TERRORISM AND THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN NOVEL: A POSTMODERNIST APPRAISAL OF DON DELLILO'S *FALLING MAN* (2007) AND JOHN UPDIKE'S *TERRORIST* (2006)

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation entitled ***Terrorism and the Contemporary American Novel: A Postmodernist Appraisal of Don Dellilo's Falling Man and John Updike's Terrorist*** has been carried out by me in the Department of English and Literary Studies. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other Institution

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Ameh Jane Eneh Date

CERTIFICATION

This project dissertation entitled **TERRORISM AND THECONTEMPORARY AMERICAN NOVEL: A POSTMODERNIST APPRAISAL OF DON DELLILO'S FALLING MAN AND JOHN UPDIKE'S TERRORIST** by Jane Eneh AMEH meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master in English Literature of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its' contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty for His mercies and sustenance.

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ABSRACT

Terrorism centres on both the tactic and strategy to commit acts of violence. It is viewed as a method of combat. It is a means to achieve certain targets. Terrorist acts aim to induce a state of fear in the victims which are not necessarily the actual targets of the terrorists. The terrorist events on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States of America on September 11, 2001 have drawn the attention of many American writers. Writing about these terrorist events evolved into a field known as terrorism and America writing. This study discusses Don Dellilo's*Falling Man* (2007) and John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) as Contemporary American novels that show awareness of terrorism. The study is a qualitative research that limits itself to two texts, *Falling Man* and *Terrorist*. This study adopts postmodernist framework as the theoretical basis for the assessment of characters and societal issues in the selected texts and how they grapple with such issues as violence, infidelity, and characters reaction to the economic state of America, poor housing and poor educational system as reasons to commit acts of violence. The study proceeds on the assumption that offering an aesthetic representation on these issues demonstrates the writers craft in creating a distinct mode of reading the event. As such using postmodernisttools in reading post 9/11 novels creates a critical view on how these events that are not only violent but appear irrational and complicated become a discourse worthy of literary study. Based on the above premise, this study finds out that most issues discussed in both texts in many ways indict America and its way of handling socio-cultural, economic and political issues. The study also finds that in order to be heard and to draw attention to America's way of life, terrorists resolve to commit terrorist activities.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Background of Study

Literature is a very powerful tool that has made and is still making a huge impact on the society. What happens in a society is reflected in literary works, in one form or another. This could be either through plays, poetry, and prose, etcetera. The assertion that 'literature reflects the society' is as old as Plato's concept of imitation.One of the corrective functions performed by literatureis that it mirrors the ills of the society with a view tomaking the society realize its mistakes and make amends. Literature also recreates what is obtainable in the society, its good values and ills. This is achieved by fictionalizing what happens in the society. Writers and philosophers such as Aristotle, Shelly, and Wilde all discuss the phenomenon of the vast effects of literature through their works and reached the conclusion that man possesses an inherent curiosity and this needs to be explored as often done by the literary artist.

What literary writersdoin most casesis to recreate real life events in their society,by putting theminto fictional forms and present such to the society. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1972: V) states that: "literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society…". Literature brings out contemporary issues inherent in the society and this according to Achebe (1974:10) is "what you do as a writer depends on the state of your society…".Thus, any good writer must be committed to his/her society by demonstrating an awareness of his/her surroundings through writing. Chukwuma (1991:10) agrees with theabove view as he states the function of the novelist or writer in the society as follows:

> The novelist is the conscience of his age. He manifests a high sensibility of the individual in society and scoops out those aspects of the system that choke and intimidate him from which he has no

> relief. He shows a sharp consciousness of the events of here and now, the world of today. His responsibility as a writer is to make his readers more aware of their environment and the attendant problems….

Writing has become a way for literary writers to demonstrate their consciousness of the happenings around them. In this way,the novelist or literary writerdrawsthe attention of readers to societal issues, conflicts as well as problems inherent in the society. This shows the writer's commitment to the society.

Mary Shelly (2000:45) analyzes not only the role of literature, but the role of the artist in the society as well. She opines that:

> The writer imparts meaning and perceived truth to a blank page and grants connotation to what is indefinable. Literature allows its reader to communicate with characters and feel the emotions…It also allows its readers to venture through the fictionalized lives of others in order to answer questions regarding their own life; it impacts lessons while simultaneously creating beauty in an otherwise painful or mundane existence.

Events in the society are meaningfully understood through the medium of fiction in literature. Through a fictionalizedportrayal of characters and events, writers create beauty in their manner of presenting such events. Thus readers come to terms with what is happening around them by identifying with characters and situations.

It is therefore evident that both literature and novelists or writersplay a vital rolein the documentation of the concerns prevalent in the society. Writersexpresstheir awareness and consciousness of these issues in form of writing. Thus, there is need for this study to briefly converse on the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States of America as a Contemporary American social problem represented in the works of the authors under study. On the need for these terrorist events to be represented in literature, Kristian and Rothberg

(2008:123) stresses that: "literature is the proper vehicle through which public and private dimensions of 9/11 can be fused" and that "the American literary imagination privileges the novel's ability to confront the terrorist attack in public discourse" (p.124). The above argument emphasizes that literature has a preeminent role in making sense out of the September 2001 event. To know the role literature plays in the American society, there is a need to know the preoccupation of American writing. In this respect, the major concerns of American writing before and after the 9/11 events, are focused upon subsequently.

1.1American Writing, Before and After 9/11

American literature is shaped by the history of the country. The rise of science and industry as well as changes in the way of thinking, feeling, wrought many modifications in the lives of American people.All these factors molded the literature of America from the 17thcentury to the 19th century. During the 17th century, most of what is written as literature was by Englishmen such as John Smith, Daniel Denton, Anne Bradstreet, and Edward Taylorwho dwelt more on colonial issues (Erik, 2006). They wrote biographies, treaties, sermons, few drama and prose to explain colonizing opportunities.Other writers described their colony while a few others stressed the differences of opinion that spurred colonialists to leave their homeland. More importantly, writers during this period argued on the question of government involving the relationship between the church and the state. Poetry written during this period conveyed feelings concerning family and religious beliefs. After the American Revolution and increasingly after World War 1 of 1918, American writers were exhorted to produce a literature that is truly native.In the 18th and 19th centuries, writers such as William Cullen Bryant, Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, and James Fenimore Cooper initiated most of the literary development during the period. They write about cultural independence and their experiences during that period. They draw upon

these experiences to pursuepost-colonial liberation and colonial expansion by conquest, appropriation and purchase.

Later on, in the 20th century particularly, a group of writers and thinkers known as the Lost Generation evolved. This group refers specifically to American writers who emergedduring the First World War(1914-1918) and its immediate aftermath and gained popularity in American Literature. These include: Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and F.Scott Fitzgerald. They struggled to find some meaning in the world in the wake of chaos. For Hemmingway, his novels were famous for their extremely spare, blunt, simple sentences and emotions. The Lost Generation gave up on the idea that anything was truly knowable; all truths became relative and conditional.They express disillusionment with theWorld War 1 occurrence through their writings.

The preoccupation of American writing has not changed remarkably overtime.Similarly, many literary writers of the 1950s after World War II, sought to depict what they took to be common or essential to all Americans regardless of gender, class, ethnicity, or regional identity. Eric Rangno (2006:4-12) identifies some of the major trends in American literature as: World War II and the Vietnam War, Technology, Alienation, and the Absurd.Writers of this period such as Thomas Pynchon, Donald Bartheleme use literature to show the impact that computer, television, nuclear weaponry and other aspects of modern technological culture have on mankind. For Eric (2006:4):

> the study of works of this period shows these literary figures criticizing American culture. The choice of the themes like self-exile, indulgence, spiritual alienation and moral degradation throws ample light on the tendency of these writers. Contemporary American Literature can be said to reflect the complexity, the

> unrest and the multi- culturalism of contemporary American society.

It can be deduced that American writingwas critical ofthe type of life lived by the Americans after the war.American literature is preoccupied withthe issues of spiritual alienation and poverty which the Americans faced as they (the Americans) expected to have a better living condition.With the above preoccupations of American literature, life after the war has been an active field of research on American studies before the terrorist event of September 11, 2001. Although a precise definition of contemporary American literature is not known, however it can be viewed from the perspective of what is obtainable in their writings. Contemporary American literature applies to literatures written after the World War II which reflects the socio-cultural, economic and political views of the society after the World War II. What contemporary American writers produce in their works is not farfetched from what is obtainable in previous American writings. After the heinous attacks on 11th September 2001, it became a new preoccupation for contemporary American writers. Many contemporary American writers; Jonathan Safran Foer, Lynne Sharon Schwartz, Loorie Moore, John Updike, Joseph O'Neil, Don Dellilo amongst others, have responded to these events in literary writing. They focus on defining the event using mostly the novel as a literary form. Most contemporary writers produce literary works that focus on moral degradation and criticize American culture as one of the reasons that led to the attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Through writing, these writers express disillusionment and struggled to find meaning about the chaotic incidents of September 11, 2001.

Describing the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Enders and Sandler (2009:260) state: "the September 11th, 2001 attacks in the United States, commonly referred to as 9/11, resulted in the most casualties of any single documented terrorist attack in history." Sandler

and Ender's view points to the reason why 9/11 has become a major topic of discussion in American writing. These attacks are felt by Americans both at home and abroad, hence, the need for Contemporary American writers to express their sentiments in their writing.According to Schudson (2003:188): "9/11 presents a unique situation where writers empathizedwith the public rather than remained unbiased. It presented a sympathic account of the tragedy along the lines of popular sentiment". He further states that:"Terrorism of 9/11 draws attention through its dramatic and shocking nature… therefore; it naturally creates a curiosity and increasesreaders'interest through its written nature (p.188). The aboveview explains why 9/11 should be put in writing. Since the catastrophic events on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the discourse on terrorism has become one of the dominant preoccupations of American literature.

John Updike and Don Dellilo are amongst the masters of contemporary American fiction of the postwar era. They have written various works on American life, terrorism and terrorist activities both before and after 9/11, which have spurred a great deal of criticism and attention. Mishra (2007: 4) states that: "if the world changed after 9/11, literature also changed. Anyone writing after the event was shaped and informed by the events. American writers such as Don Dellilo, and John Updike… faced up to terror in their own ways". Some of their notable works include; *White Noise* (1985), *Mao II* (1992), *Falling Man* (2007), *Underworld* (1998) by Don Dellilo and also *Rabbit Remember* (2001), *The Witches of Eastwich* (1984), *Towards the End ofTime* (1997), *Terrorist* (2006), *The Poorhouse Fair* (1959), *Paradise Lost* (2005) by John Updike. The works of both writers deals with contemporary issues prevalent in the American society at that time.Through the use of the novel as a medium in literature, they portray these events of terrorism in different ways. A brief background on Dellilo and Updike as contemporary

American writers will be consideredin order to appreciate what informs and defines their respective writing.

1.2 Backgrounds of the Authors

Over the years, plays, essays and novels have continuously been written by Don Dellilo and John Updike. These have made them part of the multitude of contemporary American writers who are saddled with the responsibility of portraying issues that bother the American society. Dellilo and Updike have become leading figures among their contemporaries as such; a study of the backgrounds of both writers is an important component of this study.

1.2.1 Don Dellilo

Don Dellilo is a white American author, playwright, essayist and novelist whose works have deal with diverse subjects and themes such as nuclear war, the cold War, the advent of the digital age, and global terrorism. He isa canonical writer who represents the contemporary American literary canon (*The Anthology of American Literature* 2004 and *The ConciseAnthology of American Literature* 2005). The*New York Magazine*refers to Dellilo as: "the literary master of terrorist's imagination returned to his favourite theme of terrorism with *Falling Ma*n 2007". He is well known for his sharp social criticism of contemporary American life. Bloom (2003) named him one of the four major American novelists of his time. Engels and Duvall (2008:1) give an insight generally on the works of Dellilo as follows: "Dellilo's works engage issues of contemporary American society; he has dealt with toxic spills, consumerism, mass media, terrorism, conspiracy, paranoia and more. His work has been said to exhibit a prophetic reach". In his frequent statements on the role of the contemporary novelist, Dellilo insists that, the writer is the man or woman who automatically takes a stance against his or her government (Dellilo in Arensberg; 45). With this, Dellilo can be said to portray issues in the society from an ethical

stand point, as he deals with such ethical issues as family, gender and religion. Thusin his novel *Falling Man,* he emphasizes the various aspects of individual's lives to draw a critique on terrorism in the American society. Dellilo discusses characters relationship with one another, especially family members to criticize family relations before and after the terrorist events.

1.2.2 John Updike

John Updike (1932-2009) is a white American writer who is considered as one of the most visible, successful and prolific writers of American literature as well as a prominent canonical author(*Heath Anthology of AmericanLiterature, American Literature Anthology, and the Norton Anthology of American literature*). For Amis (1991:34), Updike is a"master of all trades, able to crank himself up to Ph.D. level on any subject he fancies…"*Terrorist* is Updike's twenty second novel, fictionalized in Paterson, the city of New Prospect, Northern New Jersey. Updike is from the middle class American society and had faced societal problems on a personal level. Updike therefore represents the middle class of the society and this is portrayed in his works. James Schiff (1999:63) describes Updike and his works as: "a domestic writer whose writings revolve around the domestic affairs of middle class Americans"

Due to the success and fame of Updike's literary works, they have been examined by many researchers. One of them is Ashipe (2007:228) who argues that: "Updike has become increasingly aware of how in writing and rewriting his own personal history, he has also been recording America during the second half of the twentieth century". Ashipe concludes that Updike's fiction, *Terrorist*:"offers an exhaustive, intimate chronicle of a life lived … one that records and immortalizes, the experience of being alive during the second half of the twentieth century". This indicates that Updike mirrored the circumstances of the society in his literary works.

As demonstrated in the backgrounds of both writers, Dellilo and Updike's distinction from their contemporariesdwells on the strength of their highly imaginative focus and insightfulness of thought. Itis therefore evident that contemporary American literary writers use literature as a medium to offer insights into the terroristattacks of 9/11 and as such, the needto depict a postmodernist appraisal of their literary writings. This will enable a better understanding of the novel's portrayal of terrorism and the literary value of representing terrorism.

1.3Terrorism

The terms 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' date back to the eighteenth century (Laqueur, 1987:4).Prior to the 1960s, most terrorist activities in America were localized. It was either confined within a specific geographical jurisdiction or limited to certain regions. Within terrorism lies the word 'terror'. Terror comes from the latin word "terrere" which means 'frighten' or 'tremble'. When coupled with the French suffix 'isme' (referencing "to practice"), it becomes akin to "practicing the trembling" or "causing the frightening". Trembling and frightening here are synonyms of fear, panic and anxiety- what we would naturally call terror.

Various scholars have attempted to define terrorism. Jeffrey Simon (1994:29) highlights that: "at least 212 different definitions of terrorism are in use throughout the world with ninety of them used by governmental organizations and other institutions." Staiger et al. (2008: 24) acknowledge that: "attempts to establish a definition of terrorism that transcends various National borders has been largely unsuccessful". Bravo and Dias (2006: 3) are of the view that: "Terrorism has been described variously as both a tactic and a strategy; a crime and a holy duty; a justified reaction to oppression and an excusable abomination. Obviously, a lot depends on which point of view is being represented".This could be based on political inclination, class,

culture, ethics, race or even religion. Terrorism is obtainable in the American societyand has been a topic of concern for a number of contemporary literary writings.

Generally, there are various ways in which terrorism hasbeen expressed. It ranges from kidnapping which may be due to economic deprivation, frustration and desperation; hostage taking, bloodshed and also extensive destruction to government or public facility by individuals or groups who want to instigate change or draw attention to certain issues either politically or economically. Yet, a widely accepted definition is still lacking. This study takes cognizance of the post 9/11 terrorist events in the United States of America. This is said to be the largest event of International terrorism, which occurred on September 11, 2001 in a set of attacks on various locations in the United States of America.In this particular case, terrorists hijacked civilian airliners and used them to attack the World Trade Center Towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington DC. According to Marsella and Moghaddam (2004:12): "one event that has received extensive attention from the media, the Federal government, and the general public is the September 11, 2001 bombings of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon which are the worst cases of terrorism in America that claimed a lot of lives." Due to its vast recognition both in media and writing,this study will subsequently examine terrorism of September 11, 2001 and its depiction in literature using postmodernist tools.

Laqueur (1987:5) believes that; "a comprehensive definition of terrorism… does not exist nor will it be found in the foreseeable future." The United States Department of Defense defines terrorism as "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate Government or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological". Laqueur (1987:14) describes terrorism as; "… the use or the threat of the use of violence, a method of combat, or a strategy to achieve certain

targets… It aims to induce a state of fear in the victim that is ruthless and does not conform to humanitarian rules." Similarly, Bruce Hoffman (2006:11) explains the term as:

> ineluctable political in aim and motives, violent or equally important, threatens violence, designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target conducted by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure (whose member wears uniform or identifying insignia), and perpetrated by a sub national group or non-state entity.

It is certain that the target of terrorists in most cases is beyond the victims of such attacks. The terrorists carry out violence as a way to reach out to those who are conceived as being able to address the demands of the former. In this way, violence is a means to put pressure on the parties involved to concede to the demands of the terrorists. Laqueur and Hoffman's definitions of terrorism emphasize that the main idea of terrorism is that; it uses or threatens violence to achieve certain aims or targets. In one of the most rigorous attempts to define terrorism, Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman (1988: 28) examined one hundred and nine (109) different definitions of terrorism, and identified twenty two elements in these definitions, calculating the frequency of such occurrence and issuing a lengthy consensus definition incorporating most of these elements. Consequently, they view terrorism as:

> an anxiety inspired method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individuals, groups, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby in contrast to assassination the dire targets of violence the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat and violence-based communication process between terrorist (organization), victims (imperiled) and the main targets are used to manipulate the main targets (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.

This elaborate definition of terrorism emphasizes that terrorismis carried out by an individual or group of people on a target population, mostly a group of peoplewho may not necessarily be the main targets.The terrorist carry out violence as a means of communication, to bring to the noticeof those considered in position to meeting the demands of the terrorist.

Literary scholars such as Schmid and Jongman (1988) portray that the act of terrorism is carried out by an organization or group but goes ahead to differentiate it from assassination, for unlike assassination, in terrorism, "the targets are not usually the main targets, for these terrorist acts are chosen randomly or haphazardly or in some cases selectively; that is representing or symbolizing a particular group of people from a particular target population" (p. 28). Drawing from Schmid and Jongman's explanation, they seem to posit that a particular group of people or population on which terrorist attacks is carried on are not usually the main targets. The reason being that it will "serve as message generators to the main targets" (p.28). Terrorism in a way differs from assassination due to the targets involved. Assassination mostly centres on the murder of a particular target while in terrorism; the victims of the terrorist may not necessarily be the target. This is a way for terrorists to draw the attention of the actual targets. From the various features of what defines terrorism, this study defines terrorism as the use of violence against random civilians or particular target audience in order to intimidate or to create generalized pervasive fear for the purpose of achieving set goals which could be political, religious or ideological.

In view of the foregoing definitions, there are key elements of violence, fear, and intimidation embedded in terrorist acts and each of these elements produces terror in its victims. The FBI's definition of terrorism is instructive: "terrorism is the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment

thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." Wilkson (2006:328) further suggests that terrorism can be distinguished from other forms of violence in the following ways:

> It is premeditated and designed to create a climax of extreme fear; it is directed at a wider target than the immediate victims; it is considered by the society in which it occurs as 'extra- abnormal', that is, it violates the norms regulating disputes, protest and dissent; it is used primarily, though not exclusively to influence the political behavior of government, communities or specific social groups.

What should be considered about terrorism primarily is that it is a deliberate act particularly anchored as violence by terrorists to achieve their set goals. Terrorists aim to create fear among a wider audience than the targets themselves. The domain of literature and terrorism has received considerable attention by literary scholars and critics. However, it is always the terrorism part, which is given focus. The current study will illuminate through a postmodern approach how two contemporary American novels appropriate terrorism by the use of fiction, a branch of literature, providing insights into the September 11, 2001 terrorist events in *Falling Man*(2007) and *Terrorist* (2006) by Don DeLillo and John Updike respectively.

1.4 Statement of Problem

Criticisms on the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have developedinto a flourishing literary field of discourse. Against this background, most works published have all based their study of these terrorist events on the psychology and trauma of the victims. They have also presented the 9/11 events as being religiously inclined. American writers after the attacks, grasped for ways to understand and present what appeared as incomprehensible trauma following the attacks. The result of these discussion shows that public and private dimensions of 9/11 can be fused into contemporary American literature to confront the terrorist attacks, to deal with the causes and effects on those affected by the attacks.

As important as the studyof the effects and causes of September 11, 2001events are in contemporary American literature, the idea behind literary writers' crafting of post 9/11 novelsas literary pieceshave not beenextensively examined. Many writers have focused mostly upon the violent nature of these attacks. This study shows that out of violence which is a negative occurrence, writers have got inspiration to write about certain issues. The study goes a long way to show that a negative occurrence such as the terrorist events of September 11, 2001 can lead to acts of creativity. This study uses postmodernist tools to focus upon distinctive literary features employed in both prose narratives that clearly give a picture of what terrorist acts and terrorism look like. By so doing, the mind of the terrorist/terrorized, victims/victimized as depicted within the context of a fictional world are foregrounded in this study. Also the focus of this study considers how the point of view which is depicted in contemporary American writingslocate not just the meaning of 9/11 in literary discourse butalso provide a morebeautiful approach to reading about the events. Consequently, the premise of this study affirms that: to offer a postmodernist appraisal of 9/11 in literature creates a distinct mode of reading the event. A reading of 9/11 just for its causes and effects on the victims even though a desirable goal does not fully appreciate the two works as literary materials. Using postmodernist tools in reading post 9/11 novels creates a critical view on how these events that are not only violent but appear irrational and complicated become a discourse worthy of literary study.

1.5 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to show the relationship between literature and terrorismand its portrayal in contemporary American literature against the backdrop of September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States in the novels of Don Dellilo and John Updike.

Its objectives are therefore:

- To analyze through a postmodernist theoretical approach, insights into the nature of terrorism.
- To demonstrate that using a violent event such as the September 11, 2001 terrorist events as a backdrop can lead to acts of creativity.
- To provide further insights, to the events of 9/11 and their aftermath as portrayed in the novels of John Updike and Don Dellilo.
- To demonstrate that both novels have historical and contemporary relevance.

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study is necessary to show the need for the depiction of terrorism in literature as it gives room for the past to be re-examined or revisited, in this way exposing readers to the various modes of presenting the post September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.Itis also essentialto undertake this study because it demonstrates how carrying out a postmodernist appraisal of literary works of this nature leads to a better appreciation of literature as a reliable and beautiful way of capturing events that are not only violent, but appear irrational and complicated.

Don Dellilo and John Updike are novelists who fall under contemporary American writing. Since the events of the attacks on the World trade Center and the Pentagon, their writing have focused on these attacks. Their fictional works especially *Falling Man* and *Terrorist* continue to challenge readers, scholars and critics concerning the perspective that they engender in their respective works.Hence this study contributes to such efforts that are currently undertaken to

comprehend the 9/11 events by these novelists. It also relies on postmodernist trends and crafts as reading tools to expand existing knowledge.

This research encourages the portrayal of terrorist events as well as other societal ills using the medium of literature. This is not in any way condemning other forms of writing outside literature. As readers and individuals come in contact with the post 9/11 situation in literature, it shows more affective tendencies to entertain, educate, and inform readers about this particular event.After all, the purpose of every writer is to pass across a message to his or her audience and not just writing for academic purpose.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of Study

This research restricts itself to the novel genre. The novels:*Falling Man* and *Terrorist*by Don Dellilo and John Updike respectively have been used for this study. Both writers are widely read and renowned contemporary American writers known for critiquing the American society. They have writtenliterary works on violence, politics, war and other issues that concern the American society.Consequently, their works have received various forms of criticism because of the manner they present issues bothering the American society. Both texts supply substantial materials that can be used to assess and evaluate the 9/11 events paying close attention to issues that inform the novels' portrayal of terrorism as written from the perspectives ofboth authors.

1.8 Methodology

This research is a qualitative one, which is text based. It deploys a postmodernist approach to show how both literary works have logically foregrounded their creativity. A deductive method of research has been carried out, a procedure that progresses from the general to the specific. This proves that literature is capable of depicting terrorism as it enables a wide range of

perspectives on terrorism to be examined. The primary sources are Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* and John Updike's *Terrorist*. The secondary sourcesincludenews reports, online articles, journals, e-books, essays, and the internet which have discussed and reviewed the issue of September 11, 2001 terrorist event and the relevance of its depiction in literature.

Since literature gives room for the past to be re-examined or revisited, the role of writers is therefore seen as showing awareness and consciousness about issues through writing. Don Dellilo and John Updike have written various works onAmerican and its ways, terrorism and terrorist activities to show cognizant of the American society. The terrorist events of September 11, 2001 are among the issues that these writers have revisited through writing. By undertaking a postmodernist appraisal of 9/11 terrorism, literature by way of fiction produces an avenue where both writers can recreate the ugly and horrifying experiences of 9/11 taking various point of views. In essence, literature provides writers with a suitable medium for expressing their thoughts, feelings about events that take place around them.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Literature Review

This study reviews relevant existing literature on the discourse on 9/11 terrorism in American novels. There has been no agreement on a specific mode of presenting these events in literature due to the freedom of imagination and the poetic license that writersenjoy.However, it is apparent that since the horrific events, these have preoccupied many contemporary American writers. This study also explores and revealshow various critics and scholars have responded to literary works written about 9/11, specifically the novels of Don Dellilo and John Updike.Literary critics of contemporary American literature have dwelt expansively on key issues of psychology and trauma, Religion and Stereotype based on the 9/11 events. Therefore, much focus has not been done on a postmodernist appraisal of the various issues obtainable in the novels of Don Dellilo and John Updike that gives a picture of what terrorism look like.

2.1 The Concept of 9/11 Terrorism

The terrorist attacks in the United States of America on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 were events of monumental dimension. There have been various discussions about the events with regard to what it means to American literature. Generally, it is referred to as the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Baudrillard (2002:403) describes what was and what 9/11 is. He states thus: “it was a day which included a horrific attack on the United States … it has now become an iconic event, terrorism’s other event”. This description points to the fact that the term 9/11 has become a symbol which denotes a historic period in the United States. Similarly, Polk’s (2009:1) view is in line with this, as he states thus: “The signifier 9/11 adds a dimension of interpretation ineluctably attached to the attacks”. This shows that in the

discussion of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, in the United States, it is impossible to avoid the term 9/11. This is due to the horrific nature of the events that has made them distinct from others. In other words, when the term 9/11 is mentioned, the attacks come to mind.9/11 has become a name attached to the attacks. Since these terrorist incidents, quite a number of literary works have been published. It includes fiction and non-fiction. It is to this effect that Hossein and Abbasali (2011:119) observed that: "since the catastrophic events of 9/11 and its aftermath, the discourse on terrorism has become one of the dominant preoccupations of American literature". Don Dellilo (2001) in his essay, "In the Ruins of the Future" suggested that: "literature have the power to create a collective narrative of 9/11" (quoted in Kauffman, 2008:356). The events of 9/11 are therefore a major source of concern for contemporary writers especially as their disastrous nature makes them different from other forms of violence. In *Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis*, Gray (2009:134) is of the opinion that:

> Contemporary American fiction authors must possess not only the capacity to recognize that some kind of alteration of imaginative structures is required to register the contemporary crisis, to offer testimony to the trauma of 9/11, and its consequences but also the ability and willingness to imaginatively act on that recognition.

This affirms the view that there is a widespread expectation that novelists would imaginatively provide a unique insight into the events in their literary works. Therefore, contemporary American writers do not only recognize the events but also, dwell upon such events in their works. Gray explains further about the way 9/11 should be approached in literature. He states thus: "perhaps the way to tell a story that cannot be told is to tell it aslant, to approach it by circuitous means, almost by stealth" (p.136).Due to the dreadful nature of the attacks, there are no specific ways in which the events can be approached. No wonder writers who have written narratives about 9/11 such as: Ian McEwan, John Updike, Jonathan Safran Foer, Cormac

McCarthy, Don Dellilo, Thomas Pynchon, Jay McInerney, Martin Amis amongst others, presents the terrorist events variously in their fictional works. This shows that although writers represent issues that have occurred or are still dominant in the society, they portray such differently from the way those issues might have taken place. But to a large extent, they still pass the message across and most times suggest avenues on how such occurrences can be better appreciated/ prevented or curbed. Every writer has his/her own view about the events, therefore the way such a writer writes is likely to differ from those of others. Apart from emphasizing on the manner of representing the 9/11 occurrence in literature, it is also usefulto portray a postmodernist appraisal of 9/11 novels by the deployment of postmodernist tools.

In *Empires of the Senseless: The Response to Terror and The End of,* Michaels (2003:110) explains the usefulness of portraying the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001 in literature thus:

> Turning experience into the message and substituting signification for presence; what this means in writing is a commitment to the transformation of the text into a thing, either into a thing it seeks to represent or into the thing that replaces writing. The point both times, is to turn a meaning that might be understood into an object or event … experienced.

This quotation explains the need to turn the 9/11 experience into a message in the novel form, to indicate a significant period in American history. In an article for *The Guardian*, Robert McCrum (2001:23) emphasizes the need for novelists "who can supply the insights that people need at a time like this". Similarly, Gray (2008:147) claims that: "authors of post 9/11 fiction have the chance of getting into history, to participate in its processes and, in a perspectival sense at least, of getting out of it too and enabling us, the readers to begin to understand just how those processes work". Writing about 9/11 gives writers' the chance of participating in history. This gives them the opportunity to relate the attacks from divergent perspectives.

Due to the ugly nature of the attacks, a literary critic like Bello-Aluee (2013: 65) defines the focus of writers in approaching the September 11, 2001 incidents. He states thus:

> When writers first tried to represent 9/11 in literature, they focused mainly on psychic trauma and the domestic. The insistence that the novel is uniquely able to represent 9/11 and provide some kind of cultural catharsis led critics to read literary responses as attempts to mimetically reproduce that traumatic event.

Literary writers' while representing 9/11 in writing mostly focus on the effects of the attacks. For them, putting these events into writing would express the psychological state of the Americans after the attacks. This study is focused on understanding the defining ideology behind the various works that portrays the events of 9/11. It centres on the use of postmodernist tools as a means to bring out those distinctive literary features that look at what terrorism and terrorist acts look like.

While others such as Cheryl (2008:32) in her article titled; "9/11 and the Novelists", sets out to examine the extent to which novels of 9/11 such as *Falling Man* succeed in providing a recognizable and illuminating portrait of the events, in Andersen's (2008:10) case he emphasized the importance of the novel in the discussion of issues like 9/11.He states thus: "the contribution of the American novel to the discussion of 9/11 has mostly been to de-collectivize the event; to take a collective experience and show us the individual, particular consequence of it". From all these views, it is made clear that the discourse on 9/11 in American literature has been recognized as a major topic of interest and discussion. It has based its concern on a vast panorama that put this global event in literature dwelling more on the causes and effects of the attacks. The discourse on terrorism should not only involve this, but also the depiction of issues that show the postmodernist appraisal of such issues discussed in literary works. In this way, the writer's ability to understand and discern the ugly experience is evaluated. This demonstrates

that there is no fixed approach to presenting the events of 9/11, hence, inviting appreciation of such literary works.

Many other literary critics have also stressed the need for the events of September 11, 2001 to be foregrounded in literature. Versluys (2009:14) *in Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel* argued that literature has a prominent role in attempting to make sense of these terrorist attacks. In the final chapter of Versluys' study, he suggests that: "as novels become increasingly removed from 9/11, the attacks will become more than a place marker, a cultural vestige that is part of our collective consciousness". Since the period of the 9/11 terrorist attack is a significant one in the history of the United States of America, it is therefore necessary to put it into writing. Kubiak (2004:296) sees the need for foregrounding terrorism in literature as he affirms that: "the main purpose of such fiction is to explore the motives and ideas behind the socio-political and psychic act of terrorism." He further states that: "terrorism in literature is meant to apply to fictional explorations of both the causes and motivations as well as the aftermath of the terrorist attacks" (p.297).Relating these to the 9/11 attacks, Versluys (2009) echoes the dilemma consciously felt by writers of fiction, who have struggled to create imaginative works in the aftermath of 9/11:

> Novelists recoiled in horror and, in dealing with 9/11; in the manner of their craft ... they were confronted with a difficult question. How to exercise one's freedom of the imagination when faced with those who do not hesitate to use horrendous violence in order to abrogate that freedom and replace openness of thinking by prescription, and religious dictate(Versluys 2009:151).

It is therefore necessary to know the point of view from which writers represent the events of 9/11 in literature. In this way, the extent to which writers' present these events and their perspectives through writing can be understood.

As the terrorist's events of September 11, 2001, progressively evolved in contemporary American writing, a colossal number of literary works have constituted a corpus to be analyzed under the often cited concepts of trauma, race, gender and religious stereotypes. Prior to the events of 9/11, Appiah (2001:151) notes the major recognition and major marker of American writings associated with 9/11 since these events as: "religion, gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality … occur within the framework of nationality". Neria et al (2011:430) notes that most researches have examined the psychological consequences of the attacks. They rightly point out that: "the psychological impact spilled over beyond those directly exposed, affecting those who merely witnessed the attacks indirectly". This is true as most reviews of the works written after the attacks tend not only to focus on the psychological effects felt by the victims and witnesses of the attacks, but on other perspectives as well.

What can be drawn from the discourse of 9/11 in literature is that what constitutes post-9/11 novels is their treatment of 9/11 as a significant historical event around which different narratives can be constructed. Since September 11, 2001, it is evident that the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have been addressed from multiple perspectives. From numerous definitions and understanding of the 9/11 events, it has been observed that scholars and critics acknowledge the need to foreground the various dimensions of terrorism in literature. Although an agreed definition and the manner of representing the attacks is yet to beattained, the reason being that scholars have defined the term differently. What is evident is that most writers want to write about the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001 that have preoccupied the minds of many Americans since that day. This study therefore reviews some of the contemporary 9/11 novels under the sub-headings of Psychology and Trauma, as well as Religion and Stereotype. It also reviews literatures on Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* and John Updike's *Terrorist* using the

above sub-headings. The reason is that this tends to be the focus of most of the reviews carried out on these works.

2.2PsychologyandTrauma

When referring to trauma, it is unavoidably traced to the earliest theories of Sigmund Freud, whose work formed the basis of psychoanalytic theory. Freud's view on psychology and trauma concerns the series of the occurrence of an event followed by its suppression and finally its return.Caruth (1996) a critic on trauma gives a general elaborate definition of trauma and its psychological effects on individuals. In her collection of essays titled, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, She described these as an: "overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (p. 11). Owing to the unexpectedness of the events resulting to trauma, most of the victims are not aware of the trauma they go through at the time of the occurrence. This seems to be the case of victims after the September 11, 2001 occurrence. According to Phelps (2013: ii) "in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, Americans grasped for ways to understand and represent the incomprehensible trauma". Such writers include, Jonathan Foer in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), Jay Mclnerney's *The Good Life* (2006) Don Dellilo in his writing of *Falling Man* (2006) amongst others.

Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) is one of the first novels to deal directly with the trauma of September 11. It is a novel that tells the story of Oskar Schell, the nine year old protagonist traumatized by the death of his father in the collapse of the twin towers. Oskar hoped he could find out more about his father's death as he referred to the event as "the worst day" (p: 11). Oskar feels disturbed when gathering information about September 11, of which he

expresses thus: “I did a few other searches, even though I knew they would only hurt me, because I couldn’t help it” (p: 42). It is the feeling of hurt, an unsuccessful search for the meaning behind a key he found in his father’s box and the guilt of not answering the phone when his father called on the day of the attacks that led to Oskar’s trauma. Keniston (2008: 47) attributes Oskar’s behavior to the fact that: “People who have been traumatized like this often feel the need to do something, anything, to take their minds off and to make them feel as if they are doing something useful”. Other characters such as; Linda Schell (Oskar’s mother), Anna and Thomas Schell (Oskar’s grandparents), Mr. Black, Abby Black, Stan are also faced with the trauma following the events. In *Redefining Trauma Post 9/11*, Anke’s (2011) review of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is one among other reviews that strongly stresses on the issue of trauma experienced by characters in the novel. He summarizes thus: “mourning seems to be preferred over melancholia as the best way to deal with trauma” (p. 97).The above quotation implies that mourning is seen as a way of walking through the traumatic events. Oskar found it difficult to move from the past, due to a “psychological fixation on the traumatic past. Mourning suggests a process of moving on, literally working through the memory of the traumatic experience” (Anke 2011: 105).

Major discussions and reviews also focus on trauma in Jay Mclnerney’s *The Good Life* (2006). The novel’s focus is on the two main characters, Russell McGavok and Corrine Calloway who stumbled upon each other during the 9/11 attacks. They are in shock from that dreadful day. Russell, Corrine, Luke, Sasha, Ashley as well as other characters go through a state of trauma as they recount over and over their whereabouts and actions on that day. For instance, during an interactive section between characters after the events, Luke gave an account of his whereabouts on that day in a disconnected narrative. Still faced with the shock in the aftermath of the events,

all he could explain was how he called Guillermo to postpone their meeting (p.70).He also keeps repeating: "windows on the world at eight" (p. 71-2). This demonstrates that Luke is in a traumatic state. Verbestel (2010:67), another literary critic of Trauma studies sums up Luke's behavior in the novel as thus: when Luke wonders "If I ever actually regained consciousness" (p. 72), it shows that he went through the whole experience on an unconscious level. Eventually, Luke picks up the habit of smoking as a way to come out of the trauma. He does this "on breaks between digging" (p: 74).It is the shock faced by Luke that makes him feel "out of whack" (p.75) even a few days after the attacks. It is trauma that lead characters like McGavok and Corrine go into an adulterous relationship as a way of recovering from the shocks. Similarly, reviews on the psychology and trauma faced by characters in Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* will be reviewed subsequently.

2.2.1Psychology and Trauma in *Falling Man* (2007)

Falling Man focuses on the emotions, psychology and trauma of characters in the aftermath of 9/11.Therefore, discussions of September 11 exist at the confluence of and revolve around trauma, and its psychological implications. Quite a number also dwell on Dellilo's portrayal of the terrorist in the novel as a written from a religious perspective. These reviews are based on the reactions of Americans after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The resultant effect of terrorism on those affected and the portrayal of terrorists in the novel will therefore be reviewed. Based on the trauma experienced after the attacks, Aluee- Bello (2013: 65) states that: "in Dellilo's novel, *Falling Man*, he deals with the psychological consequences and traumatic effects of the attacks on a few individuals". She explained further that, Dellilo's choice of psychic, personal trauma has to do with a more general question about the role of literature and what it can offer in terms of understanding and relating to the enormity of the

events (p 66). Using the Freudian concept of Psychology, Caruth (1996:7) in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* states thus:

> What is truly striking about the accident victim's experience of the event… is not so much the period of forgetting that which occurred after the accident, but rather the fact that the victim of the crash was never fully conscious during the accident itself; the person gets away; apparently unharmed.

Adopting Caruth's explanation of the Freudian concept, Fussell (2011:22) concludes accordingly: "Trauma victims are not fully conscious during traumatic events, and do not fully realize what have happened until much later. Witnessing death and the panic of others, contributes to a break in the psyche". Keith, a victim of the 9/11 terrorist attacks demonstrate a state of unconsciousness when he remembers himself leaving the towers. Although Keith was physically present, he was psychologically removed (p 23).This describes a victim of trauma's situation burdened with the trouble of coping after the attacks, the consequence of which results into internal psychological conflicts. Contrary to Fussell and Aluee-Bello's adoption of the Freudian concept of psychoanalysis to examine the traumatic consequences of the attacks on characters in *Falling Man*, this study reviews the text using a different dimension. The study employs postmodernist theory to demonstrate that the knowledge of the author's background account for his depiction of characters and events in *Falling Man*.

The traumatic experience of characters after the terrorist attacks in *Falling Man* is enlarged by Spiegelman (2004:12) in his book, *In the Shadows ofNo Towers*. For him, "the traumatic event, then … figure simply as a historical moment that allows for an insight into the various structuring forces of the contemporary every day of the U.S.". The above view confirms that trauma does not only affect the characters in the text but it relates to the contemporary society, the United States of America. For him, "terrorism in *Falling Man* is a necessary screen for the

understanding of the present day trauma, the trauma faced after the terrorist attacks" (p. 12). In *Foreign Bodies: Trauma Corporeality in Contemporary American Culture*, Di Prete (2006:105) explains the 9/11 terrorist attacks in *Falling Man* as a text based on: "psychological trauma worked out through a corporeal representation of that trauma especially in Contemporary American fiction."Di Prete showed how the effects of post 9/11 are represented in the character of Keith and Lianne. Through trauma, the memories of 9/11 are re-created in characters. The more the characters are in the state of trauma, the more they recollect their experiences during the terrorist attacks. Di Prete (2006:105) defines corporeality in relation to the character of Keith and Lianne in the novel as he states:

> Keith's trauma is corporeally represented in two ways. First a physical manifestation of 9/11 as a way for Lianne to work through her trauma and also his (Keith's) persistent and intense focus on his physical therapy demonstrates his attempt to physically work through his own psychological trauma.

He further explained the role played by literature in discussing trauma in *Falling Man* in the following manner: "It can bring out this transformation; it externalizes what is internal, opens it to public consumption and to witnessing and brings it back, once shared as something one can re-appropriate and safely place within self"(p. 107). The above explains the close connection writing has to do with the 9/11 terrorist attacks. By using the novel genre of literature, Dellilo portrays how emotions are heightened for trauma victims. Due to the importance of the novel form in understanding trauma, Rothberg (2008:124) states that: "for the novel's ability to fuse public events with private lives, it shows that the novel is used as a medium to incorporate aspects of the lives and events of the post 9/11 terrorism". In addition to the work of the above critics, this study will also prove that Dellilo's depiction of events using the novel genre is not solely to represent trauma. The novel as a medium used by Dellilo is a way of demonstrating the author's craft in the manner issues are presented about the attacks. By so doing, this proves that

the novel is a viable ground (genre) to demonstrate his craft by the use of a violent situation such as the 9/11 events.

Duvall (2008:9) mentions *Falling Man* sparingly in his *Introduction: The Power of History and The Persistence of Mystery* as he states thus: "*Falling Man* examines the psychological trauma experienced by New Yorkers in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11", but goes on to focus on the novel's portrayal of the "role of the artist in contemporary society" (p.9). Thus, writing a novel like *Falling Man* is an instance that shows the function the writer plays in representing the experience felt by Americans after the attacks. Michael Rothberg (2008:124) also shares similar views with Duvall in the sense that, they both stress the role of literary writers in representing the effect and impact felt by Americans after the attacks. For him, this is evident in Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* as he states thus:

> Literature has provided one of the most effective sites for reflection on the meaning of American life after 9/11. At present, … the events of 9/11 still impact others on a more personal level, how we come to understand what it can mean to a person is what Don Dellilo is hoping to explore in *Falling Man*.

In addition to the role of literary writers like Dellilo in representing the trauma experienced after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, other reviews on Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* are based on the trauma faced individually by characters in the novel. Frost (2008:180) is of the opinion that Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* "addresses trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder as a way to look at what 9/11 meant to the victims on a personal microscopic level". This view about9/11 terrorism is arrived at given the different traumatic reactions of characters, concerning how they are affected and how they are coping after the incident. She further contends that:

> For a character like Keith, his traumatic experience of losing his friend and narrowly escaping his own death in the tower, that trauma affected his concept of self both metaphorically and

> physically. Lianne watching what happened on TV made her a vicarious victim, allowing the traumatic event to seep into her daily life, causing the trauma of her father's suicide to resurface while also demonstrating how traumatic flashbacks can occur externally (Frost: 181).

Ultimately, this quotation concludes that *Falling Man* allows for a closer look at Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It emphasizes what 9/11 means to victims and witnesses of the attacks. Expanding on this view of trauma resulting from terrorism which *Falling Man* explores, Frost (2008:198) states that:

> Dellilo's narrative explores the actual literal repercussions on a personal level through the characters of Keith and Lianne. The attacks of September 11 may have been a warning to the world, but it was also a traumatic event that affected not only the thousands of people who were in the towers that day, but also the countless others who watched it, both in person and via the media.

The above explains how various characters moved out of the initial shock of the event into a long term suffering in the aftermath of the attacks. The effect is either felt directly bythose involved, or indirectly by those who witnessed the events. It is this shock that results to identity crisis and later traumatic stress disorders on the part of the victims of the September 11 attacks. Explaining how shock results to trauma on the characters in *Falling Man*, Frost (2008:185) asserts further:

> The representation of terrorism of 9/11 in *Falling Man* is portrayed as creating shock to characters and this shock leads to several identity crises. Like the character of Keith goes through several identity crises, each one connected to symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. First Keith questions the concept of self, not quite feeling or knowing who he is inside of his own body. We then see a two-fold doubling of identity as Keith distinguishes between who he was before 9/11, and who he is now. As well as creating a different self to accommodate his relationship with another survivor Florence.

This is one of the effects experienced by victims after the terrorist attacks. The character Keith in *Falling Man* is faced with shock which becomes trauma. This traumatic situation gives rise to his

questioning himself and his relationship with others. Frost's perspective in *Falling Man* only focused on the stages of coping with trauma by individual characters. The study lacks a postmodernist appraisal in the usage of characters and events in the text. This study fills the gap by foregrounding the author's craft through a postmodernist approach of the post 9/11 scenario. This will include the use of personal pronouns, setting in terms of place and time, various forms of narrative structure, imagery and the novel's engagement with various types of visual representation such as painting, photographs and the media. The employment of the above distinct feature in Dellilo's *Falling Man* accounts for his distinct mode of depicting the attacks and its aftermath.

Versluys (2009:16) in *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel*, agrees with Frost's view on the shock faced by characters resulting to trauma. But, he relates this shock to the American society and not just individual characters. Versluys introduces the term melancholia to show the state of Americans after the 9/11 attacks. He states consequently: "Dellilo's exploration of trauma demonstrates how September 11th has forced American society into a perpetual state of melancholia". Versluys looks at how the trauma of September 11 in *Falling Man* has affected American society as a whole. Americans are not just in the psychological state of trauma, but in a depressed state. He further states that: "*Falling Man* describes pure melancholia" (p.20) and then later adds that: "the terrorist attacks punctuate an era characterized by brokenness and unrelieved melancholia" (p.21). *Falling Man* is seen as a replica of the American society on September 11, 2001. After the attacks, Americans are thrown into a state of disarray and extreme depression just as the characters represented in the text.

Although Versluys review of *Falling Man* centered on the American society, he also addressed the state of characters in the novel. His review failed to address how characters like Keith and

Lianne who are part of the American society, are themselves witnesses and victims of trauma. He claims that: "Lianne has no firsthand knowledge of the trauma that Keith suffered and for that reason, she can begin to understand what he (Keith) went through"(Versluys 2009: 25). Versluy's opinion of trauma does not recognize the character of Lianne as a victim of trauma. She is in many respects a victim of trauma. Although their experience and proximity to the terrorist attack vary, both Keith and Lianne are in many respects victims of trauma. Contrary to the above view which is based on characters as victims of trauma, this current study focuses on the victims and terrorists perspective as a way to represent ethical issues such as the immoralities of suicide, marital infidelity, parental obligations, violence, terrorism and death.

Kauffman (2009:649) explains other ways in which Dellilo portays trauma in his novel. He states thus: "art, specifically painting and drawing, plays a prominent role in *Falling Man* and it is used to support the novel's representation of trauma as isolation and emptiness". She gives an instance in *Falling Man* to the effect that at one point in the novel, Lianne discusses a portrait her son Justin has been drawing with his grandmother: "Justin and I, we need to talk about skin color, flesh tones. He likes white . . . . Does he have a white crayon? He has white paper, she said" (FM. 179). In view of the above statement, Kauffman concludes that: "In the context of trauma these suggests a perspective of emptiness, or perhaps more accurately the picture is a portrait, soullessness" (p. 650). Similarly, when discussing a post 9/11 terrorist novel such as Don Dellilo's *Falling Man*, Gray also looked at the way Dellilo has been able to represent trauma in the novel. Gray (2008:130) asserts that: "certainly, what is notable about this text that have attempted to confront the dreadful event of 9/11 and its aftermath directly is the presence of, and in fact an emphasis on the preliminary stages of trauma; the sense of those events as a kind of historical and experimental abyss, a yawning and unbridgeable gap between before and after."

The above explains the trauma felt after the terrorist attacks. It emphasized the psychological state of characters before, during and after the attacks.

Aside a psychological or psychoanalytic review of *Falling Man* based on the traumatic state of characters after the attacks, Gamal (2011) acknowledged the need for a different approach to reading the text. Gamal (2011) quotes Elleke Boehmer (2010:147) in *Encounters and Strangeness in the Post 9/11 Novel*, who adopted a postcolonial approach in reviewing Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* and John Updike's *Terrorist*. For him, "an alternative reading of terror allows us to examine its occurrence in the reciprocally violent historical contexts of colonization and global neocolonialism rather than of historical war on terror in which terror is reviewed simply as savage and irrational, an eruption of the primitive" (p.148).From the above view, writing such novels as *Falling Man* and *Terrorist* does not imply war on terror. As such, against this backdrop, terrorism will not just be perceived as an extreme or violent attack, inflicting pain on victims. It will be seen as an event that has contemporary relevance to the American society.

From the above reviews, it is evident that most of the critical works on the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 till present have dwelt elaborately on the psychological effects on the victims. Thus, this study demonstrates that works such as *Falling Man* go beyond this single motif. Therefore a postmodernist appraisal of *Falling Man* based on issues such as: violence, religion and faith, infidelity and parental irresponsibility help in the understanding of the depiction of terrorism in the text. The deployment of key postmodernist tools of metafiction, collage, fragmentation, pastiche, intertexuality and parody helps unveil the various dimensions and perspectives about the underlying reasons that account for terrorist attacks and tendencies. In this regard, Dellilo's perspective in *Falling Man* offers an enriching story about 9/11 and its aftermaths.

2.3 Religion and Stereotype

2.3.1 Religious and Stereotypical Portrayal of Characters in Don Dellilo's *Falling Man (2007)*

Most critics' construe that Don Dellilo in *Falling Man* misrepresents or stereotypes Muslims. In the review of *Falling Man*, earlier studies are characterized by the conception of Muslims as terrorists and perpetrators of violence. This is largely due to the terrorist events in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan were such violent acts are prominent. To that effect, characters in *Falling Man* are said to be stereotyped. In *Orientalist Feminism: Representation of Muslim Women in Two American Novels;Terrorist* and *Falling Man*, Marandi (2012:5) is of the opinion that Dellilo and Updike represent terrorism from the perspective of the image of Muslim characters, particularly the female characters, " who are oppressed, subhuman. They are those who live in the state of abject slavery and also being regarded as seductive, submissive, often an epitome of immorality and transgressive sexuality". The above view holds that the depiction of characters in *Falling Man* (2007) and *Terrorist* (2006) is based on religious sentiments, since characters that belong to a particular religion are not portrayed in good light. Marandi (2012:14) also adds that, women in *Falling Man* are portrayed as sexual objects. With this, he draws instances from the text thus: "She [Leyla] wanted him to know her whole presence, inside and outside (p. 82). "She [Leyla] had dark eyes and floppy body that liked contact" (p: 175). While for the male, several times the novelist mentions Hammad's sexual desire for passerby women, a saleswoman in the supermarket and for his girlfriend's roommate besides herself (Marandi: 14-15). The above points to the depiction of Muslim characters as being preoccupied with immoral thoughts and behavior.

In line with this view, Hossein and Abbasali (2011:189) comment on Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* accordingly:

> He tells his story of the terrorist attacks from the perspective of a group of Muslims who blatantly conduct the terrorist attacks of 9/11, in an attempt to take revenge on the West for its unrestrained growth in the course of modernity. As such, he lays the blame on Islam as being incompatible with the West's history of civilization. Thus, in his historiographic rendering of 9/11, Dellilo focusing on the American presents a totalizing reading of it.

This opinion graphically illustrates that even after the terrorist attacks, the portrayal of Muslims as perpetrators of terrorism in the novel is one sided. Muslims are perceived as violent and referred to as terrorists.

Hossein and Abbasali (2011) maintain that in Dellilo's portrayal of Muslims in *Falling Man*, the narrator indirectly reads Hammad's mind this way: "Islam is the world outside the prayer room as well as the Surahs in the Koran. Islam is the struggle against the enemy, near enemy, and far, Jew. First, for all things just and hateful, and then the Americans" (FM. 80). In order "to satisfy the need for a clear enemy and a coherent narrative, Dellilo makes a recourse to the construction of a threatening Islam as the only enemy and other of the United States (Hossein and Abbasali, 2011:121). This view demonstrates that both critics agree that Dellilo's perspective of terrorism is one sided. By categorizing the terrorist's events of 9/11 under the flag of Islam, Dellilo tries to unify its meanings by concluding that Islam is the enemy (p.125). The above lacks the view of the use of characters as a style in the text to discuss the conflicting view of issues that points to the events of 9/11.

2.3.2 Stereotypical Portrayal of Characters in John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006)

Just as in Dellilo's *Falling Man*, most literary critics have also described terrorism in Updike's novel, *Terrorist* as stereotypical in its depiction of characters. Kakutani (2006: 16) rejects the portrayal of the protagonist in the novel. She points out a lack of insight into the character as an autonomous individual. She writes thus:

> Unfortunately, the-would be terrorist in this novel turns out to be a completely unbelievable individual; more robot than human being and such a cliché that the reader cannot help suspecting. That Mr. Updike found the idea of such a person so incomprehensible that he at some point abandoned any earnest attempt to depict his inner life, and settled instead for giving us a static, one- dimension stereotype (p.16).

What this implies is that Updike's major character of Ahmad focuses more on his bid to carry out terrorism instead of bringing out other aspects of the life of the character. Updike dwells more on portraying the protagonist as a Muslim terrorist whose aim is to create violence. In line withthe view of Updike's protagonist Ahmad as a flat character, Morton (2010) explains how literary representations such as John Updike's *Terrorist* tend to reinforce the view of Islam as a religion of violent fanatics. For Morton, the text also shows the binaries of counter terrorist discourse between Islam and secular West in which the human consequences of such rigid and lethal polarities become visible. Arab-Americans such as Ahmad are seen as fanatic, crazy, and scary (p. 247).

Prior to the aforementioned argument, another review of *Terrorist* sees the portrayal of Ahmad in a positive light. This view contends that Updike, an evident critic of America, makes Ahmad his spokesman to mock the society and the system. Adams (2006:8) is of the view that:"Ahmad, we are told, loathes the decadent West, the way of the infidels, headed for a terrible doom. He wants his head to be full of the Koran, but Updike, writing in a sympathetic third person, makes

him of the devils party whether he likes it or not". This quotation upholds the view that through Ahmad's eyes, Updike marks out the flaws in the American person and particularly the American society. It is very apparent in view of this comment that Updike is a critique of America and its ways. In many ways *Terrorist* is an indictment of America and its system.

Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia (2012: 171) are of the opinion that:

> Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) is one of the many American novels which, in line with the dominant political discourse, has focused on representing Muslims as the others and Islam as a retrogressive religion which orders its adherents to use violence against unbelievers.

These critics conceived of terrorism as portrayed in Updike's *Terrorist*, as an attempt to depict Islam as intolerant of Western modernity. They are of the view that Muslims, as used in the novel, are the main architects of terrorist attacks, especially the attacks on The World Trade Center and The Pentagon. Furthermore, Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia (2012) quote Deyab (2009:6) who states that:

> Updike's main objective in this novel is to represent Islam as backward in nature. To him, Islam is a one dimensional fanatic religion as he asserts in one of his interviews; Islam doesn't have as many shades of gray as the Christian or Judaic faith does. It's fairly absolutist, as you know and you are either in or not. This is what happens in Terrorist. Ahmad, the fanatic Muslim Protagonist, decides to kill the people whom he calls infidels, the people whose main fault is living the American way of life.

From the above statement, it can be deduced that both critics relate how Updike introduced a Muslim protagonist to create, given his beliefs and actions, a comparison with other religions. By so doing, Muslims are portrayed as infidels in order to differentiate them from Christians or Judaists. Habib (2013:13) notes: "most reviews on Updike's work*; Terrorist*, have been highly criticized by most critics for his lack of involvement with the protagonist, Ahmad and lack of

authenticity in the portrayal of a convert Muslim in USA". Habib (2013) quotes Pope's (2012:13) description of the character of Ahmad: "He hangs between, in doubt to act or rest; in doubt to deem himself a God or Beast". Pope's explanation entails that characters, especially the main character is not portrayed in good light. This point to the fact that Ahmad is viewed as a religious fanatic who perpetrates violence especially to non-Muslims.

Manquosh *et al* (2011:312) in *Amplifications of Religious Fundamentalism in Fiction: Updike's Terrorist* demonstrates how Updike uses Islam to portray terrorism. His portrayal of terrorism is linked to the fanatical teachings of some Imams. "Updike makes his point of view clear, particularly through the impact of an Imam called Sheikh Rashid over a young Arab-American Muslim named Ahmad" (Manquosh *et al.,* 2011:312).They give an insight into the novel with respect to the Imam as: "a dangerous religious teacher who can be discerned by other characters of which his evil intentions are not hidden under any guise. His religious fanaticism leads him to expose hatred towards Terry as a non-Muslim." (p. 312). They cite an instance in the novel, in a dialogue between Ahmad's mother, Terry and the guidance counselor, Jack:

> His teacher at the mosque, this sheikh Rashid is kind of creepy; but Ahmad's aware. He reveres him but distrusts him. You say you've met? Just once or twice, picking up Ahmad or dropping him off. He was very smooth and proper with me. But I could feel hatred. To him I was a piece of meat- unclean meat (p. 170)

Manquosh et al (2011) further adds that Updike exposes the negative impact of the Imam's teaching on Ahmad, as Ahmad who adopts the Imam's teaching, views Americans as infidels. He becomes pessimistic and hates the American way of life (Manquosh *et al*., 2011:313). Thus, Updike's novel centers on a combination of religious fanatics and terrorism. By religious fanatics, he alludes to the extremist Imams and the word 'terrorists' refers to those who carried out the 9/11 attacks. Gebhart (2011) points out the only two African American characters we get

to know by name; Joryleen and her boyfriend Tylenol, of which Joryleen ends up being a prostitute. To Gebhart, this is yet another example of an almost insensitive categorization. Considering the fairly stereotypical depiction of other ethnic background in the novel, it is difficult to disagree with this observation. The above critics tend to dwell more on categorizing characters based on their religious background. This study sees the need to explore through a postmodernist approach the upheavals of the post 9/11 American society through a middle class perspective.

While most critics condemn the use of the protagonist, Ahmad as a Muslim terrorist, and conceive Updike's deployment of the character as solely to perpetuate violence, Azzam (2006:64) points out the commendable side of portraying the terrorist observing that: "Ahmad is a serious staunch believer and shares an intimate proprietary union with the Almighty. He sees himself as God's sole custodian and although he is aware of his blasphemous compassion for the creator, he yearns to meet him nonetheless." Walsh (2006:1) also provides a satisfying interpretation of Updike's portrayal of Ahmad as he contends:

> Updike is a believer, but he has hitherto rejected a directly religious presence in his work arguing that fiction holds the mirror up to the world and cannot show more than this world contains and this world does not contain an adequate explanation for Ahmad's trajectory.

Walsh (2006:2) concludes that since that is so, Updike can be considered very successful in presenting the ambiguity of today's world, where no one or no faith can be supported whole heartedly. In this respect, what Updike has done in his novel is a fictionalized portrayal of characters and events.

In an article titled "Rebels through Updike and Desai's Lenses", Habib (2013:53) also comments positively on the portrayal of an Islamic terrorist in the novel as she states: "The portrayal of the

terrorist in the novel witnessed progress and changes. The last line of the novel gives an impression of Ahmad (the Terrorist) being liberated and astray from his straight path". Habib (2013) draws inferences from the text: "These devils Ahmad thinks, have taken away my God" (p: 310). Therefore, it can be said that Updike ends the novel with Ahmad's enlightenment, being free from the extreme beliefs that lead one towards destruction. He might have also lost faith in Islam altogether (p. 53). Habib's view is justified by the interview held by Updike with Charles McGrath. In the interview, Updike justifies his portrayal of Ahmad saying: "I imagined a young Seminarian who sees everyone around him as a devil trying to take away his faith. The 21st Century does not look like that, I think, to a great many people in the Arab world" (p.12). Unlike other reviews that point out the negative portrayal of the protagonist from the beginning to the end of the novel, Habib perceives Ahmad as progressive, a strong believer of his faith who does not allow himself to be used by the negative teachings of others.

On a similar note, Stone (2013) is of the view that Updike's *Terrorist* appears to be a novel about the mindset of a radical Islamic terrorist. The purpose of *Terrorist* is not to gain insight into the mind of an Islamic terrorist, but rather to use the Muslim character as a means to understand America (No Page).Obviously, this shows that the dialogues, along with the reflections they provoke in Ahmad, serve Updike's intention which is the examination of contemporary America exposed to the passions in the non-American world. Contrarily, this study opposes the above view by showing that the deployment of characters in the novel connotes a call for respect and tolerance amongst religions and culture. The use of the character of Ahmad in particular demonstrates the author's craft to tell the state of the post 9/11 events from a teenager's perspective that is conscious of the happenings around him.

From the above reviews, Don Dellilo and John Updike are influential contemporary American writers of all time. In *Falling Man* and *Terrorist,* most critics pay more attention to the portrayal of characters in the novels. They fail to look at the depiction of the events in the novel beyond the level of characterization. Thus most of the critical works on *Falling Man* and *Terrorist* tend to assess the degree to which both writers succeed or fail in the use of Muslim characters as terrorists. This study through a postmodernist approach foregrounds Dellilo and Updike's craft in examining the different events explored in their prose narratives. In *Falling Man,* key issues such as the immoralities of suicide, adultery, failed parental responsibility, violence, terrorism and religion were examined. While in *Terrorist,* issues such as; the degeneration of a post 9/11 America and its economy, the educational sector, disillusionment of the American middle class in the aftermath of 9/11, religious issues and cultural diversity are raised as a way to indict America and its system. The various forms in which the above issues are discussed involve the use of personal pronouns, setting in terms of place and time, various forms of narrative structure, imagery. It also involves the novel's engagement with various types of visual representation such as painting, photographs and the media which demonstrate Dellilo's craft in telling his story. Similar to Dellilo's *Falling Man*, Updike's*Terrorist,* discusses issues in the novel through a shift in various narrative points of view that collide irregularly in the course of the narrative. The use of a yelling tone, irony, descriptive language, and also an italicized narrative form that expounds the inner voice and thoughts of characters demonstrate Updike's skills in the story.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Theory is a methodological tool in literature used in reading a literary work. As such, it can be used to interpret a text or a literary work by evaluating it, thus revealing the in-depth meaning of the text. The postmodernist theory has been used to evaluate the issue of terrorism as undertaken by the American writers: Don Dellilo and John Updike in their respective novels, *Falling Man* and *Terrorist*. The terms 'postmodernism', 'postmodern' and 'postmodernist' have been contested over the years since the inception of the terms in the 1960s. According to Hutcheon (1989:1), as a result,"any attempt to define the words will necessarily and simultaneously have both positive and negative dimensions".To say what postmodernism is, is but at the same time to say what it is not. "Postmodernism is a phenomenon whose mode is resolutely contradictory aswell as unavoidably political" (Hutcheon 1989:1). This definition refers to postmodernism asa term that takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement.Postmodern on the other hand is a term that first found general usage in architecture. It is one which juxtaposes and gives equal value to the self-reflexive and the historically grounded. (Hutcheon 1989:2). Both postmodernism and postmodern can be said to have a similar focus as many writers in referring to these postmodern contradiction do not try to suggest the essence for postmodernism. In referring to contradiction in both terms, Hutcheon (1988: 14) in her book titled *The Poetics of Postmodernism* state thus:

> I see it as an ongoing cultural process or activity that is more than a fixed and fixing definition… it is a poetics, an open, ever-changing theoretical structure by which to order both our cultural knowledge and our critical procedures. This would go beyond the study of literary discourse to the study of cultural practice and theory.

Postmodernism and postmodern is a discipline that retains a dynamic orientation as a theoretical structure since it is an ongoing cultural process. Lyotard (1986:125) is in support of the above view as he sees both terms as "a cultural process involving the expression of thoughts." From the

above views, both critics agree that the terms are cultural processes that do not carry any fixed meaning or ways of representation. Postmodernists on the other hand hold the view of the postmodern in recuperating their works, postmodernist theory is formed around these views.

Postmodernist theory is well known and has become current in the 1980s(Barry 2002:82).Waugh (1998: 349) is of the opinion that the theory cannot be so easily understood because according her, it:"designates a diverse collection of cultural practices, writers, artists, thinkers and theoretical accounts of late modernity. It also refers to a general sense of radical change in the ways of thinking that has been inherited from the eighteenth century European Enlightenment". Another literary critic, Jeremy Hawthorn (1992) in *Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* described Postmodernist theory based on its difference from modernism. He explained that, both give great prominence to fragmentation as a feature of twentieth-century art and culture, but they do so in very different moods. The modernist use fragmentation, in such a way as to register a deep nostalgia for an earlier age when faith was full and authority intact. From the above explanation, it could be inferred that fragmentation has been a defining tool used to differentiate Modernism from Postmodernism. Modernists lament fragmentation while Postmodernists celebrate it and see it as an escape from the confining embrace of fixed systems of belief.

Postmodernist critics such as Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Patricia Waugh, and Linda Hutcheon point out the meaning of postmodernism in their various definitions which all leads to the understanding that postmodernists strive to show their consciousness of the happenings around them through writing. According to Waugh (1998:180):

> postmodernism is best thought of as a 'mood' arising out of a sense of the collapse of all those foundations of modern thought which seemed to guarantee a reasonably stable sense of truth, knowledge,

> self and value. Even scientific knowledge becomes a fiction: there are no objective facts' for 'facts' too are produced through forms of observation and discourse determined by theoretical (fictional) frames.

Waugh explains what literary works would mean for postmodernists, where every knowledge of truth becomes fiction and not facts. Lyotard (1992:50) similarly remarks:

> The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, put forward the unpresentable in presentation itself. That which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable, that which searches for new presentations, not to enjoy them but in order to impact a stronger sense of the unpresentable… the artist and the writer, then are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what would have been done. Hence, the fact that work and text have the characters of the event… postmodernism would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (post) anterior (modo).

Lyotard specifies that since postmodernist challenges the distinction between mimesis or copy and the real, it contests the modes of its own representation and expresses the unpresentable by way of seeing the past in the present and the future in the present. The view of presenting the unpresentable is also similar to McHale's (1987) description of the theory. McHale (1987:27) is of the view that: "the 'dominant' mode of postmodernism involves an ontological uncertainty about the contradictory nature of the world projected by the text." The Postmodernist theory allows the presentation of the conflicting nature of the desired world or society created by the writer in the text to be visible.

Linda Hutcheon (1988:3) states that Postmodernism is, "a contradictory enterprise, its art form… use and abuse, install and then destabilize convention… [in] their critical or ironic re-reading of the art of the past". She argues further that: "postmodernist writing is best represented by those works of historiographic metafiction which self-consciously distort history". From Hutcheon's view, postmodernist fiction disorders the linear coherence of a narrative by distorting

the sense of significant time, or the passing of ordinary time. Postmodernist theory is defined as a literary theory that deconstructs traditional notions about language, identity, writing and the world created in the text, it is a cultural process involving the expression of thoughts. Postmodern fiction stresses even more than this (if that is possible) the tensions that exist, on the one hand, between the past (and absence) of the past and the present (and presence) of the present, and on the other, between the actual events of the past and the historian's act of processing them into facts. (Hutcheon 1989: 73). To have knowledge of the past becomes a question of representing, that is,

> of constructing and interpreting, not of objective recording. To condition any notion of history as objective presentation of past events, rather than as interpretive representation of those past events, which are given meaning (as historical facts) by the very discourse of the historian (Hutcheon 1989:74)

The focal point in postmodernist theory and practice is the self-conscious inscription within history of what exists, but usually thehiddenattitude of historians toward their material. Postmodernists presents history objectively rather than a subjective representation.

There are various means and techniques employed by Postmodernist writers in making sense of a literary work. Harvey in Hutcheon (2003: 41) refers to these elements as: "a shift from the kind of perspectivism that allowed the modernist to get a better bearing on the meaning of a complex but never singular reality, to the foregrounding of questions as to how radically different realities may co-exist, collide, and interpenetrate". The techniques used by Postmodernists reveal issues that bother society differently from the perspective of various characters to give more insight and understanding of such issues. It is also a means to know how such "realities" exist in a literary work. The events of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as narrated from the perspectives of Don Dellilo and John Updike will be focusedupon by employing Postmodernist

techniques. The postmodernist tools are used to analyze both texts selected for this study. Consequently, such means and techniques used by postmodernist writers in literature, Metafiction, Parody, Pastiche, Collage, and Fragmentation will be crucial tools of analysis in this study. These postmodernist tools are what Bernett and Royce (2004:248) referred to as: "… a postmodern vocabulary that suggests the nature of postmodernism." In other words, the tools of postmodernist are an archetype of postmodernism.

Metafiction

Postmodernist literary work often questions its own fictional status thus becoming metafictional. Metafiction means that a literary work refers to itself and the principles of its construction by using various techniques and narrative devices. Postmodern fictional works are about issues that bother society other than just about fiction. The term was coined by an American author and critic William Gass. Metafiction, metafictional elements and metafictionality are dominant features of a postmodern literary work. However, Patricia Waugh (1984:2) defines metafiction as:

> … a term given to fictional writing which self- consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictitiousness of the world outside the literary/ fictional text.

This shows that postmodernist employ the use of metafiction in their artistic writing to deliberately or intentionally draw attention to such literary works in order to create questions about the relationship between what is real or imagined. This postmodernist tool explores how Don Dellilo and John Updike mingle historical facts and records in recreating the events of September 11, 2001 as fictional narratives. Through the use of metafiction, historical figures

such as Bin Ladenand Ernst Hechinger are juxtaposed with fictional ones in *Falling Man.* Thus the relevance of history to postmodernist writings and the possibility that readers are involved in the creation of meaning in the literary text are issues that are foregrounded.

Parody

Just like metafiction, parody is another dominant postmodernist tool that illustrates that literary works hold intertextual relations to the society. According to Hutcheon (1991:1), one of the main features that distinguishes Postmodernism from Modernism is the fact that it: "takes the form of self-conscious, self- contradictory, self-undermining statement. One way of creating this double or contradictory stance on any statement is the use of parody: citing a convention only to make fun of it". This view differentiates a postmodernist literary work from the Modernist one. The use of parody in literary works discloses opposing and undermining statements. Various literary critics regard parody as essential to postmodernist theory. Hutcheon attests in this regard that: "Parody is usually considered central to postmodernist both by its detractors and its defenders" (p.93). She further argues that: "through a double process of installing and irony, parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference" (p.93). This is a function of parody. Its purpose is to make a ridicule of events. In this way, through the use of irony what is represented in a literary text indicates events that have happened or are still dominant in the society.

Hutcheon (1991:228) is of the opinion that: "postmodern parody is both deconstructively critical and constructively creative, paradoxically making us aware of both the limits and the powers of representation in any medium". Parody in literature reconstructs a literary text creatively to show often in an ironic sense a difference between the past and contemporary forms of presentation of reality in art. In his way, parody thus becomes self-reflexive because it: "draws our attention not

only to the parodied works of literature, but implicitly also to the whole process of depiction of reality through literary works" (p. 229). In *Falling Man*, Dellilo uses parody to mimic characters awareness of post 9/11 as compared to their pre-9/11 existence. Most characters in the novel are not conscious of their previous life until faced with incidents at the towers. While in *Terrorist*, Updike's characters constantly express the state of post 9/11 America's national security, foreign policy, popular culture, technology and so on. Yet their criticisms are always delivered in a satiric way as if what they say does not really matter. The creative use of parody by both writers creates ridicule and ironic comments in the mind of readers.

Pastiche

Closely related to postmodernist parody is pastiche. Just like parody, it involves the use of a peculiar or unique style of writing. Pastiche is a postmodernist technique that comes from the Italian word 'Pasticcio' which means, "A medley of various ingredients" (OED in Sim 2001:125). This implies a similarity in postmodernist literary works consisting of different styles, genres, narrative voices and devices each of which has its important role in the composition of the literary text. It involves a combination of multiple elements or genres to create a unique narrative or to comment on the situation of post modernity. It can also be referred to as taking various ideas from previous writings and literary styles putting them together to make a new style. The difference between parody and pastiche lies in their manner of evaluation. Unlike parody that creates effects of mimicry and ironic comments in literary works, pastiche do not aim at ridicule. Dellilo and Updike in *Falling Man* and *Terrorist* respectively used elements such as painting, radio, television, photography, a performance artist to create a unique narrative and to comment on the post 9/11 scenario. Dellilo also draws ideas from his previous writing in Mao II to enrich the depiction of the character of *Falling Man.*

Collage

Postmodernist often use the technique of collage for the narrative and compositional construction of their works. The collage breaks the linearity of narration, enables the stylistic and offers a multiple, pluralistic and often relativistic vision of the world. In postmodernist literary works, a mimetic, realistic portrayal of reality often overlaps with fiction, fantasy, dreams and sometimes hallucinations. In Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* and John Updike's *Terrorist*, the use of various narrative voices and styles, the presence of immediate transitions between scenes that intersperse events in the past and present, distorts the linear narration of the activities of these characters. The above are elements of postmodernist collage obtained in both novels which on their own create meaning in the texts.

Fragmentation

The postmodernist brings out the plot, characters, themes, imagery, and historical references that are fragmented and dispersed throughout the entire literary work. In this way, the sequence of events are interrupted by breaking up the text into short fragments or sections, separated by space, titles, numbers or symbols. Sometimes, the literary works are written with a combination of bold and italics fonts; characters are symbolic, and a miscellaneous arrangement of columns and footnotes. All this can occur in language, sentence and grammar. In this study, Dellilo's *Falling Man* and Updike's *Terrorist* are archetypes of postmodernist texts. Both texts employed the use of fragmented storyline made possible by the division of the novel into various sections named after characters and the employment of multiple narrators. Characters give their various narrative views mostly from their experience or knowledge about events in the novel. In this way, postmodernist writers reject modernist chronological presentation of narratives by accepting multiple narrative voices and fragmented storylines in fiction. The use of

postmodernist theory as a theoretical framework foregrounds the presentation of terrorism in the literary works that have been discussed in this study.

The study examines the usefulness of these perspectives in the deployment of terrorism. It demonstrates that postmodernist theory is a viable tool to demonstrate Don Dellilo and John Updike's craft in their portrayal of the post 9/11 events. It also employs the use of postmodernist techniques/ tools such as parody, pastiche, collage, fragmentation, metafiction etcetera, to show the importance of these forms of depiction in the novels. The engagement of distinct stylistic features such as; personal pronouns, allusion, symbols, imagery, setting in terms of place and time, irony, narrative point of view and descriptive language enables a great assessment and evaluation of issues discussed in both texts. It also shows the relevance of portraying terrorism in literature. Postmodernist fragmentation gives readers the ability to evaluate what the writers perceive about the ugly happenings of September 11, 2001. It also enables readers to make their own judgment and understanding of the 9/11 incidents. This points to the fact that the issues and the various forms in which they are depicted underscore the defining ideology of the events of 9/11 in the various works.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 The Portrayal of Terrorism in Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* (2007)

3.1 An Overview of Don Dellilo's *Falling Man*

Falling Man (2007) is a post-September 11 2001 story that begins with one of the two central characters, Keith Neudecker, walking down the street shortly after the planes hit the World Trade Center. Keith Neudecker is a lawyer, who escapes from the burning Twin Towers and attempts to adjust to life again after the tragedy. From the scene of the incidents, Keith returns to the apartment of his former wife, looking for the comfort of his family. Keith and his estranged wife, Lianne are separated before the tragic incident. They both have a young son named Justin, who often looks out the window with binoculars, searching for planes in the sky and a man named Bill Lawton, Justin's mispronunciation of Bin Laden. Lianne's mother, Nina, is not happy that Keith wants to reunite with her daughter, as she is not very fond of her son-in-law. Nina also has a boyfriend named Martin Ridnour, who is an art dealer.

Lianne welcomes Keith in, assists him in getting medical attention and tries to help him readjust to life after his tragic experience. Lianne runs an Alzheimer's support group that focuses on writing, but its members slowly dwindle as the story progresses. As the story develops, it is revealed that before Keith's escape from the Tower, he accidentally grabs the briefcase of a woman named Florence. While Keith develops a romantic interest in Florence, Lianne starts to develop paranoid fears about Middle Eastern people. She becomes easily irritated at things like postcards showing pictures of those who lost their lives and hearing a neighbor in their building play a particular type of music. Between the story of Keith and his family, the author discusses details in the daily life of a Middle Eastern man named Hammad. He is a pilot who is pursuing more flight training in the Gulf Coast. It is later revealed that he is one of the hijackers who struck the North Tower. Eventually Keith leaves Lianne and the family to start a new life for

himself. He remembers playing poker with co-workers who lost their lives in the Towers. Ultimately, he decides to become a professional poker player and travel across the country, competing in tournaments.

This chapter which analyzes Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* (2006) focus on a postmodernist appraisal of issues such as violence, issues of infidelity, lack of trust, and failure in parental responsibility, religion and the reaction of characters against the backdrop of the experiences and point of view of the victims and terrorists during, before and after the attacks. Events presented, take into account the beliefs and thoughts of characters. This helps in understanding the idea behind the portrayal of terrorism in *Falling Man*. The above concerns are relayed by the use of distinct features such as: personal pronouns, setting in terms of place and time, and various forms of narrative structure. Other features include the use of imagery, metaphor and the novel's engagement with various types of visual representation such as painting, photographs and the media, dramatic opening and closing. All the above features point to the author's craft in telling the story. Through the use of Postmodernist features the fragmented views of characters and events are presented therefore creating multiple viewpoints and perspectives of the chaotic situation obtainable in the text. Postmodernistfeatures also create the possibility for readers to be involved in the creation of meaning based on the issues foregrounded in the text.

3.2 Violence

Violence is a paramount issue that runs through in the text. The evaluation of violence comes from the various chaotic scenario presented in the text. Violence takes the form of images and metaphor, aggression from one character to another and the use of the media. The result of violence amounts to death, bloodshed, and suicide. As the story unfolds, fragmented perspectives of victims and terrorists are structured in three fold with each section named differently. The

structure of events and characters' perspectives account for the deferred or delayed recognition of the terrorists' events in the novel. The first section titled; "Bill Lawton" is so named from the misspelt name of Bill Laden that Justin the son of Keith and Lianne adapts from the media. A Parody effect is created by the picture of "Bill Lawton" which comes from the past representation of a historical figure, "Bin Laden". The ironical portrayal of "Bin Laden" generates ridicule and in turn mocks the subject of 'Bin Laden' an existing historical figure. In this regard, postmodernists do not disregard the context of the past, but uses irony to acknowledge the fact that we are inevitably separated from the past (Hutcheon 1989:94).

A pastiche of events is created by the use of multiple images like still life objects and figurines which are combined and this helps in the course of the narrative. Paintings as used in the text depict still life objects and are presented as follows:

> the painting in question showed seven or eight objects, the taller ones set against a brushy slate background. The other items were huddled boxes and biscuit tins, grouped before a darker background… two of the taller items were dark and somber, with smoky marks and smudges, and one of them was partly concealed by a long-necked bottle. The bottle was a bottle, white. The two dark objects, too obscure to name, were the things that Martin was referring to (p. 23).

The picture described as gloomy and marked with stains of smoke explain Ridnour's earlier statement about "…seeing the towers in this still life". The objects described in the painting make Ridnour, a former terrorist and Nina's lover to recall what took place at the towers. Lianne, Keith's former wife also acknowledges that she saw the towers by looking at the still life. This is emphasized in the text thus: "she saw what he saw. She saw the towers" (p. 40). Thus the still life as depicted in the text is a way to make reference to the events at the scene of violence.

Events in the novel are often presented side by side with characters view on the description of violence as well as other issues. A collage of these views breaks the linearity of narration and gives insight into the chaotic scene of the collapse at the towers. Florence, one of the victims at the scene of the attacks recounts the horrors of that day to Keith, the protagonist and former husband to Lianne. Due to her experience and the horrific nature of the attacks, Florence carefully speaks of the attacks as if in a bid not to miss any detail about the incident. Florence account of the attacks is given in the text from the second person narrative point of view as follows:

> She went through it slowly, remembering as she spoke, often pausing to look into space, to see things again, the collapsed ceilings and blocked stairwells, the smoke, always, and the fallen wall, the drywall, and she paused to search for the word and he waited watching... there was water somewhere running or falling, flowing down from somewhere. Men ripped their shirts and wound them around their faces, for mask, for the smoke. She saw a woman with burnt hair, hair burnt and smoking… times they had to walk blind, smoke so thick, hand on the shoulder of the person in front. She'd lost her shoes… the stairwell was crowded now, and slow, with people coming from other floors… there were panic faces… I went down five or six steps and hit the landing, like stumble-falling, and I hit hard… (p 27).

The building where the attacks take place is seen to be in a destructive state. The emphasis on the use of 'smoke' portrays a hazardous and violent environment that results to the death of victims. The elaborate picture of the events recounted by Florence using multiple images of "falling", "hair burnt", "smoke" and a composition of the first person narrative 'I', the second person 'he/she' creates a fragmented perspective of events. The narrative is not told chronologically but disjointed to show human experience as unstable. Katie one of Justin's friends also says she: "… saw the plane that hit Tower One. She says she came home from school, sick, standing at the window when the plane flew by" (p.63). The scene of the attacks is not only witnessed from the point of view of adults, but also from that of a child. This perspective adds beauty to the

narration of events and represents the various ways in which the terrorist events can be portrayed. Violence is further represented in the novel through a fragmentary narrative structure, a metafictive portrayal of events and a pastiche of scenes.

3.2.1 The Fragmentary narrative structure of *Falling Man*

Falling Man (2007) is a postmodernist text that focuses on the post September 11, 2001 events in the United States of America. Centering on the theme of violence, the narrative voices in the text unveil the dimension of the events that characterize the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Through a random presentation of characters, the narrative explores the experiences of characters in the text as victims of terrorism. The chapter also explores how these experiences are projected and demonstrated in the novel. The text affords readers the privilege of experiencing the feelings, thoughts and the attitudes of victims, who are direct or indirect victims of the attacks. This is enriched by the manner in which the characters are presented in the text. According to Mansutti (2013:111):

> Dellilo used literary language to complicate the character's voice and positions as they struggle to speak or repress, the unspeakable, and they establish a moral structure within which those voices and ours reverberate reciprocally on issues such as guilt, knowledge, forgiveness, pity, solidarity.

The complex use of literary language heightens the voice and positions of characters especially via the instrumentality of fragmentation. The inconclusive nature of exchanges of statements by characters often creates difficulty in making sense of the conversation by characters. Also it is difficult to make sense as to the end to which such conversations are made.

A disjointed narrative echoes from the beginning of the text where events are described by the use of various points of view jumbled together. The fragmented storyline made possible by the

use of multiple narrators allows no coherence in the order of narration of events in the chaotic world. Events are described as:

> The world was this as well, figures in windows a thousand feet up, dropping into free space, and stink of fuel fire, and the steady rip of sirens in the air. The noise lay everywhere they ran, stratified sound collecting around them, and he walked away from it and into it at the same time. There was something else then, outside all this, not belonging to this, aloft. He watched it coming down. A shirt came down out of the high smoke…they ran and they stopped, some of them, standing there swaying… (p. 4)

The world described in the text is shown to be in a state of chaos and unnamed characters referred to as 'he' and 'they' make it difficult to decipher who is being spoken about. The tone and fragmentary narration that dominates the narrative counters the traditional sense of a linear plot in the conventional narrative. Thus events in the text are presented in a disjointed manner a feature that further qualifies the plot and the structure to be considered as a postmodernist one. As narration progresses, the text captures the tragic experiences of the characters. Hence a unique perspective is offered to the different forms of tragedy that pervades the lives of characters within the textual experience.

The beginning of the story presents an elaborate view on violence at the scene of the attacks. Through a disconnected alternating omniscient and second person narrative point of view, events are presented in a descriptive manner. Suspense is created due to the delayed information about the setting of events. The setting is later revealed to be the morning of the day of the attacks. This is presented in the text thus:

> … Debris coming down around them, and there were people taking shelter under cars. The roar was still in the air, the buckling rumble of the fall… This is the world now. Smoke and ash came rolling down streets and turning corners, busting around corners, seismic tides of smoke, with office paper flashing past, standard sheets

> with cutting edge, skimming, whipping past, otherworldly things in the morning pall (p.3).

The smoke ash in the streets with various objects flying in the air depicts a fragmented scene of violence that portrays chaos, and destruction. The scene describes an unpleasant and gloomy atmosphere that generates panic. Unnamed characters are also described in a state of panic, confusion and pain caused by the attacks. A disjointed experience of characters is elaborately described as:

> they ran and they stopped, some of them, standing there swaying, trying to draw breath out of the burning air, and the fitful cries of disbelief, curses and lost shouts, and the paper massed in the air, contracts, resumes blowing by, intact snatches of business, quick in the wind. He kept on walking. There were the runners who'd stopped and others veering into side streets. Some were walking backwards, looking into the core of it, all those writhing lives back there, and things kept falling, scorched objects trailing lines of fire. He saw two women sobbing in their reverse march, looking past him, both in running shorts, faces in collapse… standing with hands extended at roughly chest level, elbows bent (p. 3).

The cries of disbelief, curses, and shouts of victims amidst falling objects give a glaring picture of the effects of violence. The tone used in the description of events explain the hasty nature in which the narrator wants to present events and as such gives an idea about the horrific nature of events on the day of the said attacks.A fragmented use of concrete images such as "wreckage", "debris", "smashed", "cutting edge", "balls of blood", "smoke and ash", "rubble", "rumble", "glass in his face and hair", "dust and soot", "blood" dispersed in the text add beauty to the narration of the scene of violence. Terrorism emerges in the form of images that show violence and made manifest through the reshaping and representation of these images so that they appear unexpected, new… (Apitzch 2010:95). Apitzch's view on the way images are used in the novel underscores Dellilo's distinct way of capturing terrorism.

3.2.2 Metafictional portrayal of Violence

Through the violent scenes depicted in the novel, the past is known; a picture of what the attacks looks like on September 11, 2001comes to mind.An instance of the cruel scene is a glaring picture of:

> … fire rescue cars and ambulances; there were state police cruisers, flatbed trucks, vehicles with cherry pickers all moving through the barricades and into the shroud of sand and ash. …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 window all along the streets, in his hair and on his clothes (p.24).

The dead scattered at different locations with rescue officers at the terrorist scene tells the deadly nature of the violence. The images, setting and various narrative points of view are elements that draw the attention of readers to the construction of the text as a work of fiction. In this way, metafiction offers insight into the real world of the 9/11 occurrence, such that distinction cannot be made between fiction and real. This is in line with Waugh's (1984) view in her work, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* which points to postmodernist theory as an aesthetic practice when she emphasizes that: "… postmodernism begin with the view that both the historical world and work of art are organized and perceived through such structures or frames", but Waugh recognizes further that: "the distinction between 'framed' and 'unframed' cannot in the end be made" (p.28). By referring to frames in literary works, Waugh's view shows that 9/11 is experienced in *Falling Man* through discursive and narrative constructs that help to bring out the picture of violence. At the same time, it also shows the limit in which violence is replete in the text, a section of the 9/11 events much larger than represented mostly through characters narratives.

The accumulation of historical facts about Bill Lawton helps in the construction of the image of Bin Laden that is ultimately revealed in the novel. The delayed unraveling of Bin Laden's identity distorts the reader's knowledge about the character the text intends to portray. Eventually by the time a link between Bill Lawton and Bin Laden is created in the text, an image of a man is already established separate from his historical identity. Kauffman's (2008:371) explanation of the character of Bill Lawton/ Bin Laden portrays the use of the character as both a historical and fictional figures to an example of postmodern metafiction. Kauffman states the function of metafiction as thus: "this metafictional element distorts the narrative as a well-known figure to convey the sense that in this novel, all identities are either confused… or double… or merging… or failing or occasionally doing all these things simultaneously" (p. 371). The figure of 'Bill Lawton' and 'Bin Laden adds to the quality of the narrative, consequently creating a historical impression and contemporary knowledge of the past. It stresses the importance of bringing readers attention to the purpose the character serves in the text. The use of the character of Giorgio Morandi also brings to mind an existing historical figure, Giorgio Armani, a famous designer. Metafiction is created by the involvement of the above named historical figure in the text. The story draws from the life of Giorgio Armani to create a fictional Giorgio Morandi.

Finally, the image of the 'Falling Man', David Janiak represents the cryptic figure upon which all these discourses encroach. The text draws ideas from *Mao II* (1991), a novel by Don Dellilo to represent the figure of a Falling Man. In the novel, Bill Gray, his protagonist, a writer and a photographer discusses the autonomy of the image as a feature of a contemporary society. The use of metafiction is a way to draw ideas from previous writing to develop the storyline of the plot. In the text, Lianne explains how she saw the performance artist unexpectedly in many parts of the city. The following statement of hers captures the description of the 'Falling Man':

> He'd appeared several times last week, unannounced, in various parts of the city, suspended from one or another structure always upside down , wearing a suit, a tie and dress shoes. He brought it back, of course those stark moments in the burning tower when people fell or were forced to jump (p.33).

The manner of dressing of the 'Falling Man' brings Lianne's attention to the day of the terrorist events. The picture of victims dressed in shoes, suit and tie and falling upside down displays the manner in which the victims died. Another victim of the events, Isabel, Katie and Robert's mother, also expressed her view about this symbolic figure saying:

> A man was dangling there, above the street, upside down. He wore a business suit, one leg bent up, arms at his sides. A safety harness was barely visible, emerging from his trousers at the straighten leg fastened to the decorative rail of the viaduct (p. 33).

Similar to Lianne's description of the Falling Man, that of Isabel also depicts the victims of terror who are dressed in suit falling from the towers. The use of the symbolic figure of 'Falling Man' is necessary as it elicits feelings of terror, excitement and beauty at the same time. However, far from portraying these effects, Janiak also known as Falling Man in the text exudes suffering and fatigue, anonymity and disappointment. Historiographic metafiction depicted by the use of metaphor indicates that restaging the death of those who lost their lives makes the events a memorable one, a moment to reflect upon. He (Falling Man) is a replica of numerous falling men from the towers. The presentation of Falling man in the text proves that contemporary knowledge of the past is a product of fiction. Thus the description of Falling man becomes another story in the plot rather than a truthful and accurate record of the past. Leps (2010:197-8) opinion is in line with the above view. He states thus: "Janiak recreates a fictional stillness designed to give memory and provoke new modes of knowing. By remembering and repeating this performance, it calls for a different form of relating to the other". From the above

excerpt, it is evident that the use of this symbolic figure draws attention to the reality of the deaths at the twin towers.

The use of metaphor is another means by which the scene of violence is made visible in the text. The text employs the use of expressions such as “radio voices scratching at the wreckage” (p.3), to describe the effect of violence on those who are not present at the scene of the attacks. “Standard sheets with cutting edge” represents a metaphor for a large amount of money or valuable documents that are seen flying at the scene of violence. “Glass in his face and hair” describe the degree of damage on the victims. A combination of oxymoron, personification, and setting which varies from the burning towers in an unnamed street to “Marienstrasse” to “Nokomis” where the terrorists plan their activities to “The Hudson Corridor” where the attacks were carried out creates a pastiche on the narration of events. The pastiche of scenes depicts the mood of the environment in the aftermath of violence. Lianne’s description of the living room relies on personification to drive her point home. She express thus: “Today the living room was in the state of happy disarray” (p.7). The living room is personified and given human attributes, being in a pleasurable state and yet still in a state of confused impression and disorderliness. The happy and yet disarrayed mood of the living room contradicts each other.

Each chapter begins mostly with a disjointed second person and third person narrative points of view. The presentation of events in a fragmented manner creates a sense of being lost in the description of events. At the same time, the combination of both perspectives creates suspense that propels the continuous reading of the story. Terrorism is also weighed from the degree of violence encountered by each character. Lianne, former wife to Keith the protagonist evaluates the events based on the degree of injuries on Keith’s body. When Keith comes to Lianne’s house straight from the scene of the attacks, Lianne realizes the degree of harm caused by the attacks

when she compares Keith to a " gray soot head to toe, I don't know, like smoke, standing there, with blood on his face and clothes" (p. 8). The use of blood, soot and smoke are images that describe Keith as a victim of violence.

As events are being relayed from a fragmented narrative point of view that encompasses the omniscient, the first person, and the second person narrative point of view, the writer intercepts the flow of narration. By taking the form of a character to question the situation of events, the narration is interrupted. The writer through the second person narrative voice asks the question: "what's next? Don't you ask yourself? Not only next month. Years to come" (p. 9). The writer seems to ask what America expects of its citizens after such violent attacks. The use of metafiction in this instance allows the writer's presence to question the situation of events. Although the statement stands on its own, the writer speaks from the voice of one of the characters, Lianne, Keith's former wife. The writer replies himself stating thus: "Nothing is next. There is no next. This was next… this was next. The time to be afraid is when there's no reason to be afraid. Too late now" (p. 9). The above convey the disillusioned state of Americans, as life suddenly seem meaningless to them.Another form in which violence is presented in the text is by aggression between characters. Nina, Lianne's mother and a lover to Ridnour, becomes aggressive to her daughter first for her marriage to Keith and then due to her worries for her grandson. With a harsh tone, Nina blames her daughter Lianne for her marriage to Keith and refers to this as a huge mistake:

> marrying that man was a huge mistake, and you willed it, you went looking for it. You wanted to live a certain way, never mind the consequences. You wanted a certain thing and you thought Keith. What did I want? You thought Keith would get you there. What did I want? To feel dangerously alive. This was the quality you associated with your father (p. 10).

Nina also adds that: “I had strong objections building up over time” (p.10) about Lianne’s marriage to Keith. Lianne tries to resist this blame by objecting to her mother’s aggressive nature thus: “what you object to is very different. He’s not a scholar, not an artist. Doesn’t paint, doesn’t write poetry. If he did you’d overlook everything else” (p.10). Lianne statement proves that since Keith, Lianne’s former husband is neither a scholar nor an artist; Nina does not support their marriage. As the conversation ensues, it leads to arguments which make it difficult to decipher who is speaking from the other. At this point, the narration becomes fragmented. Narration becomes contradictory as the discussion between Lianne and her mother, Nina changes to the use of the first and second person narration of ‘I’ ‘me’ and ‘you’. The tone becomes more authoritative to emphasize that a character is actually blamed. The various plot and characters perspective about terrorism provides readers with various views about the events and also invite them to make judgment about the events.

3.2.3 A Pastiche of events

The text, *Falling Man*, presents violence beautifully not only by the use of various characters and narrative voices but also by the use of setting and the various forms of the media such as the television, telephone, radio and newspapers.The hospital scene presented in the novel is evident of the aftermaths of the terrorist events. Through the use of this setting, readers are presented with various victims that were affected as a result of the attacks. In addition, words and phrases such as ‘injury’. ‘hemorrhage’, ‘dehydration’, ‘blood flow to tissues’, ‘EKG’, ‘X rays’, ‘a tear or sprain’, ‘trauma center’(p. 12) dispersed in the story create an image of a hospital scene. Most of the description is brought out using the third person narrative view point, as ‘they’ is consistently used. Through this point of view the tone of narration changes to a reporting tone, as if recounting the events to an imaginary character. Pastiche is created by a combination of various

narrative tones, narrative style and setting. The various elements that make up the narration of events help in the composition of a post terrorist scene. A pastiche of scene is interwoven with a fragmented narrative. The abrupt switch in tone from a reporting to a descriptive tone and the change of scene from the hospital to Justin and his friends Katie and Robert generate a fragmented narration of events. The plot becomes disjointed due to lack of a chronological description of events.

These children, Justin, Katie and Lianne develop their own code of speaking about the violence that took place in the towers. The involvement of the children's perspective came to be revealed in the discussion between Lianne (Justin's mother) and Isabel (Katie and Robert's mother). Lianne gives a description of the terrorist thus: "he is tall, with cropped hair, and she thought he looked like army, like career military, still in shape and beginning to look seasoned, not in combat but in the pale rigors of this life, in separation perhaps. In living alone, being a father from a distance" (p.24). Lianne adds to the above description as she states: "… has a long beard. He wears a long robe; he flies jet planes and speaks thirteen languages but not English except to his wives. What else? He has the power to poison what we eat but only certain foods" (p.54). Using the characters of Lianne and Isabel, one comes to know the description of the terrorist, 'Bill Lawton', the man who creates violence in the novel. The metafictional figure of 'Bill Lawton' gives a picture of one of the terroristswho is referred to as 'man', and also alludes to the actual historic figure of the terrorist, 'Bin Laden'.

The media is used in the text as one of the means to convey terrorism. Newspaper as a form of media, introduces one of the perpetrators of the terrorist act. It is conceived in the statement made by Lianne thus: "she saw the face in the Newspaper, the man from Flight 11. Only one of the nineteen seemed to have a face at this point, staring out of the photo, taut, with hard eyes that

seemed too knowing to belong to a face of a driver's license" (p. 13). The metafictional description of one of figures of the terrorist described as 'one out of the nineteen' makes reference to the nineteen terrorist that blew up the World Trade Towers. The fictional portrayal of the historical figures of the terrorists is in line with Lyotard's view in "The Postmodern Condition". Lyotard explains truth as neither emphasized nor self contained and reality can only be found in the media or on the screen of which Baudrillard refer to as the philosophy of Simulation. The Newspaper is used in the text as one of the means of the media to refer to one of the terrorists responsible for the violence at the towers. The emphasis on the number of terrorists who carried out the violence proves that the attacks are carried out by a group and not individuals.

The television set is also another way by which events are represented. In an instance, Lianne is watching the news on the attacks but turns off the television set when Keith comes to her house. The violence at the towers is also recounted in the novel when Keith and Lianne are watching the television. This scene of the terrorist attacks is depicted in the novel as thus: "Then she kept watching. The second plane coming out of that ice blue sky, this was the footage that entered the body, that seemed to run beneath her skin, the fleeting sprint that carried lives and histories, theirs and hers, everyone's, into some other distance, out beyond the towers" (p.65). The events at the towers relayed on the screen make Lianne to identify with victims involved in the violence. It is through watching the attacks on the screen that makes Justin and his friends, Katie and Robert conscious of the attacks and develop the myth around 'Bill Lawton". Eugene A. another victim of terrorism says he heard about the attacks from the television, when his ex-wife called from Florida. "It was my ex-wife, he said, that I haven't talked to in like seventeen years,

… she says turn on TV" (p.49). Thus the television becomes an important medium used to describe events in the plot.

Another way of bringing out violence in the text is by the use of a fiction within a fiction, an unnamed novel in which Lianne edits. Through this means, readers consciousness are re-awakened to the day of the 9/11violence. As Lianne walked down the streets of her home, her thoughts wander through her family in relation to the attacks. Events continue in the unnamed novel that Lianne edits. It is represented as thus:

> The first cop told him to go to the checkpoint one block east of here and he did this and there were military police and troops in Humvees and a convoy of dump trucks and sanitation sweeper moving south through the parted sawhorse barriers. He showed proof of address with picture ID and the second cop told him to go to the next checkpoint, east of here, and he did this and saw a chain-link barrier stretching down the middle of Broadway, patrolled by gas masks. He told the cop at the checkpoint that he has a cat to feed… there were fire- rescue cars and ambulances, there were state police cruisers, flatbed trucks, vehicles with cherry pickers, all moving through the barricades and into the shroud of sand and ash…he showed the splint on his left arm… showed his wrist splint… The street and cars were surfaced in ash and there were garbage bags… everything was gray, it was limp and failed, storefronts behind corrugated steel shutters, a city somewhere else, under permanent siege, and a stink in the air that infiltrated the skin… the dead were everywhere, in the air, in the rubble, on rooftops nearby, in 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 (p. 47)

The scene of a post violence scenario is replete with many images such as 'sand and ash'; 'stink'; 'rubble' portrays an atmosphere of violence that results to death. Vehicles, houses and characters are said to be settled in ash. Parody as a technique is deployed in the manner the unnamed character in the novel reacts to the situation of events. By telling the cops about feeding his cats in the midst of a chaotic situation as this, mimicry is brought to the fore of the whole events. Shortly afterward, events are depicted in the present as the unnamed character becomes a

character in the text at the scene of the attacks. The unnamed character referred to in the first person pronoun as "I" is seen alongside Keith walking across the bridge to Brooklyn and heading towards Keith's house. The sudden switch in scene creates a fragmented narrative.

From the text, the reason for the creation of violence is emphasized by one of the characters, Martin Ridnour, Nina's lover. Ridnour explains the reason for 9/11 terrorism as caused by the anxiety and anticipation of the terrorists. The terrorists want to create fear in the minds of the people to draw attention to themselves and the issues they stand for. For Ridnour, the terrorist use innocent Americans at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as their target. He further points out that the terrorist used the twin towers as their target so as to show that Americans biggest economy can be susceptible to attacks and is capable of being destroyed. Ridnour explains the reason to commit violence and the choice of target by the terrorist as follows:

> It's sheer panic. They attack out of panic. This much, yes, it may be true. Because they think the world is a disease. This world, this society, ours. A disease that's spreading, he said. 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. They strike a blow on 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…this are matters of history. This is politics and economics. All the things that shape lives, millions of people, dispossessed, their lives, their consciousness. They use the language of religion, okay, but this is not what drives them. Panic, this is what drives them. (p. 69)

Terrorism in the novel is not localized or limited to certain regions in America. The terrorist do not have justified reasons to commit crime. Although the terrorist use the language of religion, it is the fear of American's dominance in its economy that drives them to commit crime which is expressed through bloodshed and extensive destruction of public facility. There is bloodshed both on the part of the victims, those at the tower on the day of the said attacks and the terrorists

themselves who are involved in carrying out the act. At the end of the narrative, the text did not indicate whether the terrorist are heard or not. Focus is mainly on the reasons for these attacks and characters perspective.

The last part of each section of the novel is composed of disjointed views of the terrorist and written using different subtitles. One of the subtitles named "On Marienstrasse" (p.77-83) introduces the character of Hammad, one of the terrorists and the activities of other terrorists. It is in Marienstrasse that the terrorists rent an apartment and where they (terrorists) all gather in the apartment to air their views about America. These terrorists as described in the text come from other countries to America in order to pursue technical education. They come to America under the umbrella of receiving education to commit violence. This setting as used in the novel enables the activities of the terrorist to be seen and also creates an avenue by which terrorists voice their view about committing violence. One of such reason for violence is expressed from the point of view of Hammad one of the terrorist. Through Hammad's point of view, readers come to know about the discussion of the various terrorists and the reason for carrying out the attacks as follows: "the talk was fire and light, the emotion contagious. They were in this country to pursue technical educations but in these rooms they spoke about the struggle. Everything here was twisted, hypocrite, the West corrupt of mind and body, determined to shiver Islam down to bread crumbs for birds" (p. 57). The manner in which the terrorists discussed shows hatred and anger for American's acknowledgement of false belief in which they (Americans) do not observe. One of the terrorist named Mohamed Mohamed el-Amir el- Sayed Atta spoke about the terrorist's: "feeling of lost history. They were too long in isolation…being crowded out by other cultures, other futures, the all-enfolding will of capital markets and foreign policies" (p. 58). From Amir's perspective due to changes in culture and economy, there is need to carry out

violence. This is the reason why the attacks are carried out on the towers, which is known to be the symbol of America's wealth and power and later becomes fantasies of destruction (p.56). The above reasons is what lead to panic as Martin, Nina's lover earlier point out, that the terrorists fear American's way of doing things will supersede theirs. In this way this part of the novel is specifically devoted to the terrorist to describe their preparation for the attacks.

Through Hammad's perspective, metafiction plays the role of analyzing events in the text from the world of the terrorists. One of the steps towards planning for the attacks is given as: "the men went to internet cafes and learned about flight schools in the United States. Nobody knocked down their door in the middle of the night and nobody stopped them in the street to turn their pockets inside out and grope their bodies for weapons. But they knew Islam was under attack" (p.171). The flight schools attended by the terrorists show the extent to which they prepare for the attacks. In another sense, they are fictional characters employed to make reference to the historical terrorists who blew up the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The above insight on the plans of the terrorists clearly explains the panic that Martin talks about as the reason for terrorism. As a way of preparing for the attacks, Hammad and other terrorists are trained on how to become terrorists 'In Nokomis' where: "they were shaped into men. They fired weapons and set off explosives; they received instruction in the highest Jihad, which is to make blood flow, their blood and that of others" (p.173). Being shaped into men shows that the terrorists are not only trained psychologically but physically. The portrait 'blood' and 'blood flow' create a violent scene of bloodshed and death.

The novel also clearly points out another measure taken to prepare for the attacks, that of keeping their beards. In several instances in the text, the terrorists are encouraged to grow beard (p. 117, 189). Martin states the reason for keeping beard as: "the beard helps bury the face… the

art of looking unkempt. Unkempt but deeply sensitive" (p. 56). As part of the preparation to carry out violence, in another part of the text named "Nokomis" (p.171-178) the activities of the terrorists are explored in a fragmented manner. Disjointed descriptions are given on the way the terrorist loss weight due to the preparation for the attacks. The text also point out that the terrorists gets their source of fund from money sent to them from outside the country. From Hammad's point of view it is revealed that Amir the leader of the terrorist group uses: "money wired from Dubai…he received some money wired to a Florida bank in his name, first and last, Mohamed Atta…" (p. 171). The money wired from different parts of the world is in most cases used for acquiring machineries for the training of the terrorists. The funds are also used to purchase weapons to be used for the attacks.

Consequently, when the terrorist carry out violence on the target, they do not consider the innocent lives that are to be lost. According to Amir, those who are victims of terrorism exist only to the degree that they fill the role we have designed for them; this is their function as others. In addition, those who will die have no claim to their lives outside the useful fact of their dying (p. 174). From Amir's statement, the victims of terrorism serve the purpose of passing a message across to their target, Americans and its governing system. This is the reason why they are referred to as others, because their role is that of paying the price for being heard. Amidst the view and perspectives of characters concerning the violence at the towers, the text continually depicts fragmented scenes on the day of the events. The disjointed narrative from various point of view of character emphasizes the incidents that take place on the day of the attacks.

The third section of the novel, "In the Hudson Corridor", shows the disjointed nature of the storyline. The disjointed nature is evident in the opening and closing of the novel in the midst of chaos. Hammad's death intersects with Keith's story about being in the towers at the time of the

events. This switch in narrative perspective is clearly an evidence of a fragmented plot line. The two narratives become almost indistinguishable from one another. Hammad's perspective concludes when he boards the plane as: "a bottle fell off the counter in the gallery… he fastened his seat belt" (p. 239). This is followed immediately by: "on the other side of the aisle, and he watched it rolled this way and that, a water bottle, empty, making an arc one way and rolling back the other, and he watched it spin more quickly and then skitter across the floor an instant before the aircraft struck the tower, heat, then fuel, then fire, and a blast wave …" (p. 239). The two bottles referred to in the gallery establish a re-reading of this particular event in the novel. Dellilo did not differentiate the two bottles in the two galleries: one is when Hammad boards the plane and the other inside the World Trade Center.

Thus *Falling Man* through the use of multiple characterization and setting, images, and metaphor depict violence as one of the major concerns that informs the potrayal of terrorism in the novel. The text is a disordered narrative with random interpretations, opinions and digression about the violence of 9/11.

3.3 Issues of infidelity, lack of trust, and failure in parental responsibility

Aside the issues of violence, other issues such as marital infidelity, parental irresponsibility are discussed in *Falling Man*. This perspective encompasses the lives of a separated couple Keith Neudecker and Lianne Glenn, an editor of text books, Justin, their son as well as Nina Bartos, Lianne's mother. The events of the terrorist attacks are used as a background to communicate the basic concerns of marital infidelity, failure in parental responsibility and suicide that exist in the text.

By the use of flashback technique, incidents which happen in the past, about the life of a family before the day of the attacks are recounted: "she sat thinking about this. Her mind drifted in and out of this, the early time, eight years ago, of the eventual extended grimness called their marriage" (p.7). The use of 'he' and 'she' ambiguously points to the fragmented nature of narration in the text. The flow of narration is interrupted and readers find it difficult to decipher who is speaking and who is being referred to. As events unfold, it becomes obvious that Lianne is the character referred to as 'she' and later referred to as "I" in the first person pronoun to speak about her failed marriage. Lianne sums up the reason for their separation as:

> She'd hear the soft heave of surf on the other side of the dunes, the thud and run, and this was the line of separation, the sound out there in the dark that marked an earthly pulse in the blood. She sat thinking about this… the early times, eight years ago, of the eventual extended grimness called their marriage (p. 9).

Keith and Lianne had been separated eight years before the attacks. Keith's extra-marital affair is the reason for their separation. When events come to the present, it is three days after the attacks.

The interspersing between the past and the present runs through the novel and brings about a break in the linearity of narration. Kauffman (2008) sums it up in a few words: "*Falling Man* portrays the contradictions between present and past; life and death; time and eternity. It records moreover the precise moment when these contradictions collide" (p.56). The discussions about the events in the novel move from the scene of the events to the past life of a family before the attacks, and later to the scene of the hospital and then to Justin and his two friends. The text does not establish a link between the past and the present and there is no connection between incidents in the sentences. Eventually Keith does not desist from his act of marital infidelity. He thinks of how he will tell Lianne about his extra marital affair with Florence even though it looks like their

relationship will turn out positive as a result of the situation of events. This is related in the novel thus:

> He would tell her about Florence… he would tell her it was not, in truth, the kind of relationship that people refer to when they use the word affair. It was not an affair. There was sex, yes, but not romance. There was emotion, yes, but generated by external conditions he could not control… he would say the time he had spent with Florence was already beginning to seem an aberration-that was the word (p. 80).

From Keith's thoughts, it is evident that he tries to defend himself from the issue of infidelity. By trying to make a distinction between sex, affair and romance, Keith concludes that he is not guilty to be labeled as having an extra marital affair.

As events about the life of Keith and his family unfold, the story about the scene of the attacks interrupts the flow of narration. The interruption of the narrative allows a fragmented view about the victims of the attacks to be brought to light. Amidst the description of events by various survivors in the novel, Lianne takes Keith to the hospital for treatment and it seems that Keith and Lianne will live together as husband and wife again. Events suddenly skew to the scene of the conversation between Lianne and Isabel, the mother of Katie and Robert.

Shortly afterwards, Keith leaves the hospital to Lianne's apartment where they (Keith and Lianne) sleep in the same house. The depiction of this scene create an impression that they would live together as they did before the attacks, but towards the end of the novel it does not turn out to be so. While certain characters engage in the description on how they got to know about the events, some are concerned about those who lost their lives while others like Keith and Lianne take advantage of the events as a way to make up their broken relationship. Thus *Falling Man* is a collection of fragmented narratives of various victims and survivors affected by the incidents of September 11, 2001.

Through the course of narration about 9/11, Lianne comes to terms with a tragic incident that occurred in her family. She recalls the violent suicide of her father, who shot himself when she was a little girl. The text gives reasons for the suicide as: "Jack Glenn, her father, did not want to submit to the long course of senile dementia" (p. 177). Lianne's father Glenn commits suicide because of his mental illness. Thus terrorism is used as a background to bring the immorality of suicide to the fore. In one of Lianne's discussions with her mother, Nina, about the terrorist incidents, the infidelity of Lianne's mother and Ridnour in their respective marriages is revealed. Nina is married to Jack Glenn, but keeps Ridnour who is also married as a lover for twenty years (p.92-3). The above scenario reveals Martin Ridnour as a German terrorist known as Ernst Hechinger. The historical character, Ernst Hechinger represents the fictional figure of Martin Ridnour in the text. Hechinger is one of the nineteen terrorists involved in the 9/11 attacks. The use of the historical character makes contemporary knowledge of the past a product of fiction.

Justin, Keith and Lianne's son, build his own fantasies about the events and goes into "his mood of somber opposition" (p.166). Justin's sudden change in mood and the manner of speaking in monosyllables results from the disturbed relationship between his parents. Consequently, keith and Lianne do not only fail to rebuild their relationship but are also incapable of protecting their son from the direct outcome of 9/11 and the unforeseen damage caused by the tensions in their marriage.

Despite characters' experiences and description of the terrorist incidents, Dellilo shows that life goes on, as characters return to their normal routine after the attacks. Justin drifts into his playful life as a teen, Keith soon realizes that the relationship he once had with his family cannot be restored. He therefore resolves to continue with his poker tournament. Lianne's sudden awareness of a post 9/11 environment to creates a parody effect. She seems to become conscious

of the present state of her life as compared to her pre-9/11 existence. Lianne resolves: “She was ready to be alone, in reliable calm, she and the kid, the way they were before the planes appeared that day, silver crossing blue” (p. 237). As for Keith, the realization of living in a post 9/11 America suddenly dawns on him. Dellilo makes mockery of Keith as all Keith wondered about, is that he is getting older, “whether he was born to be old” (p.128).

3.4 Religion and the Reactions of characters

Religion is a major issue discussed in Dellilo’s *Falling Man*. It is largely represented from the perspective of the victims of the terrorist attacks. Due to the attacks, various characters expressed complete loss of faith and detest the need for God’s existence. Characters are disenchanted by the attacks; every character takes a stand and substituted faith from various perspectives. When Lianne met some of the victims of the attacks, they: “wrote about people they knew who were in the towers, or nearby, and they wrote about God. How could God let this happen? Where was God when this happened?” (p. 53). Benny T, one of the victims was: “glad he was not a man of faith because he will lose it after this. I am closer to God than ever… this is the devil. This is hell, all that fire and pain. Never mind God” (p. 53). Benny T further questions whether the victims who survive the terrorist attacks are better than those whose lives are lost. He states: “what about the people God saved? Are they better people than the ones who died?” The above view expresses the characters believe in God’s word. Although they represent different religious perspectives, in one way or the other, though they are connected. The terrorist incident allows characters to meet with each other so that they can share their views about the attacks. The interconnectedness of character refers to the feature of intertextuality in postmodernist theory. Characters are connected at various stages, thereby creating a means by which the narrative is extended.

Another victim, Carmen G, "wanted to know whether everything that happens to us has to be part of God's plan. I am closer to God than ever, am close, will be closer, shall be closer" (p. 53). Eugene A confirms his belief in God as he states: "God knows things we don't know. Ashes and bones. That's what's left of God's plan" (p. 54). Florence one of the victims of the attacks and Kieth's lover expressed her believe in God and the universe:

> We're supposed to believe in God and then why don't we obey the laws of God's universe, which teach us how small we are and where we are all going to end up? … Those men who did this thing. They're anti everything we stand for. But they believe in God (p. 82).

The laws of God as Keith explains proves that man's life and existence is based on God's decision. Even though the terrorists carried out violence, it does not portray their lack of belief in God. For Omar, "if God let this happen, with the planes, then did God make me cut my finger when I was slicing bread this morning?" (p. 53). Omar's statement makes mockery of the idea of what God represents. Omar's comparison of a series of very serious events that claim the lives of many with that of the cut on his hand, creates a parody effect of the whole situation about God. Lianne concludes the conversation by saying:

> God says something happens, then it happens. I don't respect God no more, after this. We sit and listen and God tells us he doesn't… Religion makes people complaint. This is the purpose of religion, to turn people to a childlike state (p.48)

Lianne rejects the idea of religion and its doctrine on God's existence. Due to the terrorist events, Lianne detests the fact that God is all knowing. All the above views and opinion about religion and the various beliefs are portrayed at various points in the novel thereby complementing the overall goal of the narration. This style of presenting events allows the multiple doctrine and philosophy about religion that abound in the text to be visible. As expressed at various instances in the text, most of the victims believe God allowed the attacks on the towers to take place.

Others expressed their disillusionment over the attacks by blaming God. Another character Anna describes the event as something beyond description.

At some point in the text, Lianne is compelled to draw a distinction between science and God. As she state thus: "disbelieve was the line of travel that led to clarity of thought and purpose. Or was this simply another form of superstition? She wanted to trust in the forces and processes of the natural world, this only, perceptible reality and scientific endeavor, men and women alone on earth. She knew there was no conflict between science and God". Lianne is in doubt whether the cause of terrorism is linked to God or the forces of nature. Terrorism has brought the issue of faith and belief in God. Most times in the text, characters doubt God's law and its existence. Keith who was at the towers when the attacks occurred does not believe in God's existence. This is conceived in his statement as follows: "whose God? Which God? I don't even know what it means, to believe in God. I never think about it" (p. 44). Keith utters his total loss of faith in God and his ways because on the day of the attacks: "human voices crying to God and how awful to imagine this, God's name on the tongues of killers and victims both…" (p.65). Recalling the scenes of the attacks, Keith wonders why God's name will be used by both victims and terrorists. He therefore resolves in not believing in God's existence. Even though issues such as death, parental irresponsibility, adultery, suicide are discussed using various characters' standpoints about their faith and belief in God, the text does not in any way condone or endorse immorality. The various issues depicted in the text attest to the conflicting religious and moral perspectives of the survivors and terrorists of the attacks.

The various doubts about God and its existence due to terrorism make various characters to express their doubts of how America will look like after the attacks. Ridnour is not only in doubt of what becomes of America but also the name 'America' irritates him. This is conceived in his

statement to two of Nina's former colleagues. He state thus: "We're all sick of America and Americans. The subject nauseates us" (p.186). Martin further adds: "for all the careless power of this country, let me say this, for all the danger it makes in the world, America is going to become irrelevant… soon the day is coming when nobody has to think about America except for the danger it brings. It is losing its center" (p.186). Ridnour predicts danger in the trust of America by its citizens. For Ridnour, a day is coming when American citizens will lose hope in America and its ways. By the use of dramatic monologue, Ridnour is disillusioned and speaks to himself: "I don't know this America anymore. I don't recognize it" (p.187). From Ridnour's thoughts, the idea of America as a country ceases to exist.

In conclusion, the subjects of religion, violence/terrorism, infidelity, failed parental responsibility, suicide, and the meaning of life are relayed but never resolved in Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* (2007). Everyone in the story tries to move forward, to extract himself/ herself from the past. This proves to be an impossible task as the novel ends exactly where it begins, with the scene of the attacks and Keith wandering on the streets of New York. By the use of characters that encompass and represent the victims and terrorists' point of view, the foregrounding of events is made more relevant to the understanding of the tragedy.

Thus, in undertaking a postmodernist appraisal of the *Falling Man,* it shows that fiction allows writers the greatest opportunity to explore human experiences. It offers more opportunities for readers to understand the society better, including the writer's artistic creation. Dellilo's artistic creation of terrorism in *Falling Man* lies in the various forms in which issues such as violence, religion and infidelity, lack of trust, and failure in parental responsibility are presented. The potrayal of events goes beyond the textual features or language use. In the context of a tragic situation as 9/11, issues of moral choice need to be weighed from the perspectives and context of

both sides, those of terrorists and victims. This process has enabled Americans re-examine their lives after such tragic events and for readers to have more than a conventional understanding of the underlying reasons that inform terrorism. That is why the issues discussed in the text allow time for reconnection among characters. Although the text does not take sides with the victims and terrorists, however events depicted stressed at length the destruction such occurrences have on individuals' material and psychic state. Incorporating specific stylistic features of postmodernist theory and a variety of creative components to the narrative gives the text its own sense of substance and power. Thus readers can arrive at their own conclusions having been provided with diverse perspectives, propelled as it were, by a variety of characters.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 The Depiction of Terrorism in John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006)

4.1 An overview of John Updike's *Terrorist*

John Updike's *Terrorist* is a novel set a few years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001in the United States of America. Events in the novel take place in an imaginary town in New Jersey called New Prospect. The story centres on the protagonist Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, an eighteen year old Arab-American with an Irish-American mother whose father disappeared when he was three years old. After his graduation from High School, the Imam, Shaikh Rashid, mislead Ahmad to become a truck driver in order to carry out a terrorist attack at the Lincoln Tunnel. However, his high school guidance counselor, Jack Levy plays a vital role throughout the novel. He realizes towards the end of the novel that Ahmad is being misled and is able to persuade Ahmad to give up his plan of blowing up the tunnel. The story ends where Levy succeeds in convincing him to stop driving the truck that contains the explosives. There is little action in the plot as the writer concentrates more on the upheavals and decay in the society and its system of governance.

John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) revisits the attacks carried out on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon indirectly without explicitly mentioning them. Since the novel form is one of the means by which events can be represented, Updike's *Terrorist* in different ways deals with the situations evident in America at the time the novel was written. It is therefore appropriate to say that Updike's story is inspired by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in America and its aftermath and the effects of all this on America's middle class and what the society looks like for this class after the attacks.

The focus of this chapter is on how the text, *Terrorist* presents issues such as the threat of violence, religion and culture, as well as the degeneration of America in terms of its economy. Other concerns include housing, education, and the various forms by which these issues are portrayed as a way of indicting America and its system or ways. The issues discussed in many ways provide a platform for understanding the concept and occurrence of terrorism. Thus, this chapter explores how Americans experience a dissatisfied and dispirited life after the 9/11 incidents. A major focus of the text is to come to terms with why terrorists engage in violence. Postmodernist tools such as fragmentation, metafiction, collage, pastiche, parody have been deployed to evaluate the above concerns in the text. Events in the text are discussed by the use of distinct features like a shift in various narrative points of view, a yelling tone, irony, and descriptive language. A defining characteristic such as an italicized narrative form that expounds the inner voice and thoughts of characters demonstrate the writer's skill in the story. The above is evident of a postmodernist collage that yields in-depth information and materials about the depiction of terrorism in the text. In addition, readers' attention is captured by such features which enable the understanding of situations that seem less familiar or requires extra interpretive efforts.

4.2 Violence and the literary text

Literature has always mirrored the happenings in the society and how these events contribute either negatively or positively to society's growth. Consequently in adding his own quota to the dominant issues occurring in the society, Updike in the prose narrative text, *Terrorist* portrays how violence can go a long way in affecting a character's psyche. The text also depicts how such occurrences lead to the act of terrorism. One of the means by which the issue of violence is discussed is by the use of technology. The radio and television as used in the text, tell the rate at

which violence is threatened. Through these means, Haffenreffer, the secretary in the Department of Homeland Security, announces the alarming rate bywhich America is threatened by terrorism. At first, the threat level of terror is elevated from yellow to orange which means 'high' level of threat to specific areas (p. 43). The affected areas include Washington, New York, and Northern New Jersey (p.43). Unlike in Dellilo's *Falling Man* in which the attacks where actually carried out on the World Trade Towers, the focus on terrorism in *Terrorist* differs. In Updike's *Terrorist*, there is no actual event of the towers being blown up. Rather the text portrays the threat of such occurrences and the means by which such acts can be committed.

The terrorists in the text are referred to as: "the enemies of freedom" (p. 43) by Haffenreffer, the Secretary of Homeland Security Department. The targets of these terrorists are specific Eastern Metropolitan areas which are further stream-lined to places such as: "financial centers, sports arenas, bridges, tunnels, subways" (p.43). The text further depicts measures taken by the security department to prevent terrorist attacks. Some of such measures taken to prevent terrorism are listed as: "securing the perimeters of the buildings in the Eastern region from unauthorized cars and trucks especially in financial institutions; restrictions to affected underground parking; security personnel using identification badges and digital photos to keep track of people entering and exiting buildings; increased law-enforcement presence; and robust screening of vehicles, packages, and deliveries" (p.44-45). Yet the above measures do not totality prevent the terrorists from carrying out their plans to blow up the tunnel. As seen in the text, Ahmad, one of the terrorists almost succeeds in carrying out violence at the tunnel. His effort was terminated by Jack, his school guidance councellor and not because of the measures taken by the security department.

Despite the projected images that support the idea of protection from the Homeland Security Department, the text makes caricature of the security department. This parody is evident when Secretary, Haffenreffer makes some guileless statements, as if the terrorist threat has come out of nowhere. “Those people out there... Why do they want to do these horrible things? Why do they hate us?” (p. 48). The above question, “Why do they hate us?” is the same question president Bush raised in his address to a joint session of Congress following the 9/11 attacks. In Bush’s case, he answered the question himself: “They hate ... a democratically elected government. ... They hate our freedoms” (Address to a Joint Session of Congress Following 9/11 Attacks). The intertextual feature in the above instance enriches the portrayal of events in the text. The plot is enriched by the use of events from a historical document to comment on situation in the text. Thus readers consciousness is awaken to the past. While for Hermione, Beth’s sister, the reason for terrorism is because the terrorists hate the light (p.48). Towards the end of the story, Haffenreffer adds that they could be worst scenario of crime that can lead to violence. The secretary refers to this crime as Cyber war and Cyber attack, of which security computers can be hacked into by the terrorists (p135).

As events about violence are relayed at various points in the text, a fragmented description of the events of September 11, 2001 are constantly mentioned by characters. This creates a disjointed narration of the various views. Teresa Mulloy, Ahmad’s mother makes reference to the attacks to explain the reason behind disconnecting the phone in her house (p79). In another instance, the attacks are mentioned during the Imam’s speech at the graduation ceremony in Central High School. Jack recall to mind: “from the higher vantages in New Prospect, crowds gathered to see smoke pour from the two World Trade Towers and recede over Brooklyn, that clear day’s only

cloud" (p.115). The image of smoke in Jack's statement describes the burning towers after the terrorists' event.

In another instance, Adam Bronson, who attends the graduation ceremony in Central High School compares the issue of security in Barbados to that of New Prospect. He tells Jack Levy, the guidance councellor at Central High School that: "I could not at first believe when I came here…, the policemen in the halls and cafeteria. In Barbados we shared books falling apart…education was precious to us. We never dreamed of mischief. Here in this grand building you need guards as if in a jail…" (p.116).The increasing rate of terrorist threats in the United States explains the context of this development. Security agents are seen positioned at various points in New Prospect as a way to obstruct any plans of the terrorists.

The telephone is also used as another means to discuss terrorism and the threat of violence in the novel. Most of the conversations between Beth and her sister Hermione, who works at the security department, centres on the threat of violence. The measures also taken by terrorists to commit violence are also brought out through the telephone conversation between Keith and Lianne. One of such conversations tells how:

> Hundreds of container ships go in and out of American port every day, and nobody knows what's in a tenth of them. They could be bringing in atomic weapons labeled Argentinean cowhides or something. Brazilian coffee- who's sure its coffee? Or terrorist think of these huge tankers, not just the oil, but, say, liquid propane. That's how they ship propane, liquefied (p. 134).

It is evident that weapons are shipped into the country as a way to prepare for terrorism. Hermione concludes the phone call as she adds that with all these recent developments, and other terrorist incidents that take place a few years ago we can never be happy again- we Americans (p. 134). The above do not only refer to the current threat of violence but also make reference to

existing terrorist attacks outside America such as Madrid and Tokyo, Saks, Blooming dales. Alsothe shopping mall known as the Wanamaker's is one ofsuch places in America mentioned by Hermoine that was affected by terrorist attacks.

By the use of the local dailies such as, "The New Prospect Perspective" and "The New York Times" to comment about Bush's administration, readers are informed about a past event of violence which leads to murder. As portrayed in the text, the said murder takes place in Queens and East Orange (p. 18). Updike further caricatures and mimics the whole situation when he adds that: "…even children aged two or four or six, so young that struggling and crying out against their murderers, their parents, would seem to them blasphemy, as Isaac's resisting Abraham would have been blasphemy…" (p. 18).The mingling of historical facts about the happenings in Bush's administration with fiction refers to Historiographic Metafiction in postmodernist terms. This feature makes contemporary knowledge of the past a product of fiction; history becomes another story rather than a truthful and accurate record of the past. Thus, readers' consciousness is awaken on the hidden truth through a more accessible means, fiction.

Amidst recounting a deteriorating economic and educational system of America after the attacks, the narrator alternates the description of events to depict one of the ways in which terrorist prepare physically for the attacks. The immediate transitions between scenes create a fragmented perspective of events. Just as in Dellilo's *Falling Man* that constantly depicts the terrorists growing their beards as a way to prepare for terrorism, this is quite different in Updike's *Terrorist*. The terrorist in the text shaves his beard as a way to prepare for terrorist attacks so that his looks do not attract attention to himself. In the text the narrator parallels between his fictional character Ahmad and the 9/11 terrorist, Mohammad Atta, to make a comparison of both characters:

> He shaves his face, though he knows that debate rages over how God prefers to see men face to face. The Chehabs preferred him to shave, since bearded Muslims, even teen-agers, alarmed the kafir customers. Mohammed Atta had shaved, and most of the eighteen other inspired martyrs. The anniversary of their feat was last Saturday, and the enemy will have relaxed his defenses… (p. 285).

On the day Ahmad is to carry out the attack, he wakes up early and disguises himself as another character. Consequently, he shaves his beard to look different. Suddenly, the narrator adds that Mohammed Atta had shaved and most of the eighteen other inspired martyrs (p. 285). The above description points to Ahmad as a symbolic character, who does not only refer to the fictional terrorist in the story, but also alludes to the terrorist involved in the 9/11 attacks. Despite the little action in the plot, there is some kind of suspense towards the end of the novel. Readers are uncertain as to whether Ahmad will blow up the tunnel. Unlike the terrorists in *Falling Man* that target and blow up the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Ahmad is to carry out the terrorist act at the Lincoln Tunnel.

In the novel, *Terrorist,* history also serves as a means by which violence is portrayed in the text. A past event that leads to violence is represented by the comparison between George Bush and George Washington's administration. This comparison is made by Charlie, the son to the owner of Excellency Home Furnishings to Ahmad. Charlie tells Ahmad about the Commies in Bush's administration who brainwash the minds of individuals in the society to carry out terrorist attacks. According to Charlie: "they want to turn you into machines for consuming-the chicken-coop society" (p. 177). Charlie also narrates the revolution in New Jersey, New York that brought about disease and desertions in Washington's administration. He also tells Ahmad about Washington and his army and the war in America against the British. Charlie's comparison of Washington's administration and that of Bush point to the fact that America had experienced violent attacks and War long before the current state of terrorist events in America.At some point

during the narration, Ahmad tells Charlie: "this sounds cruel" but Charlie replies: "not really. War is cruel, but not the men who wage it necessarily. Washington was a gentleman. When the battle at Princeton was over, he stopped and complimented a wounded British soldier on what a gallant fight they had put up. In Philadelphia, he protected the Hessian prisoners from the pissed-off crowds, who would have killed them" (p.185). Charlie who is also a CIA agent under cover tells Ahmad all these as a way to dissuade him from carrying out the terrorist attack. Charlie tells Ahmad: "You, you are too young. You got all your life ahead of you" (p. 180). Charlie also gives an instance of an American who married a Pennsylvania Dutch to emphasize the idea of oneness irrespective of the country or society one may come from. For Charlie, the lesson drawn from Washington is that: "… he was a learner. He learned, for one thing, to get along with the New Englanders. From the standpoint of a Virginia planter, the New Englanders were a bunch of unkempt anarchists; they had blacks and red Indians in their ranks as if these guys were white men, just like they had them on their whaling ships" (p. 185). He also tells him all these as a means to draw Ahmad closer to him so that Ahmad can be used as a link to arrest other terrorists.

The use of Histriographic metafiction in the text makes history another storyline in the plot, rather than an accurate record of the past. Hence, readers consciousness is awaken on hidden truths about existing historical events. By drawing from the above historical incident, the text points to violence that leads to the death of thousands at that period. This style of portrayal is a postmodernist feature referred to as Historiographic Metafiction.

4.3 The Economic State of Americaand Terrorist Attacks

Terrorist (2006), being one of Updike's literary works, depicts the financial and economic hardship middle class Americans face and the effect that the aftermath of 9/11 has on them. As

much as the above concerns are depicted using characters that represent this class, they also serve as the reasons behind terrorism in the novel.

The text unveils a disjointed narration of events typical of the lives of characters as a process to make possible critique of a major moment of history. Through a random presentation of various setting and events in the storyline, an aura of ridicule surrounds what most of the characters say and think. One of the ways in which a critique about America and its ways is achieved in the text is by the use of the character of Beth, the protagonist's wife. Beth is described as lazy, possessing a lot of weight and engrossed to the popular shows on television. Beth's character is described in the novel as thus:

> The phone rings. Beth Levy struggles to extricate herself from her favorite chair, a rocker recliner called a La-Z-Boy, covered in a dull-brown vinyl imitating creased cowhide and equipped with a lever-operated padded leg rest, in which she has been sitting eating a plate of oatmeal-raisin cookies-low in calories compared with chocolate-chip or sandwich creams- while watching All My Children on WABC before switching channels to As the World Turns, on at two. She has often thought of putting a longer cord into the jack so she can carry the phone over to her chair and rest it on the floor (p 122-123).

The elaborate description of the nuances of Beth summarizes some of the basic concerns which the text deals with. Both Jack and Ahmad, the protagonists in *Terrorist* are said to share the same frustration about the situation of events. As depict in the text, Jacks dreams are described as: "sinister, soaked through with the misery of the world" (p. 18). While Ahmad constantly refers to Americans as: "it is headed for a terrible doom" (p. 39). The inauthenticity of the American educational system, the materialistic nature of modern American life and the meaninglessness of secular life in general forms the basis for some of the reasons why terrorism exist in the text. As narration progresses, the text captures a fragmented perspectives on the various ways in which

violence is threatened by the terrorist. The various measures offered to curtail the activities of the terrorist presents a unique perspective on the reasons for tragedy in the text.

A degenerating America is expressed through various characters' view in the microcosm of New Prospect. Right from the beginning of the novel, Updike penetratesAhmad's thoughts, giving glaring pictures of the degenerating American society in terms of its economy and materialistic tendencies. The protagonist, Ahmad conceives America in his thoughts thus: "*DEVILS*, Ahmad thinks. These devils seek to take away my God" (p. 2). The 'devils' as used by Ahmad is of American society as a whole and how it seeks to take away his conscience. The above statement is also emphasized at the end of the novel, as: "These Devils, Ahmad thinks, have taken away my God" (p. 304). The use of italics shows that these are Ahmad's thoughts and the sentence that follows explains the reason for his thoughts. The use of this fragmented narrative form provides readers with in-depth information about character's viewpoint in the post 9/11 world. Emphasis is on cogent issues in the society and how it affects characters world view. What follows these thoughts indicates the reason behind what Ahmad thinks. This is stated as follows:

> All day long, at Central High School, girls sway and sneer and expose their soft bodies and alluring hair. Their bare bellies, adorned with shinning navel studs and low-down purple tattoos, ask, what else is there to see? Boys strut and saunter along and look dead-eyed, indicating with their edgy killer gestures and careless scornful laughs that this world is all there is- a noisy varnished hall lined with metal lockers and having at its end a blank wall… so often it feels to be coming closer by millimeters (p. 2-3).

This quotation gives an insight of why Ahmad refers to the America as daring to take his God. The opening part of the novel offers a glimpse of the kind of society to expect in the novel. It portrays America's culture and its support for materialistic way of doing things. Ahmad

concludes further on this as he observes: “they are not on the straight path; they are unclean” (p.3). This is one of the events that build up Ahmad’s mind to commit terrorism.

At various instances in the text, characters express the decline in the state of America’s economy. This can be in terms of industrialization, consumption of goods, and finances. The text serves the purpose of criticizing the economic state of America which has declined. He therefore depicts the middle class Americans and how their lives are affected after the attacks due to the kind of economy ran by its system. Through a fragmented narrative divided into five sections using Roman numerals; ‘I’ (p. 2); ‘II’ (p. 49); ‘III’ (p. 122); ‘IV’ (p. 200); ‘V’ (p.264), Updike is able to draw the views of various characters that reflect the various strata of the American middle class. The first word in each of these sections or chapters is written in capital letters to show an act of yelling and introduces the tone of anxiety. This tone shows the seriousness of the message the writer passes across and at the same time accounts for the diverse point of view used in the text. The various jobs of these characters range from a guidance counselor, a nurse aide at a local hospital, a Librarian, furniture seller, a secretary and an assistant secretary in a security department.

One of the central criticisms in the text is America’s emphasis on consumerism and materialistic nature despite a decline in its economic status. Ahmad uses his mother as an example of such a situation. He perceives his mother (Teresa Mulloy) as someone who: “…flaunt her poverty, her everyday failure to blend into the middle class, as if such failure were intrinsic to the artistic life and the personal freedom so precious to infidel Americans” (p. 144). In addition, “all America wants of its citizens, your president has said, is for us to buy- to spend money we cannot afford and thus propel the economy forward for himself and other rich men” (p.73). There is no growth in the economic and industrial establishment yet Americans are materialistic in living their lives,

they seek worldly and secular things. The use of ‘us’ and ‘we’ in the statement above refer to American citizens.

What Ahmad despises the most about American society is its apparent lack of belief and its consumerism, its constant need to buy things. Virtually the main characters in the novel holds negative opinions of America’s constant need to buy things. Ahmad and Jack, in particular, condemn foods and other items that make people complacent, lazy, and apathetic. They also complain about: “an imperialist economic system rigged in favor of the rich…” (p. 81).This statement express hate for the kind of economy ran in the aftermath of 9/11 which gives preference to the rich against other classes in the society. With this decline in the state of the economy, America is “headed for a terrible doom” (p.39) as Ahmad predicts.

Voicing further on the reason for the retrogression of American’s economy, the use of the main character, Ahmad, gives a picture of what America has become. Ahmad elaborately blamed this reason as caused by:

> prolonged and bloody strikes; the economy never recovered the optimism that helped emigrants from Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East endure fourteen- hour days of strenuous, poisonous, deafening, monotonous labor. The factories drifted south and west, where labor was cheaper and easier to cow, and where iron ore and coke were closer to transport. Those who occupy the inner city now are brown, by and large, in its many shades. A remnant of fair-skinned but rarely Anglo-Saxon merchants find some small profit selling pizzas and chili and brightly packaged junk food and cigarettes and state- lottery tickets downtown… (p.11)

The state of America’s economy and the level to which it has worsened is relayed in the above reasons. As depict in the text, America was known to be a huge success in the industrial and economic sectors with so many productions such as “knitting mills, silk-dyeing plants, leather works, factories that produced locomotives and horseless carriages and cables to sustain great

bridges that were spanning the rivers and harbors of Mid- Atlantic region" (p. 11). But after the attacks, many Americans and non-Americans who contribute to the growth of America's economy lacked confidence in the recovery of its loss. Parody runs through the above view as a comparison is drawn between the current state of America's economy and what it used to be. They therefore took to cheap labour in factories and street hawking. Thus, Updike puts this up to readers to show that America is yet to recover from the loss suffered in the attacks of 9/11. Consequently, this is one of the reasons that motivate Ahmad to commit crime in the text.

Just as Ahmad blames his actions and motivations on witnessing a failed economy on protracted and continuous strikes, Jack Levy is of the view that: "the basic problem the way I see it is, society tries to be decent… we should all go back being Hunter-gatherers, with a hundred-percent employment rate, and a healthy amount of starvation" (p. 139). The Parodic effect creates mockery of America's materialistic nature. Americans live a false life despite the depreciating economic situation of the country. From the above statement, Jack Levy acknowledges the difficulty of survival yet America still strives to be materialistic. This can change when Americans are able to acknowledge: "… how bad off they are. They think they are doing pretty good, with some flashy-trashy new outfit they've bought at half-price, or the latest hyper-violent new computer game, or some hot new CD everybody has to have, …"(p. 140). Ahmad's view from the first pages of the text sums up the above, as he describes his high school teachers as: "full of lust and fear and infatuation with things that can be bought" (p. 3). The text therefore described a society which has stooped to living a false life. Irrespective of the declining economy, Americans still hold material possession in high regard.

In order to drive home his point about the decadence in America's economy, Updike employ the use of a symbolic character, Beth Levy, Jack's wife to represent America's consumerism and

excesses. The character, Beth Levy, is a fictional caricature of the United States of America's overconsumption, an allegory of gluttony. She is described in the novel as being lazy, always sitting on the la-Z-Y-boy chair and watching soap operas, almost unable to get up (p.129). Beth appears to be the reason for her husband's lack of success as well as his disappointed state. Certainly as indicated in the novel, Jack finds Beth "oppressively fat" and her presence oppressive in general (p. 37). The radio and television as used in the text, also serve a means used to represent America's materialistic way of life. This creates a parody effect, which is a characteristic tool of postmodern writers. Updike ridiculed what Beth says and thinks. Beth also symbolizes a critique on a number of popular culture topics, including Oprah Winfrey, a fashion TV series in the radio and television channels. Moreover, at the end of the novel, there is hope for a better life. Beth is engaged in self-improvement, and the possibility of self-regeneration.

4.3.1 Poor Housing and Crime

Apart from a degenerating economic state affecting American society, there is also a decline in its physical structures. The beautiful picture of New Prospect before the attacks depicted as: "the city was named New Prospect two centuries ago, for the grand view from the heights above the falls but also for its enthusiastically envisioned future. The river pouring through it, with its picturesque falls and churning rapids, would attract industry" (p.11). Against this backdrop, Jack Levy compares the dwindling state of houses, what it looks like before and after the September 11, 2001 scenario. The use of italics in most instances in the story creates awareness on the explicit thoughts of Jack Levy when he describes the state of American's habitation. Updike italicized his thought using a long sentence that indicates the words comes from the mind of the character. Levy's thoughts is represented as follows:

> Houses have compressed into housing, squeezed closer together by rising land costs and subdivision. Where within his memory back and side yards had once included flowering trees and vegetable gardens, clotheslines and swing sets, now a few scruffy bushes fight carbon dioxide and damp soil between concrete walls and asphalt parking spaces… The locust trees planted along the curbs, the wild ailanthus taken rapid root along the fences and house walls, the few horse-chestnut trees surviving from the era of ice wagons and coal trucks—all these trees, their buds and small new leaves showing as a silvery fur of fresh growth in the lamplight, stand in danger of being uprooted by the next push of street-widening…affordable housing units are dwindling in size like pieces of paper repeatedly folded (p.25).

The above is a clear overview of a post 9/11 environment where everything seems deserted and stagnant. Updike's characters constantly mimic the state of the post 9/11 environment. By so doing, the parody effect mimics the congested state of houses that even the bushes struggle to survive. There is no improvement even in the living condition of its citizens; especially the middle class Americans. The plot contains little action as the author prefers to concentrate on the depiction of the gloomy atmosphere in the city and the protagonists' feelings of misery and aimlessness. Even the description of houses and shops, are jumbled up together creates a disjointed narrative and shows the sterile nature of the environment inhabited by middle class Americans. Ahmad describes the location of the mosque as:

> The mosque, the humblest of the several in New Prospect, occupies the second floor above a nail salon and a check-cashing facility, in a row of small shops that includes a dusty-window pawn shop, a secondhand bookstore, a shoe-repair man and sandal-maker, a Chinese laundry down a little flight of steps, a pizza joint, and a grocery store specializing in Middle Eastern foods… for four or so blocks to the west, the so-called Arab section… tanners and dyes in old mills, stretches along this part of Main street (p. 101).

Through Ahmad's description of the Mosque, the location of other buildings is revealed in a dilapidated state. The above illustrates sterile surroundings where everyone thrives to survive in an environment which is not conducive. The use of long elaborate sentences demonstrates

Updike's craft in drawing attention to the instability of the society. This dilapidated building is what the terrorist take advantage of as an avenue to plan their activities. One of such building is located at number 292 Wilson Way. It is an old building surrounded with bushes and inhabited by a character named Karini alongside other terrorists who are said to be preparing to commit violence (p. 197-8). It is later revealed that money is smuggled to these terrorists in furnitures to acquire weapons to be used for the attacks.

At various points in the novel, Jack Levy's perceptions about the degenerating state of New Prospect coincides with that of Ahmad. The writer alternates between the first and the third person's point of view to explain the thoughts and feelings of characters in this class. This shift in perspective is said to evoke in postmodernist parlance the feature of fragmentation. It gives room to discern the various experiences of characters about America. Ahmad and other characters in the text are spoken about using the use of "he" and "she" in third person point of view. The author also presents the thoughts of Jack Levy, a Guidance Counselor at Central High School to express his view of a post 9/11 America thus:

> America is paved solid with fat and tar, a coast-to- coast tar baby where we're all stuck, Even our vaunted freedom is nothing to be proud of, with the Commies out of the running; it just makes it easier for terrorists to move about, renting airplanes and vans and setting up Web sites… those creeps who flew the planes into the World Trade Center had good technical educations. The ringleader had a German degree in city planning; they should have redesigned New Prospect (p.26).

Through the character of Jack Levy, ridicule is made about the deteriorated state of New Prospect. This refers to parody in postmodernist terms. In describing New Prospect, the text makes mockery of its setting which would look better only if it is planned by the leader of the terrorist attacks. The use of parody in the above quotation relates a lewd meaning in the current state of America and also establishes a relationship between past and the present events. This

switch from the thoughts to the voice of the characters erratically can be referred to in postmodernist terms as collage. It breaks the linearity of narration and allows multiple perspectives about the city of New Prospect.

To add more substance to the description of events, the building of Central High School is personified by giving it human attributes. The building is described similar to the human body as a building: "… rich in scars and crumbling asbestos, its leaded paint hard and shiny and its tall windows caged, sits on the edge of a wide lake of rubble that was once part of a downtown veined with trolley-car tracks (p. 10). The above post 9/11 setting does not convey a potential of regeneration. Just as the structure of the school is declining, so is its standard of teaching. The school's physical deterioration, from a place of learning to a virulent structure standing amid "rubble," symbolizes the larger failure in the educational system which has led people such as Ahmad to look elsewhere for assistance or inspiration. Ahmad finds such guidance in the Imam, Shaikh Rashid as someone who he can confide in. Consequently, Ahmad is convinced into committing violence, he explode the tunnel. The Imam makes Ahmad to understand that the more the infidels are left, "we only give them length of days that they make increase their sins and a shameful chastisement shall be their lot" (p. 77). Even though Ahmad wonders: "shouldn't God's purpose, as enunciated by the Prophet, be to convert the infidels? In any case, shouldn't he show them mercy, not gloat over their pain?" (p. 77) he does not ask the Imam. He keeps his thoughts to himself.

4.3.2 Poor Educational system and Bad Parentage

The Educational sector has also suffered decline in its contribution towards the upbringing of the child both in school and at home. Ahmad perceives the world around him especially that of Central High School as: "the high school and the world beyond it are full of nuzzling-blind

animals in a herd bumping against one another, looking for a scent that would comfort them" (p. 9). It is this decline that Jack Levy blames on bad parenting. He states thus: "kids like Ahmad need to have something they don't get from society any more. Society doesn't let them be innocent any more… kids have to make more decisions than they used to, because adults can't tell them what to do…" (p. 211). Since no one accepts responsibility for the kids, they take it upon themselves to be involved in various crimes as Mr. Habib Chehab rightly puts it: "a number of Ahmad's classmates back in Central High broke the law and were sentenced in juvenile court, for having drugs and breaking-and-entering… The worst of them thought of court and jail as part of normal life, holding no terrors; they were already reconciled to it" (p.152).

Joryleen is an example of a character that lacks both educational and parental guidance which result to her finding pleasure in immoral acts, such as prostitution and smoking. In the novel, she states her reasons for being Tylenol's girlfriend. For Joryleen, this is a way to prove his manhood as she rightly explains to Ahmad: "for a black man grown poor in New Prospect, having a woman to peddle around is no disgrace-it's a way to prove your manhood" (p. 231). Ahmad feels pity for Joryleen that is why he asks the Imam, Shaikh Rashid to give his compensation to her. For Ahmad, giving Joryleen his compensation will liberate her from a society that is "headed for a terrible doom" (p. 39). This compensation will buy Joryleen's freedom as a way of saving her from her immoral way of living. This incident points to one of the goal of Ahmad's desire to commit terror, to save himself from eternal condemnation and immorality.

Consequently the dwindling state in the educational sector prompts Jack Levy to elaborately express his opinion to Ahmad's mother, Teresa Mulloy (Terry), on the need for her role in educating her son. He expresses his opinion thus:

> All I'm saying is that kids like Ahmad need to have something they don't get from society anymore. Society doesn't let them be innocent any more. The crazy Arabs are right—hedonism, nihilism, that's all we offer... Kids have to make more decisions than they used to, because adults can't tell them what to do. We don't know what to do, we don't have the answers we used to; we just futz along, trying not to think. Nobody accepts responsibility, so the kids, some of the kids, take it on. Even at a dump like Central High, where the demographics are stacked against the whole school population, you see it—this wish to do right, to be good, to sign up for something—die Army, the marching band, the gang, the choir, the student council, the Boy Scouts even. The Boy Scout leader, the priests, all they want is to bugger the kids, it turns out, but the kids keep showing up, hoping for some guidance (p. 211–212).

The lack of responsibility on the part of parents to strengthen and direct their kids affect the children negatively. Since children are left to themselves, they do whatever they want to since 'noboby' care about them. If American culture will no longer "tell them what worth is" (p.212), kids like Ahmad will turn to something or someone that gives him attention. Ahmad is lonely and therefore shares his thoughts with no one; just himself and sometimes the Imam, that is why he is been misled into blowing up the Lincoln Tunnel of which eventually was not blown up. Ahmad regrets the amount of freedom and independence his mother allows him. She is not even concerned about his studies or his decision to become a truck driver after his graduation. In his view, parents should be more strict, they should make more resistance to their children. He concludes that this excessive freedom and independence is typically American, "lacking strong convictions and the courage and comfort they bring. ... The American way is to hate one's family and flee from it. Even the parents conspire in this, welcoming signs of independence from the child and laughing at disobedience" (p. 172-173). Teresa Mulloy does not seem to be very interested in her son's life either; Ahmad hardly speaks to his mother, since they barely see each other. The above scenario in the storyline emphasizes the resultant effects of the decline in the role of education in the society both by the school and parents which can be a reason for carrying

out terrorism. It is failure in parental responsibility that contributes to Ahmad's acceptance to carry out terrorism.

Ahmad expresses a deep disgust for the educational sector in America where teachers are paid to teach democratic and secular values by the government. He states thus: "they are paid to instill virtue and democratic values by the state government down in Trenton and that satanic government farther down, in Washington…" (p. 3). Ahmad does not speak like a teenager, but use strong vocabulary and exaggerated sentences. These characteristics help to portray him as a teenager with ample interest in what is happening around him. Although he possesses these qualities, his life appears to be empty, he does not care about personal hygiene, school is just a nuisance, and he has no friends.

4.4 Religion and Culture

The issue of terrorism is also brought out by the use of a teenager, Ahmad, who in the text constantly declares hate for America's way of doing things. The text demonstrates America as a composition of various cultures and religions. Explaining his choice of characters to Mudge in an interview for *Bookpage Magazine*, Updike reveals that; "the story featured characters whose ethnic, religious and cultural differences are clear-cut and irreconcilable" (p. 2). Characters in *Terrorist*is a composed of diverse religious milieu that evince a postmodern collage. This style allows the multiple views such as Lutheran, Islam, Judaism and Christianity to be visible in the text. Several characters depict the novel's composition of multiple cultural backgrounds. Jack Levy is a Jew (p. 16); Ahmad, an Arab (p. 11); Mr. Chehab, Lebanese American (p. 161); Teresa Mulloy, Ahmad's mother is an Irish American (p. 34); Connie Kim, Jack's colleague at Central High School is a Korean American (p. 211); Elizabeth Forgel is a German American (p. 22); the church congregation is mostly compose of African Americans. All characters represent different

parts or cultures of the middle class American society and are used to depict the fact that all religions and cultural background are valid.

In Updike's *Terrorist*, necessary information on the moral and spiritual paradigms of various religious and cultural traditions is provided by characters. This information is given at various points in the story and breaks the linearity of narration. Collage allows the multiple perspectives about various religious philosophy and doctrine to be seen in the text. The text describes the Lutherans as: "…a hearty Christen denomination keen on faith versus works" (p. 23), and give an elaborate description of the Christian way of worship (p. 50-3). From the omniscient third-person narrative point of view, Ahmad's, thoughts and feelings are described in detail. An example of such a narrative style applied in the novel is Ahmad's perception of women. He states his moral and spiritual paradigm that forbids Joryleen's way of dressing:

> There is an endearing self-confidence in how compactly her coacoabrown roundness fills her clothes, which today are patched and sequined jeans, worn pale where she sits, and a ribbed magenta Shorty top both lower and higher than it should be. ... Joryleen persists in still standing there, too near him. Her perfume cloys in his nostrils; the crease between her breasts bothers him (p. 6-7).

Joryleen is described as perfectly feminine, with curvy bodies, unblemished skin and tight clothes that accentuate their shapes. The above descriptions of Joryleen arouse forbidden feelings in Ahmad because of his religious convictions. The text is a critique of American's pop culture, from the pierced and tattooed high school students (p. 17) in fictional New Prospect, to the mind-numbing dialogue of soap operas and drivel offered up in commercials (p. 132).

Similarly, the writer uses Christian religious references as metaphors to embellish his style. The graduating students are informed that:

> Real life now commences, they are informed; the Eden of public education has swung shut its garden gate. A garden, Levy reflects, of route teaching dully ignored, of the vicious and ignorant dominating the timid and dutiful, but a garden nevertheless, a weedy patch of hopes, a rough and ill-tilted seedbed of what this nation wants itself to be (p. 113).

Jack levy makes reference to the Garden of Eden in the Bible to relate the situation of the society to the students during their graduation ceremony. In line with its references to various denominations, *Terrorist* represents a religious mosaic. The religious metaphor in the above passage functions as a guide to students on what life looks like outside the school environment. Although Jack Levy is not a strong believer in his religious faith, he used the religious metaphor for irreligious purposes. As revealed in the text, Jack levy a Jewish American, does not consider himself a religious man. "He was a Jew. But not a proud Jew, wrapped in the ancient covenant. ... Jack Levy took a stiff-necked pleasure in being one of Judaism's stiff-necked naysayers. He had encouraged the world to make "Jack" of "Jacob" and had argued against his son's circumcision ..." (p. 22-23). Jack does, however, often mention his Jewishness, which makes the reader suspect that he feels a stronger affinity with Jews than he is willing to admit. Jack and Beth love their son, Markie so much that they are disappointed when their son, for a reason they cannot figure out, does not want to live close to them and does not love them as they loved him (p.33). For Jack, this matter is not linked to religion, and through an internal monologue, he expresses:

> Religion meant nothing to him, and as they merged into a marred entity it meant less and less to her. Now he wonders if he had deprived her of something, however grotesque, and if her constant chapter and her overeating weren't compensatory. Being married to a stiff-necked Jew couldn't be easy (p. 29).

The Imam also gives his speech to students on the day of their graduation. Like Jack Levy, the Imam gives his speech based on his own religious orientation. During the Imam's speech

presentation, the scene changes to the events at the World Trade Towers. This immediate transition between scenes could be understood within the framework of fragmentation. The linearity of the Imam's address to the students is been distorted. Jack Levy recalls the incidents that occurred on the day of the attacks. "…many years ago managed the deaths of, among others, hundreds of commuters from northern New Jersey. From the higher vantages in New Prospect, crowds gathered to see smoke pour from the two World Trade Towers and recede over Brooklyn…" (p. 115). Through the use of flashback, the writer mentions the attacks. It shows the relationship between past and present events and at the same time disrupts the linearity of the narration of the activities of characters. The use of 'many years ago' in the above statement indicate that the novel is set years after the terrorist events.

According to Teresa Mulloy, Ahmad's mother, if it comes to religion, she has "dropped out of the Catholic package" at age sixteen (p.87). She says she has always treated her son as an equal. It does not really matter to her what his beliefs are, she would have supported him either way, as she explained to Jack:

> If Ahmad had gone the other way, if he had turned against the God racket all the way, the way I did, I would have let that happen, too. Religion to me is all a matter of attitude. It's saying yes to life. ... If Ahmad believes in God so much, let God take care of him (p. 93).

However, while she does not object to Ahmad's religious choices, he does not take hers very seriously either. She suspects the reason why Ahmad does not have a girlfriend has nothing to do with his religion, but rather with his sexual orientation. But for Ahmad, his reason is based on America's way of life and dressing which he sees as sinful and materialistic (p. 147). The text provide necessary information on cultural, social, and religious issues in America as factors that motivates the terrorist to commit crime, thus examining the challenges of the contemporary world.

In another instance, culture as reflected in Updike's *Terrorist* refers to America's way of life which Ahmad regards as materialistic and inappropriate. America's materialistic way of living propels Ahmad to agree to commit terrorism. He resolves to commit terrorism not only as a way of expressing hate for America's culture, but also as a way to cut himself out of America's culture which he sees as corrupt. Ahmad expressed displeasure about his mother's association with a Jew and Jack asks him to consider him as an American first: "Hey come on, we are Americans here… That's the idea: didn't they tell you that at Central High? Irish-American, African-American, Jewish Americans, there are even Arab Americans" (p. 297). The use of the above statement explains how Ahmad is dissuaded from committing violence. Jack convinces Ahmad that despite America's way of living, they share a common feature which is being Americans. Therefore by concluding the novel with this incident, Updike calls for tolerance, respect and understanding as a way to curb terrorism.

Just like Dellilo in *Falling Man* (2007) who used the Newspapers, television, telephone as a means to refer to the terrorist events, in Updike's *Terrorist*, the radio and television set is not just used to make reference to terrorism, but also a means to mimic America way of life. Through Ahmad's thoughts, the negative effects of the programs transmitted on the television set are described consequently: "infidels, they think safety lies in accumulation of the things of this world, and in the corrupting diversions of the television set. They are slaves to images, false ones of happiness and affluence" (p. 3). Ahmad points out that the programs aired on the television set tend to ruin good morals instead of educating and enlightening. Ahmad's perspective on religion and American's culture is summed up in the text when he tells Jack that:

> And because it has no God, it is obsessed with sex and luxury goods. Look at the television, Mr. Levy, how it's always using sex to sell you things you don't need. Look at the history the school teaches, pure colonialist. Look how Christianity committed

> genocide on the Native Americans and undermined Asia and Africa and now is coming after Islam, with everything in Washington run by Jews to keep themselves in Palestine"(p. 38).

Ahmad is affected by the dilapidating nature of the American society. Nobody believes in God's ways anymore but instead hide under the influence of religion as an excuse to commit evil. Since the God factor is no longer available, the protagonist bemoans the current state of affairs in the society. Also, sex has replaced the idea of a universal God. When Ahmad insists he does not like the American way of life and the variety of religious way of life, Jack tells him that: "a bright boy like you, in a diverse and tolerant society like this one, needs to confront a variety of viewpoints? …You believe this, I believe that, we all get along- that's the American way" (p. 38). It is the above view of America in which Ahmad conceives that makes Charlie to encourage Ahmad. Charlie tells Ahmad while they are in the truck that: "But to what end? As you say to consume consumer goods? To feed and clothe my body that will eventually become decrepit and worthless? That's a way to look at it. Life sucks and then you die" (p. 190). The above excerpt explains Ahmad's reasons for committing terror. For Charlie, these reasons are not worth expressing frustration that leads to bloodshed because life is: "a gift from God that he chose to give, and can choose to take away" (p. 191).

In conclusion, the events depicted in Updike's *Terrorist* show a mockery in many ways the state of America's economy, education, religion and culture which have progressively declined. As a way to indict America and its system, emphasis is made on America's consumerism and materialistic way of life which has contributed to the increasing rate of terror in the text. The threat of violence, combined with the projections of economic insecurity, created an environment of doubt and fear in the text. Updike created a vivid picture of characters like Jack Levy who lost his patience with America and its inhabitants who are desperately struggling with loneliness, shallow and materialistic needs.

A postmodernist evaluation of Updike's *Terrorist,* both in terms of thematic focus and literary technique, demonstrates that the text reflects an increasing preoccupation with global issues, from American imperialism to terrorism. Ashipe's (2007:9) view supports this claim, as he summarizes *Terrorist* thus: Updike's "fiction offers an exhaustive, an intimate chronicle of a life lived in post war America, one that richly records, and immortalizes the experience of being alive during the second half of the twentieth century" an indictment of America and its system. The novel implicitly utilizes 9/11, as the writer employs the incident as a backdrop to represent issues in the text. Hence, postmodernist featuressuch as historiographic metafiction, parody, fragmented perception of events, a collage of various scenes employed in the assessment of events; help to better appreciate the various forms in which terrorism is represented in the text. Terrorism is conversed using various means such as: the telephone, radio and television, newspaper, history to give insights of violence, setting, and images. Despite the various lapses in America's system and way of life, they is still hope that change will come and things will get better as shown in the fictional title of the town "New Prospect", which is the main spatial setting in the novel.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Conclusion

The study of Dellilo's *Falling Man* and John Updike's *Terrorist* demonstrates how contemporary American fiction can be studied meaningfully using the postmodernist theory. The analysis of these texts has revealed that both novelists have shown a consciousness for the need to portray the socio-historical realities of the contemporary American society. Quite profoundly, Dellilo and Updike have creatively managed the issues of cultural influences, violence, poor housing and crime, the economic state of America in their respective texts. Hence by deploying a selected number of postmodernist tools, this study has been able to unravel from *Falling Man* and *Terrorist*distinctive literary features employed in both prose narratives.These novels have shown thatpostmodernist framework has provided them with creative materials with which to portrayvarious concerns in America. The use of postmodernist tools such as fragmentation, metafiction, parody, pastiche, collage create room for meaning about the 9/11 event to be generated in the novels of Don Dellilo and John Updike. Each character has his/her own belief and perspectives about the happening in the society in the text. The various concerns in the text represent the postmodern period. Issues such as those of poor housing, and poor educational system show the disillusionment of characters which indicate that individuals (characters) are guided by divergent perspectives about the aftermaths of the attacks rather than a shared belief.

Given the dependence upon imagination, terrorism has served as a ready topic for fiction. Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* and John Updike's*Terrorist* fall under this new trend of which the events on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have been their focus. The events of September 11, 2001 are described by critics and scholars as the worst cases of terrorism in the history of America. With the power of imagination, the works of these writers under study have shown the

various conditions that give rise to terrorist groups. It also depicts the political and economic system in America that the terrorist oppose. These writers go a long way to present the thoughts of characters especially those of the terrorists to explain and criticize the reasons to commit crime. This manner of depictionproves that literature, in essence fiction is a viable medium used in telling about the incidents and happenings in the society.

Terrorism is a crime that encompasses fear, panic, bloodshed, and frustration, extensive destruction of lives and properties and even kidnapping. By the use of postmodernist fragmentation, these features are obtainable in Dellilo's *Falling Man* and Updike's *Terrorist*. Both prose narratives portray the features that make reference to the violence of September 11, 2001. *Falling Man* and *Terrorist* to an extent express the aim of the terrorist which is to create fear and panic to draw attention to themselves (the terrorists). Whereas at the end of both texts, it does not state whether the terrorists are heard or not rather a picture of the various reactions of characters to the events can be seen. The reactions of characters to the violent events are portrayed differently in both texts.

Falling Man presents events from the scene of the aftermaths of violence. By the use of postmodern collage,the story is told using various narrative voices, characters react in various ways by making a comparison between life before and after the violent attacks. While other characters like Ridnour, Nina's lover posits the reasons that could possibly lead to the attacks. In *Falling Man*, the target is the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the message is clear that the terrorists are attacking the economic heart of America. During the conversation with his lover, Lianne's mother, Nina Bartos, that takes place a few days after the towers fell, Martin argues that the attacks occurred because the terrorists resent western influence therefore, they strike a blow to this country's dominance to show how a great power can be vulnerable to attack.

Terrorist make do with the issue of terrorism by displaying the threat of terrorism. The reoccurrence of violence is threatened by the terrorists. Through a postmodernist pastiche of scenes depicted using the radio, television, newspaper, measures are taken by the security department known as Homeland Security Department to avert the activities of these terrorist to commit crime. Updike's protagonist, Ahmad, the terrorist, embrace terrorism as a way of freeing himself from America and its way of life but at the end of the story, it is important to note that no lasting change can be effected by committing crime. Ahmad is dissuaded from the act by Jack Levy, his school guidance counselor. The presentation of the above instance in the text proves that there is a relationship between literature and terrorism. The target in *Terrorist*is the Lincoln Tunnel and the message of the terrorists' points to the fact that it is a place mostly inhabited by infidels according to Shaikh Rashid. In this way, Dellilo and Updike's prose narratives are said to have historical and contemporary relevance. It is obvious that the happenings within the American society tend to shape their literature.

Despite the different ways used in both texts to portray crime, it can be inferred that *Falling Man* and *Terrorist* justify the reasons to commit crime as based on the state of American's economy and its way of life. The postmodernist framework presents the inconsistencies and contradiction of views due to violence. It gives meaning to the different interpretation of violence as perceived from various characters perspective. The repercussion of violence in both texts is beyond the immediate victims or targets of the terrorists. It is a way to draw attention to American's government. Literature contributes to drawing people's attention to Americans societal issues and challenges faced in the American society. Terrorism is neither random violence nor an insane act. The choice of targets also contributes to terrorism's message. Consequently, terrorists often direct their attention toward targets that are deeply resonant.

Most importantly, the treatment of terrorism in both prose narratives shows that violence is more than a mysterious menace used to terrify people in the society. Instead violence is portrayed as a way to learn from the positive or negative life lived by these terrorists, a way of telling readers about themselves, good or bad.

It is important to note what the targets of the terrorists represent. Events are presented in its disconnected state in time, setting and period with a lot of figurative languages and symbols. *Falling Man* presents events from the scene of the terrorists' attacks to incidents before the events and back to the scene of the events. This disconnected structure depicts a postmodernist fragmentation that creates expectation and as a way to derive meaning from the texts. These forms of terrorism represented in both texts allow terror to be seen and understood clearly. Terrorism in both texts is localized in the sense that the act of crime is limited to certain regions of America. The World Trade Center and the Pentagon in an unnamed street as portrayed in *Falling Man*. While the Lincoln tower in the city of New Prospect in *Terrorist*. For the terrorists, crime exhibited in the destruction of lives and properties is a tactic or strategy used to draw attention to themselves.

It is therefore obvious that the topic of terrorism and terrorist acts especially the bombings of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have received a considerable amount of attention in American literature which came to be known as Contemporary American literature. A portrayal of issues about terrorism and terrorist activities in literature proves an avenue where writers can express their disillusionment after the attacks. Thus Dellilo and Updike have successfully not only depicted a societal problem or issue but have also shown a critique on the society and its government to bring about change. Their portrayal of these issues suggest that, terrorism can mainly be avoided if the government work towards the right part of dedication to America with

good leadership, good educational system, well-paid jobs, adequate security system and if other poor societal issues are effectively tackled. Therefore on the basis of these findings in this research, this study advocates for the repositioning of the study of terrorism in literature. Dellilo's *Falling Man* and Updike's *Terrorist* are significant toolsthat not only draw awareness to crime within and outside our immediate society but for the general development of the citizenry and society at large. Hence going by the analysis of both texts using the postmodernist theoretical framework, it qualifies as models of the happenings in contemporary American society due to the fact that they explore certain sensitive concerns that characterize the contemporary American society; especially as it relates to issues of infidelity, lack of trust, and failure in parental responsibility, religion and the reactions of characters, the economic state of America, poor housing as reasons that promote crime, poor educational system and bad parentage.

In sum, the exploration of the literary works of Dellilo and Updike reveal how contemporary American novelists have variously drawn from postmodernist influences in order to come to terms with 9/11 terrorism and its aftermaths. Fiction is an ideal vehicle and postmodernist theory an ideal platform that provides substantial information about terrorist events with maximum exposure of terrorist activities.

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