IV. FALLING

DON DELILLO'S *FALLING MAN* AND THE AGE OF TERROR

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> "I think of it as one, not two," she said. "Even though there are clearly two towers. It's a single entity, isn't it?"
> "Very terrible thing but you have to look at it, I think."
> "Yes, you have to look."
>
> —Don DeLillo, *Underworld*

After the apocalyptic millennial scenarios that went by the name Y2K fizzled, Americans felt secure in their leadership of the New World Order; but when the towers fell, so did confidence in our global preeminence, revealing the twenty-first century as an age of terror and retribution. If one examines Don DeLillo's writings of the past ten years, there emerges a dialectical critique of the transnational forces of global capitalism and fundamentalist terrorism that have brought us to catastrophe. *Cosmopolis*, which was very near completion on September 11, 2001, chronicles a single day in April 2000 on which the rapaciousness that supported hypercapitalism, personified by the currency speculator Eric Packer, is confronted by a troop of black flag anarchists at the NASDAQ Center and a lone assassin who resembles an amalgam of Leon Czolgosz (the anarchist who shot President William McKinley in 1901), Lee Harvey Oswald, and John Hinckley, Jr.[1] Faced with the enormity of the attack on the World Trade Center in the city of his birth, DeLillo set aside his novel for some two months in order to write an essay, "In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September,"

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published in the December 2001 issue of *Harper's*, that not only offers a penetrating reading of the antitheses of globalization and terrorism but also provides personal reflection on the tragedy—his nephew's family had nearly been killed in their financial-district apartment house as the towers collapsed. Though daunted by the prospect of rendering 9/11 in fiction, DeLillo remarks that he "didn't want to write a novel in which the attacks occur over the character's right shoulder and affect a few lives in a distant sort of way. I wanted to be in the towers and in the planes. I never thought of the attacks in terms of fiction at all, for at least three years" ("Intensity"). In *Falling Man*, his readers recognize DeLillo's deliberative analysis of transnational politics in the figures of a traumatized survivor, a proximate witness who is a surrogate for all those who viewed this spectacle in horror but in safety, and a jihadist recruit—at times with verbatim iteration of the earlier essay. Most recently, *Point Omega* trains a sharp lens on a "professor emeritus" (7) recruited to the E ring of the Pentagon, given a security clearance, and tasked with conceptualizing the invasion of Iraq in a fashion that would enable the United States to "retake the future" (30) that was obliterated on 9/11. These three novels and the attendant essay critically enframe the profound redirection of American polity in September 2001 on the same order as December 1941 and November 1963.

To be sure, DeLillo has returned throughout his career to treat the corrosively totalizing force of global capital from his first novel, *Americana* (1971), to the concluding movement of his masterwork, *Underworld*. As a corollary to this indictment, he casts a cold eye on the dystopian promises of mass media and technocracy in *White Noise* (1985). Numerous critics have observed the prominence in such novels as *Players*, *The Names* (1982), and *Mao II* of irruptive acts of terrorism in resistance to the cultural and political hegemony of the west. Terrorists, DeLillo conjectures, have the capacity to alter the consciousness of the age in the fashion that novelists such as Kafka, Beckett, or Mailer may once have had but no longer do. In my reading of *Falling Man*, however, DeLillo does not reiterate but engages in a dialectical reassessment of the relation of global corporatism and terrorism. After 9/11 the towers, which had been treated as a figure of oppressive supremacy in earlier novels, must also be regarded in "all that howling space" ("In the Ruins" 39) as the epitome of mourning and collective trauma. Before 9/11 the terrorists who had accreted a grudging admiration for the "glamour of revolutionary violence" (*Players* 8) must also be regarded as the agents of a fundamentally regressive and dialogically forbidding transnational theocracy. The world narrative that the terrorists seized on 9/11 "ends in the rubble, and it is left to us to create the counter-narrative" ("Ruins" 34). *Fall-*

ing Man offers a—surely not *the*—counter-narrative in its tripartite recursive form and in the polysemic figure of the Falling Man as an expression not of despair and retribution but of meditative suspension and reconciliation.

"I'm standing here"

Falling Man begins and ends with a powerfully evocative literary rendering of the collapse of the north tower of the World Trade Center. The recurring reflection on the towers in DeLillo's writing suggests they had already assumed an iconic role in his thought that is more profound than their architectural stature or political historicity. As a lifelong New Yorker, DeLillo recounts that he went within days to the site, "looking directly into the strands of openwork façade. It is almost too close. It is almost Roman, I-beams for stonework, but not nearly so salvageable. Many here describe the scene to others on cell phones. 'Oh my god I'm standing here,' says the man next to me" ("In the Ruins" 38). In *Falling Man*, DeLillo focuses his narrative on the traumatic experience and the personal restitution of one man, Keith Neudecker, a corporate lawyer working in the north tower. Stunned and injured, Neudecker accepts a ride from a stranger, giving the address of his estranged wife, Lianne, and their son in uptown Manhattan, a decision that temporarily reunites the family. When he returns to the site and to his nearby bachelor apartment to retrieve his belongings, the narrative recapitulates the expression of awe before such calamity that is recorded in DeLillo's essay:

> He stood at the National Rent-A-Fence barrier and looked into the haze, seeing the strands of bent filigree that were the last standing things, a skeletal remnant of the tower where he'd worked for ten years. The dead were everywhere, in the air, in the rubble, on rooftops nearby, in the breezes that carried from the river. They were settled in ash and drizzled on windows all along the streets, in his hair and on his clothes.
>
> He realized someone had joined him at the fence. . . . He took out his cell phone and entered a number.
>
> "I'm standing here," he said. (25)

Neudecker reiterates the simple declarative fact of his existence, "I'm standing here" (27). It is the recognition of survivors that there is nothing virtuous—or evil—that distinguishes them from those who perished. It is the same recognition that comes to the survivors of every holocaust in history.

Of course it won't do to suggest that Neudecker is in any way an autobiographical character who stands as proxy for the author before the ruins of the towers—at once classical, gothic, and modern. Still, the correspondence between DeLillo's personal account and his representation of Neudecker standing in mute witness at what became known as Ground Zero (that, and other appellations for 9/11, appear nowhere in the novel) provides an example of the postmodern sublime, an event (technologically mediated and effected) for which no expression is adequate to describe. At his apartment building a short distance from Liberty Plaza (and thus corresponding roughly to DeLillo's nephew's residence), Neudecker repeats the phrase, "I'm standing here," and the narrator suggests that in "the movie version, someone would be in the building, an emotionally damaged woman or a homeless old man, and there would be dialogue and close-ups" (27). Rendered from the character's point of view, Neudecker's surmise accounts for his sense of having stepped into extraordinary circumstances and of his self-alienation. The passage also functions as the first of several reflexive commentaries in which the narrator gestures to the impossibility of any adequate artistic representation of atrocity.

The openings of the World Trade Center north tower in 1970 and the south tower in 1972 bookend the publication of DeLillo's first novel, *Americana*, in 1971, so one could say that his entire career as a novelist in New York has fallen under the shadow of the towers. There are explicit references to the towers in *Players*, *Mao II*, and *Underworld*, and though the opinions expressed therein are attributed to the characters, it is fair to say that DeLillo joined critics of architecture and urban planning, as well as many native New Yorkers, who deplored the imposition of the monstrous construction project in lower Manhattan where it obliterated the Radio Row neighborhood that was seized by the Port Authority under right of eminent domain. Built during the American era of the prefix "super-," from the supermarket to the supersonic, they served as a manifestation of America's ambitions as a superpower. While the Twin Towers stood as an ineffable expression of global dominance, the artist could either choose to take the measure of their meaning in the postindustrial world or be relegated to expressions of solipsism or marginality.

Prior to 9/11 and *Falling Man*, DeLillo critiqued the World Trade Center as a symbol of multinational capitalism. "But when the towers fell,"[2] when confronted with their utter destruction and such grave loss of life, how might he acknowledge his antipathy toward what the World Trade Center represented without appearing to endorse an egregious act of terrorism? The novelist wishes to "make raids on human consciousness" (*Mao II* 41) and yet stand in ethical contra-

distinction to the terrorist act. DeLillo repeatedly invoked the World Trade Center as representative of the gigantism and hubris of global capitalism, a force that he has stridently resisted from the start of his career in *Americana*, in which the television executive David Bell abandons his unfulfilling job in New York City. But in the aftermath of 9/11 the vilification of the towers presents an uncomfortable dramatic irony. Pammy Wynant in *Players*, the photographer Brita Nilsson in *Mao II*, and the artist Klara Sax in *Underworld* are frustrated in their efforts to solicit a reasoned colloquy with capitalist ideology as symbolized by the mute dialogue between the towers. In response to this indifference to humanity, there resides a subtly repressed desire to see the fall of the towers as the ultimate fulfillment of their totemic stature. Slavoj Žižek controversially ascribes such a libidinal fantasy to Americans in his essay, "Welcome to the Desert of the Real!" He reminds us that "when we hear how the bombings were a totally unexpected shock, how the unimaginable Impossible happened, one should recall the other defining catastrophe from the beginning of the twentieth century, that of the *Titanic*" (386). Just as the boast of its unsinkability proved to be the ideological fantasy of Western industrialization, so the fall of the towers lay bare the phantasm of its technological capitalism. "Not only were the media bombarding us all the time with the talk about the terrorist threat," Žižek continues, "this threat was so obviously libidinally invested—just recall the series of movies from *Escape from New York* to *Independence Day*. The unthinkable that happened was thus the object of fantasy: in a way, America got what it fantasized about, and this was the greatest surprise" (386–87). Indirectly emphasizing the marginality of the novelist in his exclusive references to large-budget apocalyptic films, Žižek ascribes an anticipatory desire for the destruction of the towers to the American cultural imaginary. Yet fantasies are not supposed to be realized; they exist to provide a safe displacement for fears, lusts, and taboos. Thus it was the partial attribution of guilt for the disaster to the American imaginary that was objectionable—not that America got what it fantasized, but that it got what it deserved; that in the American popular imagination such enormous wealth and aspiration for world domination should meet with catastrophe.

In *Falling Man* a version of Žižek's psychoanalytic argument regarding America's libidinal fantasy of destruction is articulated by Martin Ridnour, an international art dealer with ties to West German student radicalism of the late 1960s:

> Weren't the towers built as fantasies of wealth and power that would one day become fantasies of destruction? You build a thing like that so you can see it come down. The

> provocation is obvious. What other reason would there be to go so high and then to double it, do it twice? It's a fantasy, so why not do it twice? You are saying, Here it is, bring it down. (116)[3]

As an expression of masculine ego, what could be more wishful than repeated erections, even if they are destined to collapse? The Twin Towers entered the realm of fantasy through sheer excess, and it is the unbridled excess of global capital that most provokes the loose consortium of anarchists, belated communists, and anti-globalization protesters that charge the storm fences at every G-8 summit. Lest we associate this position—that Americans had fantasied the destruction of the towers—too closely with DeLillo, we should turn to the essay "In the Ruins of the Future," in which he speaks in propria persona regarding the terrorists: "We can tell ourselves that whatever we've done to inspire bitterness, distrust, and rancor, it was not so damnable as to bring this day down on our heads. But there is no logic in apocalypse. They have gone beyond the bounds of passionate payback. This is heaven and hell, a sense of armed martyrdom as the surpassing drama of human experience" (34). While not exonerating America for its role in the excesses of globalization, DeLillo points to the failure of dialectical reasoning that even in bitter conflicts negotiates a proportionate response; to the extent that the dispossessed have been harmed by global capitalism, they have a right to be aggrieved. But in the apocalyptic collapse of the towers one hears only the absolutist thunderclap of religious fanaticism.

The Narrative and Counter-Narrative of Terrorism

DeLillo apprized the events of September 11 by declaring that now "the world narrative belongs to terrorists" ("In the Ruins" 33). As a novelist he is inclined to think of the assault in terms of narrative structure. The fall of the towers may be an instance of "the unpresentable" in Lyotard's definition of postmodernism (81), but it is the most prominent expression of a turn in recent historical narrative. Al-Qaeda terrorists are therefore the plotters of this tragedy. In *Mao II*, the reclusive novelist Bill Gray describes the correspondence between narrative plots and geopolitical conspiracies as the "curious knot that binds novelists and terrorists" (41), prominent in the chrestomathy of DeLillo's themes. If writers and terrorists are alike in being "men in small rooms" who plot (*Libra* 181), then characters share the unenviable fate of being the unwitting victims of their machinations. Although there are other sorts of narrative structures, the form that captivates DeLillo's attention is that in which conspiracy

and contingency interact. The designing plotter and the hapless bystander, determinism and randomness, proceed in a sometimes graceful and sometimes horrific pas de deux.

Considering 9/11 as a turn in narrative plot, DeLillo contends that at the millennium the world narrative belonged to "the power of American culture to penetrate every wall, home, life, and mind." Yes, there's the bright white fiber optics of western technocracy and cyber capital that carry the signal. American culture is afflicted with digital graphomania, a compulsive disorder that demands that every available square meter be affixed with signage, that commercial media relentlessly pursue market saturation, and that the purpose of an advanced society is writing on the world—not only in an alphanumeric mode but increasingly in the purer form of the image unsullied by linguistic characters. Resistance to the cultural imperialism of western media, especially for fundamentalist Islam that abjures the image, is one crux in the story. "Terror's response," DeLillo argues, "is a narrative that has been developing over years, only now becoming inescapable. It is *our* lives and minds that are occupied now" ("In the Ruins" 33). The occupied territory is not a geographical location such as Belfast, Belgrade, Grozny, or Jerusalem; it is the cultural preserve of the human mind in which these narratives contend.

In *Falling Man*, DeLillo presents vignettes of an Islamic terrorist named Hammad at the close of each of the three parts of the novel. Hammad is a protégé of Mohamed Atta and one of the hijackers aboard American Airlines Flight 11 that strikes the north tower where Neudecker is at his desk in Royer Properties (53). None of the nineteen hijackers on 9/11 were named Hammad, so we're entitled to imagine his character as DeLillo's representation of the mindset of the young jihadist. In free indirect discourse, Hammad describes his role as sleeper-cell member and plotter:

> Here they were in the midst of the unbelief, in the bloodstream of the *kufr*. They felt things together, he and his brothers. They felt the claim of danger and isolation. They felt the magnetic effect of plot. Plot drew them together more tightly than ever. Plot closed the world to the slenderest line of sight, where everything converges to a point. . . . There was the statement that death made, the strongest claim of all, the highest jihad. (174)

There is inexorability, an inner logic to plots that cannot be denied to their conspirators. The channels of communication are restricted to a single circuit, a directive without compromise, and a recipient without question or cavil.

In conversation DeLillo has dubbed the post-9/11 period the Age of Terror (Ulin 1), though it had such forerunning prophets of doom as "The Blind Sheikh" Omar Abdel-Rahman who masterminded the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, domestic terrorists who concocted the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing in 1995. If the world narrative now belongs to terrorists, then critics are engaged in explicating what such a narrative means. In *Falling Man*, Lianne scans the Internet for articles on the eponymous figure of the novel and finds "the transcript of a panel discussion at the New School. Falling Man as Heartless Exhibitionist or Brave New Chronicler of the Age of Terror" (220). Despite never having taught in a college or university, DeLillo easily parodies the idiom of the academic conference panel. We must consider whether in the six years between the fall of the towers and the publication of *Falling Man* DeLillo hasn't in fact been accurate in naming the age. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11 he sees "Two forces in the world, past and future. With the end of Communism, the ideas and principles of modern democracy were seen clearly to prevail, whatever the inequalities of the system itself. This is still the case. But now there is a global theocratic state, unboundaried and floating and so obsolete it must depend on suicidal fervor to gain its aims" ("In the Ruins" 40).

DeLillo's fiction has so frequently incorporated various forms of domestic and international terrorism—the Texas serial killer in *Underworld*; Oswald's role in Kennedy's assassination in *Libra*; hostage taking and bombings by Middle Eastern terrorists in *Mao II*; seizure of the NASDAQ exchange by anarchists in *Cosmopolis*, among other examples—that he appears to have had a sixth sense when it comes to the narrative turn in the Age of Terror. Discussing the relation of 9/11 to *Cosmopolis*, DeLillo acknowledges that "there are people who say my books have a prophetic quality." Regarding his apparent ability to anticipate history, he says that he seeks "to show the things that are happening in such a way that one can understand them more clearly. And maybe I do see some things more clearly and a little earlier than others do. For example, terrorists appear in my books again and again. Why? Well, because they exist!" ("Maybe I see").

A fiction writer would be ill-advised to represent an event such as 9/11 in the style of documentary realism when other media such as journalism and film can do so in graphic detail. In the six years following 9/11, the publishing industry delivered more than a thousand nonfiction titles dissecting the event as opposed to a mere thirty novels (Minzesheimer). Yet the novelist has the capacity to reveal that which cannot be presented in predominantly visual media or by nonfiction journalism and exposé by striving to decipher what the

critic Kenneth Burke called "the rhetoric of motives" (76). While being treated for his injuries by an emergency-room physician, Neudecker is told that survivors of suicide bombings often develop lesions that are, literally, "tiny fragments of the suicide bomber's body," bits of flesh and bone that become lodged in the skin of anyone within proximity of the blast. "They call this organic shrapnel" (16). Forcibly, physically penetrated by the body of his attacker, Neudecker—and the American psyche of which he is a symbolic case—bears in body and mind the internalized scars of this violation. The counter-narrative to these psychological scars is surely not comprised of patriotic public displays, manifested in a globally-prosecuted War on Terror that has placed American occupying forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Rather, DeLillo pursues an interrogation of motives. Burke understood that persuasion (rhetoric) is only achieved through identification: one may only persuade another through the adoption of at least a partial identification with the other and his motives. In antagonistic debates, one utters only reductive invectives. President George W. Bush said to putative allies at a news conference in November 2001, "You're either with us or against us in the fight against terror." The opponent is a terrorist, and he must die; the opponent is an infidel, and she must die. In *Falling Man*, the figure of the mute, totalizing towers that characterized American hegemony finds a counter-narrative in the dialogues of Keith and Florence (another survivor from the north tower with whom Keith has an affair) and Martin and Nina Bartos (Lianne's mother). Were they to remain the random victims of an act of terrorism, Keith and Florence would stand as mere chits in a narrative expounded by Islamic fundamentalists against western materialism. The very serendipity of their victimization would deprive them of speech. They could only lament, "How have I become an unwitting victim of misfortune?" Instead, these two survivors conduct a reciprocal dialogue in which they ask, "How have my own thoughts and actions contributed in some minute way to the world narrative in which I am now engaged?" Working at their desks in an aerie above Manhattan, they invested little thought in the effects of global capitalism on the third world. Only by recognition of the other, through Burkean persuasion, can the characters of *Falling Man* shed their mute victimization and begin to speak in the rhetoric of the counter-narrative. In place of invective, they must find—painful though it may be—some identification with their antagonists. It's an examination of conscience, without the Catholic sacrament of confession and expiation.

The narrative form of *Falling Man* also provides an answer to how its characters' thoughts and actions have contributed to their world narratives. Just as he employed a recursive timeline from 1951

to the post-Cold-War present in *Underworld*, DeLillo structures *Falling Man* as a retrograde loop, beginning with the pinwheel of disintegration as the ash and girders and office paper and human forms fall in pieces over lower Manhattan on that September morning in 2001. But then the narrative returns to that day at the start of part 2, "Ernst Hechinger," as Keith arrives at his wife and son's apartment streaked with another person's blood (87–88), and concluding with "In the Hudson Corridor" as American Airlines Flight 11, carrying Hammad, impacts the north tower. The narrative proceeds from the immediate aftermath of the attacks to the fall of 2004, and yet it relapses, as if in meditation, on an account of that day. Temporally, the novel ends slightly before it begins, with Keith fleeing the north tower, so that by violating in his fictional narrative the inexorable forward thrust of events that comprises history, DeLillo can reexamine the motives of the terrorists and the experience of the survivors. As a lapsed Catholic like Lianne, DeLillo is familiar with the religious symbolism of the three falls, as when Jesus collapses under the weight of the cross three times on the road to Golgotha. For whose sins do the towers fall? As a novelist DeLillo is also aware of how different narrative structures act on their readers. The terrorist plot hatched by Mohamed Atta and his accomplices is one that can move only in an inexorably linear fashion; totalizing and enclosed, it can move only deathward. DeLillo's counter-narrative, however, is nonlinear and reflexive; open and cyclical (not unlike *Finnegans Wake*); and ruminative and unresolved. The linear narrative of the terrorist is a form of invective; the nonlinear counter-narrative of *Falling Man* is a form of persuasion. In the repeated telling, the possibility of healing and restitution—not only fear and rage—is held out for Neudecker.

Through the three falling men of his title—an unidentified man who leaps from the burning tower, Neudecker in reprieve, and the performance artist, David Janiak—DeLillo asks whether the mass experience of terror and catastrophe can be translated into an individual artistic response. "In the Ruins of the Future" offers one possible answer to such dilemma: "The writer wants to understand what this day has done to us. Is it too soon?" (39).[4] DeLillo acts on his own advice in *Falling Man*, when he tells us that the novelist makes a cognitive leap to imagine the unimaginable: "the writer begins in the towers, trying to imagine the moment, desperately. Before politics, before history and religion, there is the primal terror. People falling from the towers hand in hand. This is part of the counter-narrative, hands and spirits joining, human beauty in the crush of meshed steel" ("In the Ruins" 39). Thus, when Keith returns the briefcase that he retrieved from the staircase of the north tower to Florence—whom he had not met previously—he initiates in the bond between survivors one part of the counter-narrative.

The Spirit of Terrorism

Falling Man is divided into three parts; each part is titled with a man's name: Bill Lawton (1); Ernst Hechinger (85); and David Janiak (179). One attribute that these names share is metonomasia: each has been changed to suit some purpose of the characters in the narrative. The first case is a misnomer and the latter two are the characters' withheld "real" names. In all three cases DeLillo defers the reader's knowledge of these characters' identities through each section's exposition. The reader's experience of deferred recognition of the names emulates that of the traumatic event on 9/11, or for that matter, with respect to conspiratorial plots in general. Initially there is the shock of the attack itself, during which we ask what is happening to us. And then there is the revelation of a plot that has been devised by perpetrators unknown to us and whom we are only now, and only too late, coming to identify. Thus the reader of *Falling Man* comes to part 1 of the novel and asks, Who is Bill Lawton? Remarkably, none of the nineteen hijackers on the four jet airliners on 9/11 had needed to change their Arabic names; they flew, having weaponized civilian aviation technology, under their own identities. The relative openness of American immigration policy, its information media, and the ideals of a "free society" obviated the need of the hijackers for aliases. Their intentions were conspiratorial, but they intended to die, and it is through their deaths that the plotters and their grievances would be known. Here—as in so much else concerning 9/11—we see a departure from the Cold War ideology of international espionage. The hijackers's identities are *aperto*; these persons are who we have come to know they are. Whereas international spies are *segreto*; these persons, whom we have come to know, are not who they appear. Lianne's son, Justin, and his playmates scan the skies with binoculars in the days after the attack from the windows of the neighbors' high-rise building dubbed the "Godzilla Apartments" (*Falling Man* 71). It's "their secret" they're looking for the return of Bill Lawton (37). Of course one of the children has misheard the alien Arabic name, bin Laden. Lianne considers whether "some important meaning might be located in the soundings of the boy's small error" (73–74). The plot's mastermind has been identified, but he has undergone metonomasia. Anglicized as Bill Lawton, the identity of this mass murderer could be mistaken for a white American stockbroker, Chevrolet dealer, or middle-class businessman. In fact Osama bin Laden was well known to the CIA from his days as a mujahedeen fighting the Soviet army in Afghanistan. What is alien, what is beyond recognition to the Western ear, is the ideology of holy war and "the old slow furies of cutthroat religion" that bin Laden and al Qaeda represent ("In the Ruins" 37). But we also refuse to comprehend that to the

non-western ear there is the perception that the American Bill Lawton, and those who toil in his name, have likewise visited death and destruction on third-world cultures with impunity. In metonomasia, the familiar name is transposed on the mass murderer, but in return the attributes of the mass murderer are transposed on one very like us. Through the metonomasia of Bill Lawton/bin Laden, DeLillo subtly reveals as much about the presumptuousness of American culture as he does of the nefariousness of the hijackers' suicidal plot.

Each part of the novel closes with a vignette from the point of view of the young jihadist identified only as "Hammad." We should regard this terse personal name or *ism* in Arabic as another instance of metonomasia because an individual would typically bear a full chain of names by Arabic conventions. Hammad is aboard American Airlines Flight 11 in the final vignette, where the narrative point-of-view transfers from Hammad on the jetliner to Keith in his office just as the physical transfer of force from the impact disintegrates plane and building alike (239). But DeLillo chooses not to identify his character with any one of the nineteen hijackers on 9/11 to avoid the obligations of a nonfiction biographical portrait. Instead, DeLillo uses the three vignettes that feature Hammad to profile the mind of the terrorist, much as he does in earlier fictions such as *Mao II* (George Haddad and Abu Rashid), *Underworld* (the Texas Highway Killer), and "Baader-Meinhof" (2002). In the first episode, "On Marienstrasse," Hammad meets an Iraqi expatriate working as a baker in Hamburg, Germany. The unnamed man describes his experience as a rifleman in Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard during the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88) when the Ayatollah Khomeini sent thousands of boys into minefields and across the mudflats of the Shatt al Arab to be mown down by Hussein's troops. Wearying of the pointless slaughter, "even if they were the enemy, Iranians, Shiites, heretics," the rifleman-baker refuses to fire his weapon any further, understanding that "this was a military tactic, ten thousand boys enacting the glory of self-sacrifice to divert Iraqi troops" in battle (*Falling Man* 78). These boys are not soldiers dying in the tradition of *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. They are religious martyrs in suicide brigades who carry the plastic keys that open the doors to paradise (238). The expatriate's account is presented as a counterpoint to the indoctrination that Hammad receives under the tutelage of Mohamed Atta. Even in these brief cross sections of his narrative, DeLillo examines how Hammad comes to accept his role as martyr and jihadist who seeks to destroy "the West corrupt of mind and body, determined to shiver Islam down to bread crumbs for birds" (79). The Iraqi rifleman's story, however, should also serve as a lesson to those westerners who were astounded by the suicidal plot on 9/11, either unaware or forgetful of the doxology

of self-sacrifice in radical Islam. After the suicide bombing of the US Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, in October 1983; after the first attack on the World Trade Center in February 1993; after a fuel-laden truck demolished the Khobar Towers killing nineteen Air Force servicemen in Saudi Arabia in June 1996; after the suicide bombings of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, that resulted in the FBI placing Osama bin Laden on its Ten Most Wanted List; after the attack on the USS *Cole* by a suicide boat in October 2000; after the seizure of a crowded Moscow theatre in October 2002, by Chechen militants strapped with explosives; and after every truck bomb that has devastated Baghdad and the rest of Iraq since the cessation of the major phase of combat operations in the Persian Gulf War: who could conceive of these assaults as repeated instances of a successful tactic in asymmetrical warfare rather than as the expression of a deeply ingrained religious ideology? DeLillo's rendition of Hammad's enlistment in the 9/11 plot, his acceding to a radical Islamic doctrine of martyrdom, should provide an unveiling for western readers who regard it as alien and aberrant psychology rather than as a tenet of belief. Another suicide attack on the towers should not have come as a total surprise.

And yet Hammad is not so wholly indoctrinated that he cannot give consideration to whether a man should "have to kill himself in order to accomplish something in the world" (174). Hammad persists for a time in individualist thinking (he even has an affair with a woman in Hamburg) and considers how his actions might bestow a sense of personal accomplishment or credit to his name and family; to a degree such considerations are reflected in the posthumously-released videotapes of suicide bombers who attest to their actions and the honor brought to their family and their cause. He finally accepts the teachings of "Amir," Mohamed Mohamed el-Amir Awad el-Sayed Atta, that the "end of our life is predetermined" and that "there is no sacred law against what we are going to do. This is not suicide in any meaning or interpretation of the word. It is only something long written" (175). What is called for is the total immolation of the self in religious belief. Martyrdom is not an individual cause; it is God's will in fulfillment. In his analysis of the symbolic value of 9/11, "The Spirit of Terrorism," Jean Baudrillard remarks that it would be a mistake to regard the attacks as a death wish or a perversely destructive impulse. He advances the theory of "terroristic situational transfer."

> When global power monopolizes the situation to this extent, when there is such a formidable condensation of all functions in the technocratic machinery, and when no alternative form of thinking is allowed . . . it forced the

> Other to change the rules. . . . To a system whose very excess of power poses an insoluble challenge, the terrorists respond with a definitive act which is also not susceptible to exchange. (8–9)

In the increasingly totalized politics of world domination, one act of "impossible exchange" can only be answered with another. Theocracy and technocracy become mirror images of one another in their assertions of absolute power and unassailable beliefs. Hammad is taught by Amir to feel no regret for his person, but he is also taught to feel no remorse for his victims. He asks, "What about the others, those who will die?" To 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). Some might call this brainwashing; Hammad thinks it sounds "like philosophy," and others would say that it is the absolute spirit of terrorism.

When Lianne parts with Martin Ridnour whose wealth may involve international trading in contraband other than art, Lianne considers that she had not confronted the man about his identity, nor had she researched the history of West German underground movements such as Kommune One to determine if Hechinger, alias Ridnour, had participated in violent attacks against the state. "Maybe he was a terrorist but he was one of ours, she thought, and the thought chilled her, shamed her—one of ours, which meant godless, Western, white" (195). The anti-institutional terrorism of the Cold War period—and its döppelganger, state-sponsored counterespionage—is less alien than the religious fundamentalism of the Middle East even though both stand in resistance to the political ideologies of the postwar West. Taken as a metafictional critique of best-selling popular fiction, we have as the readers of Cold War-induced spy thrillers such as John Le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963) or Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Identity* (1984) become familiar with the specially trained deep cover operative, the agent whose country will disavow him/her if apprehended, who is remotely handled by morally bankrupt spy masters and threatened with death by counterparts in other agencies.[5] And we have, in fact, come to admire these extraordinarily skilled agents as heroes and heroines, more through the acculturation of their type in popular fiction than through any actual knowledge of international intrigue we might become privy to as citizens. Thus, whether we find Martin clustered with valor or cloaked with shame for his association with a radical movement, we do not find his brand of antiestablishment or state-sponsored terrorism to be alien in the

history of western political imbroglios of the twentieth century. He was one of ours.

In the dialogue between Nina, an art historian, and Martin, who may have bona fide credentials in terrorism, DeLillo analyzes the motives and the strategy of asymmetrical terrorism practiced by radical Islamists. Martin contends that "they think the world is a disease. This world, this society, ours. A disease that's spreading" (46), an opinion echoed in the indoctrination lessons of Hammad (79). Nina remarks on the ultimate futility of attempting to turn back the world narrative to a premodern, anti-Enlightenment theocracy: "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" (46). We are familiar with democratic revolutions in the West, either armed or bloodless, such as Lech Wałęsa's leadership of Solidarność in Poland. Nina rues a return to the purging of the infidels, a counter-Inquisition. Martin does not find the motive of holy war sufficient to explain the attacks; if it were, there would have been many prior instances in which radical Islam should attack the West. He argues, "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. . . . 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). He regards the attacks of 9/11 as part of an asymmetrical warfare of cultural ideologies. In the order of publication, DeLillo has already said as much in his essay, "In the Ruins of the Future": "We are rich, privileged, and strong, but they are willing to die. This is the edge they have, the fire of aggrieved belief" (34). And to put a coda on this theme, Hammad concludes, "We are willing to die, they are not. This is our strength, to love death, to feel the claim of armed martyrdom" (*Falling Man* 178). For the western terrorist the strategy emphasizes political history; for the jihadist there is the invocation of holy martyrdom. Their assessments coalesce on the effectiveness of asymmetric terrorism that wagers a sum the other finds impossible to match. Baudrillard similarly analyzes the shift in geopolitical strategy from the Cold War to the Age of Terror:

> Relatively speaking, this is more or less what has happened in the political order with the eclipse of Communism and the global triumph of liberal power: it was at that point that a ghostly enemy emerged, infiltrating itself throughout the whole planet, slipping in everywhere like a virus, welling up from all the interstices of power: Islam. But Islam was merely the moving front along which the antagonism crys-

> tallized. The antagonism is everywhere, and in every one of us. So, it is terror against terror. But asymmetric terror. And it is this asymmetry which leaves global omnipotence entirely disarmed. At odds with itself, it can only plunge further into its own logic of relations of force, but it cannot operate on the terrain of the symbolic challenge and death—a thing of which it no longer has any idea, since it has erased it from its own culture. (14–15)

We need not belabor that the continued logic of force has been ineffective in Iraq and Afghanistan and that the United States remains in precipitous decline on the symbolic terrain, the battle for the hearts and minds of Arab world citizens.

The Falling Man

The Falling Man is an unidentified jumper from the World Trade Center, suspended in time and space at 9:41:15 a.m. on September 11, 2001, against the rectilinear grid of the towers in a photograph taken by Richard Drew for the Associated Press.[6] The photograph was given a name and the falling man's identity was investigated in Tom Junod's essay, "The Falling Man" published in *Esquire*. His white shirt or tunic and black slacks and high-top shoes appear to reflect—as a human counterimage—the black and grey striping of the two towers' exterior columns. Junod speculates that the Falling Man was an employee of Windows on the World, Jonathan Briley, whose appearance and clothing as a restaurant employee conform to that of the falling figure, and whose body was found miraculously intact near the site of what had been the north tower.[7] Drew was able to take more than a dozen photographs of the falling bodies from the towers before the collapse of the south tower flushed him from his post to the safer confines of his office at Rockefeller Center. Immediately examining what his telephoto lens had captured, he identified one frame in the sequence of pictures. "That picture," he tells Junod, "just jumped off the screen because of its verticality and symmetry." In documentary photography the iconic value of the frame depends partly on the historical significance of the moment that it captures and partly on the aesthetic form of the photograph itself. The Falling Man is suspended equilaterally between the darker façade of the north tower to the left and the lighter façade of the south tower to the right. That contrast of light and dark is recapitulated by the steel columns of each building and by the man's black and white attire. Though he falls nearly a quarter of a mile buffeted by winds that tear his clothing to unidentifiable shreds, the camera lens seizes him at a

Fig. 1. A person falls from the north tower on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, after terrorists crash two hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center. AP Photo/Richard Drew. Used by permission.

moment in which he is exactly inverted, head first, as he plummets to the ground.[8] The viewer is transfixed as well by the contrast between what appears to be the Falling Man's balletic posture, upside down *en relevé* and the horrific demise that will occur some ten seconds later; that is, between the apparent self-composure and determination of the unnamed jumper and the panicked free fall that was brought about by his impossible choice between death by incineration and death by high-velocity impact on the street below. Although Drew's photograph ran in many national newspapers on September 12, it (as well as other photographs of bodies falling from the towers) was suppressed from further publication in deference to those who argued that it exploited the death of the unidentified man.

Despite Junod's valiant efforts of investigative journalism, the Falling Man remains unidentified; we will thus not be able to establish the indexical value of Drew's photograph (its pointing to an object in the world). Instead, we turn to the iconic value of the photograph that invites aesthetic and ethical interpretations. The symmetry of

Drew's Falling Man photograph, the verticality of its figure, suggests a latter-day Laocoön. In its poise we apprehend neither a desperate leap nor an accidental fall but rather a graceful suspension between two equally disagreeable alternatives. The Falling Man is the visual manifestation of Heraclitus's bending bow, or Zeno's arrow forever suspended in its flight toward its target. The families of the 9/11 victims expressed outrage that photographs of the jumpers were published, partly because these pictures violated the respect and due mourning that should be accorded to them and partly because they appear to render their deaths a suicide. Especially as the facts are in dispute, we are driven to ask what the psychological motives of that fatal leap might be. Just as Lessing's *Laocoön* debates the relative evocation of pathos in Virgil's poetry or the Rhodian sculpture, we may ask whether it is the photograph of the Falling Man or DeLillo's literary treatment of this icon of 9/11 that best renders the pathos of the moment.

As I mention above, DeLillo presents three falling men in his novel. Keith Neudecker is already a falling, failing man before the first plane hits the north tower. He is estranged from his wife and son; he has no enthusiasm for the white-collar job he occupies and to which he does not return after the attacks; and his relations with his poker-playing coworkers are largely perfunctory, even descending into a pointless hockey-rink brawl with the bachelor Rumsey (123). If we hope that Neudecker, in his descent from the tower, arm broken, shirt speckled with Rumsey's blood, and absently clutching Florence's briefcase, will be redeemed by his brush with death and calamity, find new purpose in life, and consider every day a providential gift to share with his family and the world, we are going to be disappointed by DeLillo's novel. And indeed, some reviewers were dischuffed that Neudecker's affair with Florence, his pursuit of high stakes (and thus high risk) poker in Las Vegas, and his inability to secure an intimate bond with the family to whom he has returned in default of any other safe house, do not hold out personal redemption as the antidote to so much suffering. In the three years that the novel follows Neudecker, he does not demonstrably become a more sympathetic or more ethical man than before his tragedy. He lacks a tragic hero's catharsis. Neudecker's failed recovery measures the depth of his traumatism, and though he recuperates from his physical wounds, he does not find satisfactory amends for his psychological loss. Irrevocably touched by 9/11, he cannot be made whole—and in that he is like most other survivors, the families of victims, and witnesses to the event.[9]

The novel begins and ends with harrowing descriptions of Neudecker's descent from the north tower, thus framing the entire

intervening discourse as a meditation on that moment. In both the initial account and its reprise, a shocked Neudecker notes the anomaly of a shirt that "came down out of the high smoke, a shirt lifted and drifting in the scant light and then falling again, down toward the river" (4). The white shirt that appears to defy gravity serves as an icon of all those who stepped out into airy nothingness while yearning for an impossible rescue. The floating shirt recapitulates Drew's photograph of the falling man in his white tunic, but it functions as a synecdoche for all those who leapt to their death, a number neither acknowledged nor recorded in the official accounts of the 9/11 disaster. So horrible is it to hold in mind those bodies impacting with the force of cannon shot—at least one firefighter was killed instantly by a falling man (Junod, "Falling Man")—that the image of the shirt adrift is nearly all the traumatized viewer can bear to register.

As he holds the dying Rumsey on their shattered and smoking floor in the World Trade Center, Neudecker observes that "something went past the window, then he saw it. First it went and was gone and then he saw it and had to stand a moment staring out at nothing, holding Rumsey under the arms. He could not stop seeing it, twenty feet away, an instant of something sideways, going past the window, white shirt, hand up, falling before he saw it" (242). In this recapitulation of the image, the iconic shirt appears to make an imprecation, beg reversal of fortune, or seek rescue in defiance of physical laws. The novel ends with a third account as Neudecker sees "a shirt come down out of the sky. He walked and saw it fall, arms waving like nothing in this life" (246), as indeed it is.

The third and eponymous Falling Man of the novel is a performance artist, identified in his obituary as David Janiak, who suspends himself from bridges and buildings in the very same position as the man in Drew's photograph. Lianne first encounters his performance at Grand Central Station some ten days after the attack. His stylized dive over the jostling crowd of New York commuters is likewise unannounced; no doubt the frayed nerves of the unwilling audience are further jangled by his surprise fall. She looks overhead to see him

> upside down, wearing a suit, a tie and dress shoes. He brought it back, of course, those stark moments in the burning towers when people fell or were forced to jump . . . . There were people shouting up at him, outraged at the spectacle, the puppetry of human desperation, a body's last fleet breath and what it held. It held the gaze of the world, she thought. There was the awful openness of it, something we'd not seen, the single falling figure that trails a collective dread, body come down among us all. (33)

The outrage expressed by an audience held captive by Falling Man's performance is comparable to the public response of censure regarding any photographs of the jumpers after 9/11. Perhaps it is too soon, as DeLillo surmises in "In the Ruins of the Future," for a cogent artistic expression dealing with the tragedy. Insofar as the artist must imagine a suitable audience for his or her work, Falling Man not only invokes the desperate misery of the World Trade Center's victims—who were, after all, a representative cross section of business-suited professionals, employees at work in the buildings, and the emergency responders who rushed, as Bruce Springsteen's anthem notes, "into the fire"—but also the shock and terror registered by unprepared bystanders. We are, with disastrous consequences, still held in the grip of a "collective dread," the fear that fuels the ongoing War on Terror. However, Lianne's response is differentiated from that of the appalled crowd and it is through her point of view that DeLillo states his case for the necessity of an artistic response to tragic events. She believes that Falling Man invites "the gaze of the world." Just as the artist Klara Sax in *Underworld*, when confronted with the rising gigantism of the towers, avers that it is a "very terrible thing but you have to look at it" (372), so now Lianne believes that we must look at Falling Man and interpret his performance. To all those who contend that we must, in respect for the dead, avert our gaze, Falling Man counters that the terrible gaze is necessary: only thus can the awful terror of an impossible exchange of death for death in lieu of death for life be confronted; only thus can self-annihilation become self-sacrifice; only thus is the "collective dread" of victimization overcome.

There are ancient proscriptions against the shattering of a corpse, *sparagmos* in Greek, a defilement of the body that permits no chance for proper burial. That was the fate visited on nearly all of the victims of 9/11, whether they remained in the towers to become one with the ash and particulates in the buildings' collapse or whether they fell from such a dizzying height. The performance of Falling Man reminds his audience that such a death violates a primal code of religion and ritual. The "performance artist known as Falling Man" is DeLillo's invention (33), but he is, again, a metonomasia for every artist who attempts to answer the question of what purpose art—as opposed to journalism—serves in the face of egregious, public tragedy. As the figure of the artist in the novel, Falling Man is not meant as a static memorial to those "People falling from the towers hand in hand" ("In the Ruins" 39) but as a provocateur—a guerilla artist—of the counter-narrative in history. After the loss of religious belief—or at least a communally shared belief—perhaps art can provide expiation for the atrocities committed by human beings against

one another. The leapers were neither heroes nor martyrs. Some families were loath to identify their kin out of fear that they would be condemned in Christian theology to an Inferno of the suicides. Like the figure in Drew's photograph, Janiak's performance is mute; however, he emphasizes the deliberateness of the leaper's action, taking a last look at the conflagration behind and the open sky in front, and thus reclaiming in one's death a final act of personal freedom, a counter-narrative to extremist religious fundamentalism by which each terrorist had convinced himself a holy martyr.

The two appearances of Falling Man in the novel are observed by Lianne—not by a survivor of the towers' collapse, Keith, but by his wife who serves as a witness to the enormity of the suffering, head craned upwards to view the suspended figure. As a professional book editor, Lianne provides the critically receptive faculty for whatever interpretation might be given to the performance. When she is again the accidental witness to Janiak's plunge over the commuter train tracks near 125th Street, she registers the "jolt, the sort of midair impact and bounce, the recoil, and now the stillness, arms at his sides, one leg bent at the knee. There was something awful about the stylized pose, body and limbs, his signature stroke" (168). As a performance artist, Janiak intends to shock the bourgeois sensibilities of his unwitting audience, but if that seems callous, he does so in a manner that causes irreparable harm to his own body. His pose not only reflects the figure of suffering, but it is also the assumption of some small quotient of that pain; his repeated falls without pulleys or bracing contribute to his premature demise at age 39. Lianne reads his obituary with attention to the

> dispute over the issue of the position he assumed during the fall, the position he maintained in his suspended state. Was this position intended to reflect the body posture of a particular man who was photographed falling from the north tower of the World Trade Center, headfirst, arms at his sides, one leg bent, a man set forever in free fall against the looming background of the column panels in the tower? (221)

In an apparent reference to the photograph taken by Drew, she notes the similarity in their posture. However, Lianne responds to Falling Man's performance much as we readers respond to the novel by venturing a further interpretation: falling headfirst, one leg bent—this is the figure of the Hanged Man in the Tarot deck.

The imminent demise of the man may lead us to interpret this character as an appalling figure of death. But this "trump card in a tarot deck, Falling Man, name in gothic type" (221) from the Major

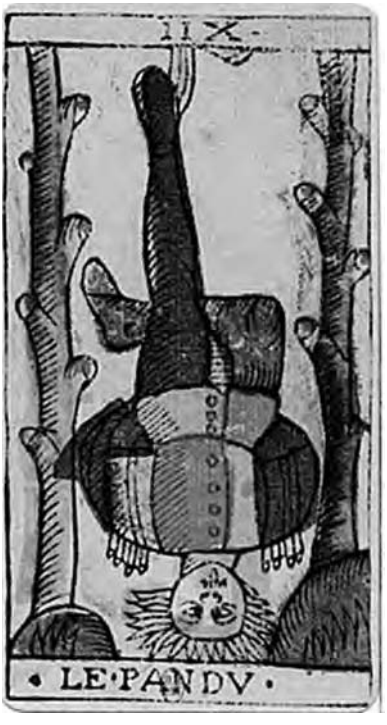

Fig. 2. The Hanged Man, the twelfth Major Arcana card in traditional Tarot decks, from the Tarot de Marseille.

Arcana of the Tarot is more properly regarded as a figure of suspension, not termination. It signifies a time of trial or meditation and evokes selflessness and sacrifice. Were we to regard 9/11 solely as an act of war in which the forces of transnational Islamic fundamentalism and global capitalism are arrayed in ruthless opposition, we would regard Falling Man only as a victim, a casualty. But the Hanged Man bids us to stay retribution, stop resistance, and ponder the implications of what has transpired. Only by making himself vulnerable, by sacrificing his advantage or disadvantage, does the Hanged Man gain illumination. Rather than react decisively (but perhaps wrongly) to a crisis, the Hanged Man as a figure of contemplation and patience may realize a course of action that was not immediately apparent. As terrible as the consequences of 9/11 were, those deaths will have been for naught were we not to view the world in a different perspective and gain insight into why such a tragedy came to pass. Far too much of what followed that day has been in the pursuit of retribution, regaining advantage, and eliminating opposition. The evocation of the Hanged Man in DeLillo's novel demonstrates the purpose of art—and its reasoned contemplation—in the face of catastrophe.

In the years since September 11, 2001, much has been done to exacerbate the collective dread of the crowd, of those who looked on in fear and loathing as the security of their world collapsed. Rather than contribute to such anxiety, Falling Man is a highly respectful figure of sacrifice and mournful meditation. His prophetic pose simultaneously evokes the suspension of time and deliberate action that dispels panic and promotes resolution and healing. There is a fundamental difference, however, between the visual icon and the literary figure of Falling Man. When we view the photograph of an unidentified falling man, we cannot escape the pathos of an individual very like ourselves whose life is about to end. The visual icon magnifies that horrific loss; we respond genuinely and very personally to his death. When we regard the literary figure of Falling Man in DeLillo's novel, we are invited to consider his performance art as rhetorical persuasion. We interpret the representation of Falling Man in the novel as we would interpret artistic expression in any other medium. Yet the novel demands that we evaluate the verbal description of his performance, the account of the crowd's reaction, and the interior monologue of a character who considers its meaning. In this fashion we as readers—rather than as onlookers once removed—are encouraged to enter the psychic terrain where victims, survivors, and witnesses of tragedy meet. We respond genuinely but now with a collective reconciliation. *Falling Man* asks that we not only gaze on unspeakable loss but that we also interpret the affective and symbolic values that it holds for all.

Notes

1. For a further discussion of the relation between DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* and his *Harper's* essay, "In the Ruins of the Future," see Joseph M. Conte, "Writing Amid the Ruins: 9/11 and *Cosmopolis*."

2. The phrase appears both in DeLillo's *Falling Man* (11, 61) and in his essay "In the Ruins of the Fiture" (39).

3. Linda S. Kauffman, in "The Wake of Terror," discusses the conflict between the American Nina Bartos and her lover, the German Hechinger—dialogizing the differing responses to 9/11 between New Yorkers and certain Europeans (361–2).

4. Other novelists have also taken up the falling figure: Jonathan Safran Foer, whose *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) concludes with a reverse sequence of stills of a falling man, and Frédéric Beigbeder, whose *Windows on the World* (2004) portrays the dilemma of Carthew Yorston who is trapped with his two sons in the eponymous restaurant and leaps to avoid the conflagration.

5. For a further discussion of Cold War spy thrillers and the aftereffects of Cold War politics in DeLillo's *Libra* and *Underworld*, see Jacqueline Foertsch.

6. The photograph by Drew appeared on page 7 of the *New York Times* on September 12, 2001. Drew was also present at the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy and took numerous photographs of that scene.

7. In "The Man Who Invented 9/11," a later review of DeLillo's *Falling Man* for *Esquire*, Junod objects to DeLillo's "appropriation" of the Falling Man and its application to a fictional performance artist.

8. In "Still Life: 9/11's Falling Bodies," Laura Frost examines the preeminent role of still photography as a visual record of 9/11.

9. In his chapter on *Falling Man*, "American Melancholia," Kristiaan Versluys describes Keith Neudecker as a case of Freudian melancholia whose compulsive reenactment of traumatic loss leads to apathy, the impossibility of redemption, and eventual death. This complex is to be distinguished from mourning, whose active working through of traumatic loss leads to healing (20). I concur that Neudecker's case is not redemptive, but I part with Versluys's assessment of the "falling man" as a stark "symbol of the dark underside of 9/11" (23). As I will demonstrate, DeLillo treats the Falling Man not as a Death card but as the Hanged Man of mournful suspension.

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