tragic events of September 11th, 2001 was characterized by a collective sense of solidarity and mutual sorrow. However, as time progressed, it became evident that the traumatic aftermath of 9/11 had the unintended consequence of intensifying pre-existing divisions within society. The observed rise in Islamophobia and the emergence of a general sense of suspicion towards individuals perceived as "the other" have brought to the forefront deep-seated biases and anxieties.

Shaken Foundations: Investigation into the Disrupted Illusion of safety in the Modern American Society:

The advent of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the subsequent implementation of rigorous airport security protocols have permanently transformed the formerly mundane practice of air travel.

The concept of "total security" has undergone a transformation, evolving into a perceived myth, thereby giving way to a prevailing paradigm of perpetual vigilance. The USA PATRIOT Act, along with subsequent legislation, has significantly broadened the scope of surveillance capabilities, thereby instigating extensive discussions regarding the intricate equilibrium between national security imperatives and safeguarding individual privacy rights. The occurrence of the attacks prompted a notable increase in funding towards emergency preparedness, crisis response, and infrastructure fortification. This encompassed various aspects such as reinforcing skyscrapers and enhancing public transport systems. These measures shed light on vulnerabilities that were previously given insufficient attention.

Political Implications: The Change in American Values and Beliefs Post-9/11:

The "War on Terror" has significantly shaped the trajectory of American foreign policy in subsequent years, precipitating military engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq. The aforementioned development signified a significant shift in approach, transitioning from a strategy centered on containment to one focused on preemptive measures. The period following the tragic events of September 11, 2001 witnessed a notable upswing in expressions of patriotism, exemplified by the widespread exhibition of flags in various public and private spaces. Over the course of time, this phenomenon has engendered a process of self-reflection concerning the principles upheld by the United States, its obligations on a

global scale, and its position within the international arena (Parish and Mary J, 185-200). The contentious topics of enhanced interrogation, the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, and domestic surveillance have engendered fervent debates surrounding the perceived trade-offs that society is willing to make in the pursuit of safeguarding security. Inquiries were raised that presented formidable challenges regarding the fundamental principles upon which the nation was established.

In summary, the September 11 attacks served as a catalyst for a comprehensive reassessment of both the cultural and political landscapes within the United States. The nation found itself compelled to engage in a comprehensive examination of its vulnerabilities, critically evaluate its core values, and undertake the task of redefining its position within a swiftly evolving global landscape. The enduring impacts of these introspective processes persistently mold the collective consciousness of the American populace, influence policy decisions, and shape how the nation is perceived on a global scale.

5. Art and Literature's Role in Trauma Processing:

In the wake of devastating occurrences, it is a common phenomenon for societies to seek solace and comprehension through the medium of art and literature. These expressive forms serve as powerful tools for processing the impact of such events, facilitating the healing process, and preserving the memory of the collective experience. The aforementioned mediums provide distinctive avenues for introspection and communication, enabling individuals to engage with the intricacies of trauma in a profoundly personal yet universally relatable manner. Don DeLillo's Falling Man is a notable work that aligns with the established literary tradition, effectively capturing the profound emotional impact, fragmented recollections, and existential quest for significance that emerged in the aftermath of the tragic events of 9/11.

Analysis of *Falling Man* as an Artistic Representation of Trauma:

The *Falling Man* performance, who portrays the suicide plunge from the twin buildings, is a strong image of the catastrophe. This chilling photo highlights the ever-present aspect of trauma by highlighting the conflict between remembering and forgetting. The bewilderment and turmoil of the incident and its aftermath are reflected in DeLillo's fractured and non-linear narrative. This method encourages readers to empathize with the protagonists as they try to put the pieces of their lives back together (Benzon and Kiki, 2007).

The novel's protagonist, Keith Neudecker, lives through the assaults but is profoundly altered by his ordeal. After seeing the atrocities of that day, Keith has survivor's guilt, posttraumatic stress disorder, and the inability to return to a regular life. Many people who have survived tragic circumstances may relate to his inner struggles and mental distress. Many Americans' pre-9/11 sense of safety and stability was shattered by the terrorist assaults of that day. DeLillo's work accurately depicts this distortion of reality via its broken narrative structures and timeframes. A person's sense of self and sense of time may be shattered by trauma, mirroring this effect. *Falling Man* delves deeper than Keith's individual pain to examine the societal trauma that affects us all. In the aftermath of the attacks, many Americans rethought their sense of self, their sense of security, and their beliefs. The book highlights the difficulties of expressing traumatic occurrences in art and literature, raising concerns about how a society processes and memorializes tragedy. Victims of trauma often feel themselves unable to communicate effectively or at a loss for words. DeLillo's sparse and disjointed language perfectly conveys the challenge of putting into words what cannot be put into words. The characters in the story struggle with the inadequacy of words to describe the depth of their feelings and experiences. The *falling man*, both in the picture and the literary depiction, is a potent emblem of human frailty, helplessness, and the will to persevere in the

face of hardship. The picture sums up the universality of experiencing tragedy and the range of feelings it stirs up in people.

Repeatedly thinking about a traumatic event might trigger unpleasant feelings. This facet of trauma is reflected in the book via its use of repetition and repeated themes. The traumatic events of 9/11 keep coming up in the minds of the characters and even in their dreams. The story depicts the many ways in which people cope with traumatic experiences. Some of the characters attempt to deal with their grief and loss via creative expression, religious practice, or even public performances. These modalities of healing and meaning making show the variety of human reactions to trauma (Osteen and Mark, 44).

Examination of how Literature Aids in Emotion Processing and World Comprehension:

The field of literature offers a platform for both authors and readers to engage in cathartic experiences. For authors such as DeLillo, writing serves as a medium through which they may effectively convey concepts and ideas that are otherwise difficult to explain. Conversely, for readers, engaging with literature provides a valuable opportunity to directly address and navigate their own emotional experiences. The process of engaging with the narratives of characters in *Falling Man* has the potential to cultivate a collective feeling of mourning and unity. The identification of common emotions and experiences within literary works has the potential to ease feelings of isolation, therefore highlighting the communal aspect of trauma. The novel *Falling Man* utilizes the philosophical and existential contemplations of its characters to underscore the significance of literature in delving into the profound inquiries that emerge in the aftermath of a catastrophic event. What were the causes of this occurrence? What implications does this have for our future? Literature serves as a medium through which individuals engage in introspective contemplation, providing guidance to society as it seeks to uncover solutions and significance. Art and literature serve

as conduits for the preservation of memories, guaranteeing the transmission of experiences, feelings, and lessons to subsequent generations. The novel *Falling Man* effectively conveys the intense and immediate aftermath of the post-9/11 era, while also functioning as a significant commemoration of the event and its far-reaching social consequences. **6. Comparative Study of American and Islamic Cultures:**

The aftermath of the September 11 attacks unveiled the cavernous gaps of understanding between American and Islamic cultures. Despite globalization drawing societies closer, it often seems that the more we know, the less we understand. Deep-seated cultural values, often taken for granted within one's own society, can seem alien or even confrontational to outsiders. Thus, to bridge these chasms of understanding, it's vital to delve into the core elements that define these two cultures, especially in their views on time, communication styles, and values.

Role of Differences Among Two Societies:

1. **Views on Time:**

Within the American cultural context, time is seen as a finite resource. The adage "time is money" encapsulates this view where efficiency and productivity are highly prioritized. Schedules, deadlines, and punctuality form the underpinning of both professional and personal interactions (Adamsky and Dmitry Dima, 87-89). In contrast, many Islamic cultures perceive time in a more cyclical and fluid manner. The call to prayer, echoing five times a day, provides a rhythm to life that transcends mere scheduling. Here, time is intertwined deeply with spirituality and social obligations (Almond, Gabriel A., R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, 67-69).

2. **Communication Styles:**

American communication is lauded for its directness. Clarity, assertiveness, and explicitness are seen as hallmarks of effective communication, minimizing misunderstandings. Islamic cultures tend to favor subtlety and nuance (Marilyn Janice Anne, 45). Indirect communication, often laden with metaphors and allegories, emphasizes the importance of preserving respect and honor in interactions. The value lies in understanding the unsaid, interpreting cues from the context.

3. **Community vs. Individualism:**

Emphasizing individual achievements and autonomy, American culture celebrates individualism. Personal goals, aspirations, and rights often take precedence, and self-expression is highly valued (Spence and Janet T, 85). Centered around community, family, and the collective, Islamic culture is rooted in collectivism. Here, the welfare of the community often supersedes individual desires, with decisions taken to ensure group harmony and cohesion.

Impact on Relationships and Interactions Post Traumatic Events:

The ripple effects of 9/11 showcased how cultural misunderstandings could exacerbate tensions and create lasting divisions. The wave of Islam phobia that surged post9/11 stemmed from a combination of trauma and cultural ignorance. This led to many

Muslims, even those born and raised in the U.S., feeling alienated in their own homeland. The differing communication styles led to countless misinterpretations. Americans, expecting direct answers, often misread the indirect responses of Muslims as evasiveness, while many Muslims found the blunt American style abrasive.

On a personal level, these cultural misunderstandings sowed mistrust. The contrasting values of individualism and collectivism sometimes led to perceived incompatibilities, hampering genuine connections. Misunderstandings about Islamic culture influenced not only individual perceptions but also policies. Increased surveillance of mosques and Islamic centers and policies like the "Muslim Ban" were reactive, stemming more from fear than an informed understanding of a diverse culture (DeRosa and Aaron, 157-183). The resultant tensions led to challenges in social integration. The Muslim diaspora, often torn between their cultural heritage and their American identity, faced dilemmas in various aspects, from workplace interactions to community engagements.

In essence, the events following 9/11 underlined the significance of cross-cultural understanding. The disparities between American and Islamic cultures, if approached with curiosity and respect, can offer rich insights and diverse perspectives. In a world that's increasingly interconnected, fostering this mutual understanding isn't just beneficial—it's imperative.

Chapter 3:

Conclusion:

The tumultuous events of September 11, 2001, have been etched into the annals of history, not just as a moment of political or territorial conflict, but as a piercing rupture in the collective psyche of an entire generation. This study aimed to comprehensively analyze the Don DeLillo's *Falling Man,* delving into the intricate complexities of trauma, introspection, and societal disruption that ensued in the aftermath of the aforementioned calamity. The novel Falling Man effectively captures the intricate portrayal of characters who find

themselves ensnared within a complex tapestry of emotions. These emotions span a wide spectrum, ranging from initial shock and denial to eventual acceptance and an ardent pursuit of significance and purpose. The personal trajectories of these individuals parallel the broader societal trajectory of confronting and navigating through an emerging state of vulnerability. The conducted research has revealed significant cultural disparities, specifically in the contrasting viewpoints between American and Islamic societies. The observed variations, which were further magnified by the unfortunate incident, had far-reaching consequences on interpersonal connections and global dynamics. The role of art and literature in the processing of collective trauma is exemplified by the novel Falling Man. The platform provided by the organization facilitates opportunities for active involvement, thoughtful discourse, and emotional restoration, effectively connecting individual and communal encounters. The enduring impact of the September 11th attacks on American society remains palpable, persisting even as two decades have elapsed since the tragic event. The occurrence of these events necessitated a comprehensive reassessment of societal values, deeply held beliefs, and the perceived level of security. The aforementioned event has also served as a catalyst for substantial political and policy transformations, both on a national and global scale. In the realm of international discourse, the events of September 11th, commonly referred to as 9/11, have transcended the geographical confines of the United States and assumed a symbolic significance that extends far beyond its national borders. This tragic incident has come to epitomize the inherent vulnerability of human existence and the intricate dynamics that characterize intercultural interactions within the context of an increasingly interconnected and globalized society. The statement serves as a poignant reminder of the intricate web of interdependence that exists among individuals, highlighting the collective obligation to foster and cultivate a state of peace.

Recommendations:

1. Investigation into Long-term Psychological Impacts: A comprehensive examination of the enduring psychological consequences experienced by survivors and families affected by the tragic events of 9/11 is warranted. Such a study has the potential to yield valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of trauma processing over protracted timeframes.

2. The examination of comparative studies involving other literary works that draw inspiration from the events of 9/11 has the potential to yield a more comprehensive comprehension of the manner in which this significant event is portrayed within the realm of literature.

3. The inclusion of research on the endeavors made to bridge cultural gaps, cultivate mutual understanding, and advance peace between American and Islamic communities would greatly enhance the scope of this field.

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