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**New Cycle of Vision in the Recent American Novel**

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## **Falling Man Tropes and the New Cycle of Vision in the Recent American Novel**

Rodica Mihaila

On September 12, 2001, the *New York Times* and all the major newspapers across the United States ran the photograph of a man diving to his death from one of the TWC twin towers seconds after the terrorist attacks.<sup>1</sup> This memorable A.P. 'Falling Man' photograph taken by Richard Drew has been one of the most shocking and distressing documents of the human drama ignited by the 9/11 events. In his inspired 'reading' of the photo, Tom Junod writes:

[The man] departs from this earth like an arrow. Although he has not chosen his fate, he appears to have, in his last instants of life, embraced it. If he were not falling, he might very well be flying. He appears relaxed, hurtling through the air. He appears comfortable in the grip of unimaginable motion. He does not appear intimidated by gravity's divine suction or by what awaits him. The man in the picture [...] is perfectly vertical, and so is in accord with the lines of the buildings behind him. He splits them, bisects them. [... He] is the essential element in the creation of a new flag, a banner composed entirely of steel bars shining in the sun. Some people who look at the picture see stoicism, willpower, a portrait of resignation; others see something else—something discordant and therefore terrible: freedom. There is something almost rebellious in the man's posture, as though once faced with the inevitability of death, he decided to get on with it.<sup>2</sup>

There have been numberless other photos of the more than 200 people who jumped from the North tower during the one and a half hours before the tower finally collapsed,<sup>3</sup> but in contrast to the 'Falling Man' these so called 'jumpers'—to quote Junod again—'are made puny by the backdrop of the towers [...].Some of them are shirtless; their shoes fly off as they flail and fall; they look confused, as though trying to swim down the side of a mountain'.<sup>4</sup> In short, they seem to illustrate a

ghastly contemporary version of the 'Fall of Man', symbolic of the upcoming Age of Terror.

Falling Man himself was not so different from the 'jumpers'. As Drew admitted, only in one photo out of a sequence of twelve—in other words, for only a very brief fraction of time—the man fell in such a dignified, controlled manner. In the other eleven photos 'he fell like everyone else, like all the other jumpers trying to hold on to the life he was leaving, which is to say that he fell desperately,' which was the reason why, in the name of human dignity and decency, the photos of jumpers, including Falling Man, were withdrawn from print if the human figures were identifiable.<sup>5</sup>

America has always served as a perfect example of not only an 'imagined community', invented before it even was discovered, but also 'a visionary nation'<sup>6</sup> that perpetuated through cycles of vision the utopian impulse of building up a better world. These cyclic visions corresponding to major paradigm shifts in American consciousness and culture have been equally grounded in history and the belief in its reversibility (the inexhaustible hope in the infinite possibility of a new beginning) on the one hand, and in a messianic belief in America's moral mission, its 'manifest destiny', on the other. What makes the Falling Man photo unique in comparison with those of the other jumpers is its double symbolism. It can be viewed simultaneously as a modern version of the Fall of Man in the Age of Terror, the fall from grace, from the sense of security and prosperity symbolized by the WTC twin towers, and also as a prefiguration of a new cycle of vision made possible by the redeeming powers of the Falling Man's heroism and dignity, by his very humanity. This double symbolism has appealed both to reporters, who tried to identify the actual Falling Man in the famous picture, and, above all, to writers in search of ways to represent the Age of Terror and make sense of a reality that had outdone their imagination.

In his post-9/11 essay 'In the Ruins of the Future', Don DeLillo, who has long explored the waning impact of the novelist's voice compared to that of the terrorist in today's world, argues that in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, when there is no doubt that in the face of a reality which renders fiction totally irrelevant, 'the world narrative belongs to terrorists', the only thing a writer can do is 'to create the counternarrative'.<sup>7</sup> By 'the counternarrative' he means stories about 'people running for their lives' and 'stories of heroism and encounters with dread'—stories which 'take us beyond the hard numbers of dead

and missing and give us a glimpse of elevated being'.<sup>8</sup> In other words, stories which give a measure of our common humanity.

As I intend to argue here, despite—or rather because of—the threat of an 'Age of Terror' and the unprecedented erosion of the idea of American exceptionalism in the wake of the 9/11 catastrophic event, it is an ethical challenge, this humanism shaped by falling man/fall of man tropes, that distinguishes the voice of the recent American novel and substantiates a new cycle of vision, of rebirth and self-renewal, which, paradoxically, would perpetuate the idea of American exceptionalism into 'the ruins' of the (post)-apocalyptic future. Contemplating the boundary-line of the human, the novel maps out a space of transition from narratives of rupture and irreversibility of history to narratives of continuity, of salvation and redemption. For this space to exist at all, it has to be shaped by a utopian vision of ethical relations between us and them, between us and us.

To illustrate my point I have selected four novels that differ considerably in their use of narrative techniques and in their indebtedness to various literary traditions, from realism to post-postmodernism: Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007), John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006)—all of them being remarkable, even if tentative, endeavours to redeem the falling man/fall of man images and to transfigure the horror by placing the seemingly opposite binaries us/them into the larger universal context of an ethical relation between Self and Other<sup>9</sup>—an ethical vision which makes of both the self-destructiveness and the endurance of American exceptionalism subjects of intense scrutiny.

Foer's novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, which ends with a 15 page sequence of photo illustrations based on the photograph of a jumper by Lyle Owerko, filters the events of September 11 through the consciousness of Oskar Schell, an uncanny, smart and imaginative 9-year-old boy, whose father died in one of the WTC towers.<sup>10</sup> Like his alienated literary siblings, J.D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield, Gunter Grass's Oskar Matzerath and Kurt Vonnegut's Billy Pilgrim, Oskar, a trespasser of both the real and the surreal, lives within the self-created refuge of his prolific imagination, the only space where the apocalyptic events of 9/11, which defied all reason and understanding, can be represented and where persistent fear can be dealt with.

Oskar's fear is partly the result of what Bauman diagnoses as 'ignorance and uncertainty',<sup>11</sup> but even more so, of a relation between Self and Other short-circuited or rendered absurd and hysterical by the terrorist attacks. As he confesses: 'Even after a year [...] there was a lot of stuff that made me panicky, like [...] Arab people on the subway (even though I'm not racist), Arab people in restaurants and coffee shops and other public places'.<sup>12</sup>

The only antidote to the terrorism-induced fear that the falling man/fall of man trope represents seems to be what Emmanuel Levinas, in his ethical philosophy inspired by the Holocaust experience, calls 'the humanism of the Other'<sup>13</sup>—love, compassion, responsibility for the other and a deep need to connect, which gives Foer's book a special touch of humanity. After talking for the first time with one of his neighbours, a lonely and sad old man he has totally ignored, Oskar wonders: 'How could such a lonely person have been living so close to me my whole life? [...] If I had known, I would have gone up to keep him company. Or I would have made some jewelry for him. Or told him hilarious jokes. Or given him a private tambourine concert'.<sup>14</sup>

The last fifteen pages run backwards the image of the falling man in Owerko's 9/11 photograph until the man disappears up in the sky—which is Foer's way of reminding the reader of the manipulative, fabricated spectacle culture that produces such terror, the fall from grace, and of something that neither technology nor art can do—that is, give back life and safety. In a more optimistic version, the falling man trope marks here the beginning of the new cycle of humanistic vision: 'like an arrow moving backwards in time,' falling man may also indicate hope in a possible redemption, man's apotheosis in a future which, as DeLillo puts it, Americans always 'like to think that America invented'.<sup>15</sup>

The significance of that photograph in Foer's novel takes us directly to DeLillo's *Falling Man*, a novel about art's failure to provide even an approximation of the 9/11 cataclysmic human drama and one in which the very absence of Drew's 'falling man' photo is the book's central symbol. 'Falling Man' in DeLillo's novel turns out to be a performance artist dressed in a business suit, who appears at various New York locations in the weeks following 9/11, jumping from high places only to remain suspended upside down, in midair, caught by a safety harness. The reactions of the bystanders run the whole gamut from shock to indignation, to pity or confusion, while scholars try to decide whether to

call him 'Heartless Exhibitionist or Brave New Chronicler of the Age of Terror'.<sup>16</sup>

The relation between the performing artist's stunt and Drew's photograph is made explicit only at the end of the book, and even then, placed under question:

Was his [the artist's] position intended to reflect the body posture of a particular man who was photographed falling from the north tower of the World Trade Center, headfirst, arms at his sides, one leg bent, a man set forever in free fall against the looming background of the column panels in the tower?<sup>17</sup>

The actual photo exists only in the viewer's consciousness and as such it is turned by DeLillo into a 'fall of man' trope:

It hit her hard when she first saw it, the day after, in the newspaper. The man headlong, the towers behind him. The mass of the towers filled the frame of the picture. The man falling, the towers contiguous, she thought, behind him. The enormous soaring lines, the vertical column stripes. The man with blood on his shirt, she thought, or burn marks, and the effect of the columns behind him, the composition, she thought, darker stripes for the nearer tower, the north, lighter of the other, and the mass, the immensity of it, and the man set almost precisely between the rows of darker and lighter stripes. Headlong, free fall, she thought, and this picture burned a hole in her mind and heart, dear God, he was a falling angel and his beauty was horrific.<sup>18</sup>

DeLillo does not aim to document the terrorist attacks in his 9/11 novel for, life has obviously outdone the possibility of art to represent it, as he argued in 'In the Ruins of the Future'—'the narrative belongs to the terrorist'; at best, his book can be a 'counternarrative'. His story centres on a Manhattan middle-class family in the aftermath of the attacks. Keith Neudecker, a shocked survivor who manages to escape from the first tower inferno, returns in confusion to his son Justin and his wife Lianne, from whom he has been separated for more than a year, only to find out that communication between people has been short-circuited and the collective trauma has irremediably shattered everybody's lives.

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At the general level of American society, the fear, suspicion and resentment which the terrorist attacks infused into the process of othering, into the relation between Self and Other, between Us and Them, is seen as one of the most damaging long-term effects of the 9/11 attacks. The novel foregrounds disconnectedness as a syndrome of the new 'Age of Terror'. Nevertheless, even if disconnectedness imbues all aspects of the narrative, including the elliptical, jerky dialogues, it does not blur the novel's ethical imperative of knowing the other and of reaching out for the others. On the contrary, it is instrumental in transmitting it.

The end of the novel juxtaposes two ways of living one's life in the aftermath of 9/11. One, in estrangement from the others, as in the case of Keith who 'was self-sequestered, as always, but with a spatial measure now, one of air miles and cities, a dimension of literal distance between himself and others'—'self-sequestered' within his own fear and the routine of his secluded daily life; the other, by reaching out for the others, as in the case of Keith's wife, who would go to church not because she 'felt something godlike' but because 'Church brings us closer', because it gave her 'a sense of others' and 'others bring us closer'.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the book's title and its central symbol, and despite DeLillo's ample use of photographs in earlier books like *Mao II*, in *Falling Man*, as I have pointed out earlier, Drew's photograph is not reproduced, being mentioned only at the end of the book, when memory is proclaimed to be the only 'photosensitive surface'<sup>20</sup> which could render the horror of the event. In the long series of textualizations of the falling man photo—the performance artist's repeated shows, the flight of the hijacker to his target, the implied biblical reference in the description of the falling man photograph ('he was a falling angel, and his beauty was horrific'), and finally, Keith's identification with the falling man—the evidence provided by the original photograph is made totally meaningless, just as the replications of photo-stencils in Warhol's screenprints, to which DeLillo has already referred in *Mao II*, deprive the original image of meaning. The book ends with another replication of Drew's photo, in the version of Keith, the survivor: escaping from the towering inferno 'he saw a shirt come down out of the sky. He walked and saw it fall, arms waving like nothing in this life'.<sup>21</sup>

The Fall of Man becomes a question of ontological uncertainty and personal vision. Wondering who was the Falling Man in Drew's photo,

Lianne concludes that 'that nameless body coming down, this was hers to record and absorb'<sup>22</sup> or to put it differently, 'all we know of him becomes a measure of what we know of ourselves'.<sup>23</sup> The Self as a separate being is thus defined only in its relationship with the Other. DeLillo seems to quote directly from Levinas, for whom this face-to-face encounter with the Other, is above all, ethical. Acknowledging the limitations of art to cope with reality, the textualization of Drew's photo in DeLillo's novel parallels Levinas' definition of the face of the Other:

The way in which the other presents himself, exceeding the idea of the other in me, we here name the face [...] The face of the Other at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me, the idea existing in my own measure and to the measure of its ideatum—the adequate idea.<sup>24</sup>

In most post-9/11 American novels, as is the case in DeLillo's novel, the recognition of the face of the Other, that is, seeing ethically, lays the premise of a new cycle of vision for the redemption of humanity and the recovery of hope through love and responsibility for the Other.

An interesting racialized variation of the 'fall of man' trope which ushers in a new cycle of vision in multicultural America is offered by Updike's novel *Terrorist*, where the counternarrative belongs to a young would-be Arab-American terrorist. *Terrorist* is a political thriller which juxtaposes official discourse on terrorism and terrorists (a political plot involving the CIA and the Secretary and Undersecretary of Homeland Security) and a counternarrative beyond the simple 'us (Americans) vs. them (Arab terrorists)' binaries (the story of growing up a terrorist in multicultural America), which tries to approach the relation to otherness from an ethical perspective.

Updike explores post-9/11 America in a once prosperous New Jersey mill town that has fallen into decay. Once home to enthusiastic and hard working, mostly white immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, New Prospect has come to the point where 'those who occupy the inner city now are brown, by and large, in its many shades'.<sup>25</sup> The 'browning' of New Prospect lies at the core of the novel just as the 'browning' of 'America's complexion', as Bharati Mukerjee observes,<sup>26</sup> lies at the core of the country's predictable future. Obsessed by ideals of purity, eighteen year old Ahmad Mulloy, son of an Irish-American mother and an Egyptian father who deserted him when he was



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three, turns to Islam for love and guidance only to be turned into a terrorist programmed to drive a truck intended to blow up the Lincoln Tunnel in New York City. An Arab-American version of Holden Caulfield, Ahmad is an almost pathetic, Don Quixotic figure, a lonely young man craving purity, disgusted by the corrupt, faithless world in which he lives, and therefore easily manipulated by those who know how to take advantage of his confusion and bitterness. Updike places Ahmad under his novel's magnifying glass in an attempt to discover the source of the boy's alienation and the causes that made it possible for a homegrown American teenager to become a jihadist, ready to kill and get killed—'a hero for Allah'.<sup>27</sup>

Despite Ahmad's dehumanizing vision of the world that seemingly justifies the 'us vs. them' binary opposition and the representation of the terrorist as the evil other in the official rhetoric, by closely monitoring his progress, the novel humanizes Ahmad to the point of turning him into a victim. When eventually he gives up his terrorist plan, proving that his humanity prevailed over the fanaticism of his indoctrination, Jack Levy, his Jewish school counsellor tells him that '[he was] set up by a CIA operative in a sting operation of very dubious legality', which renders him even more pathetic, even more of a victim: 'You are a victim, Ahmad—a fall guy. I can't imagine the Department of Homeland Security wants the details out in the media, or hashed over in some courtroom'.<sup>28</sup> The deconstruction of the binary opposition continues when Ahmad learns that Charlie, the son of his Lebanese boss, was an undercover CIA agent who died for this country, tortured and beheaded by 'the other side'. It follows that not all Arabs are 'the enemies of freedom', as the Secretary for Homeland Security would put it; on the contrary, some prove to be real American patriots.<sup>29</sup> Or, in Levy's version of the official discourse on multiculturalism as the American identity of the new century, 'we're all Americans here. That's the idea, didn't they tell you that at Central High? Irish-Americans, African-Americans, Jewish-Americans; there are even Arab-Americans'.<sup>30</sup>

The book's symbolic ending juxtaposes ingeniously the old trust in America's promise and the inescapable reality of divided hearts and betrayed hopes that 9/11 left in its wake. Coming out of the Tunnel, a bitter Ahmad sees 'the silhouette, dead ahead, of the Empire State Building, once again the tallest building in New York City'.<sup>31</sup> But to his eyes, the Empire State Building, an enduring landmark of the American Dream, the symbol of the enduring American Empire, standing 'once

again the tallest building in New York City' despite the 9/11 attacks, or ironically, *because* of them, is only a 'silhouette, dead ahead'. The demystified America Ahmad discovers after his descent into the underworld of terrorism and secret operations is an Empire of Evil—the last sentence in the novel is: '*These devils, Ahmad thinks, have taken away my God*';<sup>32</sup> an Empire where even the fall from grace is racially marked. Even though vaguely and ambiguously, the 'falling man' tropes in DeLillo's and Foer's novels pointed to the reservoirs of hope in the myth of American exceptionalism—the idea of the American as a New Adam, a new man invested with the power of redemption and the chance of a new beginning. But in the case of Ahmad, the 'falling man' is deprived of all the heroic attributes of the American (New Adam) descent. He becomes 'the fall guy', and moreover, a 'scapegoat' to be blamed for whatever went wrong with the United States. The 'fall guy' trope, which destabilizes the 'myth' of multiculturalism as an American identity model for the twenty first century world, points to the self-destructiveness of American exceptionalism, to which the ethical vision provides the only antidote.

A special case in my inquiry into the dynamics of the falling man/fall of man tropes as indicative of the new cycle of ethical vision that offers a counternarrative of continuity and salvation against the evidence of exceptionalism's self-destructiveness is McCarthy's Pulitzer-winner *The Road*. A post-apocalyptic novel, described by some as a fable or a parable, by others as science fiction, *The Road* is also a critique of exceptionalism grounding Americans' unyielding trust in the future. Nature, 'the wilderness', 'the virgin land' have played a central role in the symbolic construction of America as 'Paradise Regained', and both in painting and in literature, the sublime of the American landscape has always reinforced the idea of 'manifest destiny'. McCarthy's book deconstructs the myth of exceptionalism by creating a vivid image of an American Waste Land in the wake of a presumably nuclear disaster which has destroyed all forms of life and civilization, except for some desperate, terrified, filthy and brutalized people, chased by wild gangs of bandits—all of them reduced to a subhuman condition by starvation, death, and loss. The fall of man seems irreversible. The myth of exceptionalism can no longer be taken as an unquestionable truth, but as long as the journey has not come to an end and the sense of purpose and mission endure, the myth survives as 'make-believe'—a sort of road map to another hoped-for New World.

Travelling south across the hostile landscape of this burnt, frozen and dark America, the unnamed protagonists of *The Road*, a father and his eleven-year-old son, born shortly after the disaster, are in search of a warmer climate and minimal indispensable conditions for survival. The motif of the journey as quest and initiation through experience that has served so well the cause of exceptionalism in the American novel is used now to produce opposite effects.

After the disfiguration of nature and the reconceptualization of wilderness, the reversal of the westward direction in the frontier myth is another subversion of the exceptionalist mythology. Father and son travel from North to South rather than from East to West (as did the pioneers who built America); they have left no home behind and there is no 'Promised Land' ahead. The road seems to stand for the end of the 'frontier', the ultimate frontier beyond which there is only death.

The father's obsessive concern is to protect his son, to provide food and clothing, to keep him warm, to teach him the lessons of survival, and to explain the meanings of words forged by a lost civilization that the boy never knew. For he himself is dying of a severe ash-induced respiratory condition and he knows it. From this standpoint the journey is not only an initiation through experience like so many others in the American novel, but also a Hemingway-like test of experience, with death as the ultimate challenge, where accepting the test with dignity gives the measure of one's humanity. And just as a spark of human dignity still lingers on in the relationship between father and son, the sense of mission and the purposefulness that traditionally account for much of the coherence and endurance of the myth of exceptionalism are not totally lost either. At various times during the journey, father and son speak about 'carrying the fire'—a mission, a reason to keep going:

We're going to be okay, aren't we, Papa?  
Yes. We are.  
And nothing bad is going to happen to us  
That's right.  
Because we're carrying the fire.  
Yes. Because we're carrying the fire.<sup>33</sup>

The phrase is repeated all throughout the book, standing for the power coming from the sense of mission, of 'manifest destiny', that distinguishes the 'good' guys, who carry the 'fire' of humanity, from the 'bad' guys, who lost all human distinction:

We wouldn't ever eat anybody, would we?  
No. Of course not.  
Even if we were starving?  
We're starving now.  
You said we weren't.  
I said we weren't dying. I didn't say we weren't starving.  
But we wouldn't.  
No. We wouldn't.  
No matter what.  
No. No matter what.  
Because we are the good guys.  
Yes.  
And we're carrying the fire.  
And we're carrying the fire. Yes.  
Okay.<sup>34</sup>

The meaning of 'fire' is revealed only at the time of the father's death:

It's all right. This has been a long time coming. Now it's here. Keep going south. Do everything the way we did it.  
You are going to be okay, Papa. You have to.  
No, I'm not. Keep the gun with you at all times. You need to find the good guys but you can't take any chances. No chances. Do you hear?  
I want to be with you.  
You can't.  
Please.  
You can't. You have to carry the fire.  
I don't know how to.  
Yes you do.  
Is it real? The fire?  
Yes it is.  
Where is it? I don't know where it is.  
Yes you do. It's inside you. It was always there. I can see it.<sup>35</sup>

The mission takes on clear religious connotations; the son is the chosen one. He is invested with the messianic role of the redeemer. The father's last wish is to see his son accomplish the mission, which seems an impossible task, as he dies before the boy meets the 'good guys' who help him continue his journey.

Far from being lost on mankind, the puritan rhetoric of exceptionalism is rephrased in post-apocalyptic terms, with God's realm in the Manichean dualism threatened by the viciousness of the 'bad guys', with the wilderness transformed into a Waste Land and with the commitment of the people chosen by God to accomplish the 'errand into the wilderness' and build the 'City upon the Hill' distilled into the innocence of an eleven-year-old boy who 'carries the fire' inside him. The messianic role of America as the 'redeemer nation' lives on in the symbol of the boy.

Even hope, an essential element in the making of any positive vision of the future, though seemingly lost, is restored at the end of the novel by the recovery of the missing female principle. The boy, whose mother committed suicide shortly after the cataclysm, when her son was barely born, is able to continue his journey and he may hopefully accomplish 'the mission' when a woman who has lost her own son takes up the role of the boy's missing mother:

The woman when she saw him put her arms around him and held him. Oh, she said, I am so glad to see you. She would talk to him sometimes about God. He tried to talk to God but the best thing was to talk to his father and he did talk to him and he didn't forget. The woman said that was all right. She said that the breath of God was his breath yet though it pass from man to man through all of time (R, 286).<sup>36</sup>

Undoubtedly, *The Road* expresses a strong sense of an ending—the ending of our civilization as we knew it at the dawn of the twenty first century—but, at the same time, it teaches the lesson of endurance, which perpetuates the idea of American exceptionalism and projects it far into the future of a post-apocalyptic world.

Despite their many differences, the novels I have discussed present a version of America that is marked in various degrees by the 'age of terror', but they strive to restore hope in the possibility of action and human solidarity, to keep humanity alive in each one of us. The ethical challenge at the core of what seems to be a new impulse in the recent American novel, away from the postmodernist logic of non-agency, non-history and derivativeness, turns into a promise to revitalize the novel with additional significance and universal value.

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## Notes

- 1 See the 'Falling Man' photo taken by Richard Drew at 9:41:15 a.m. on 9/11/2001 at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Falling\\_Man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Falling_Man) [accessed 3 March 2010].
- 2 Tom Junod, 'The Falling Man', *Esquire* (September 8, 2009/September 11, 2003): [http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ0903-SEP\\_FALLINGMAN](http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ0903-SEP_FALLINGMAN) [accessed 3 March 2010].
- 3 See a compilation of photos of jumpers at: [http://americandigest.org/mt-archives/9\\_11\\_jumpers.jpg](http://americandigest.org/mt-archives/9_11_jumpers.jpg) [accessed 4 September 2010].
- 4 Junod, 'The Falling Man'.
- 5 Junod, 'The Falling Man'.
- 6 Zachary Karabell, *A Visionary Nation* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001).
- 7 Don DeLillo, 'In the Ruins of the Future', *The Guardian* (December 22, 2001) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2001/dec/22/fiction.dondelillo> [accessed 3 March 2010].
- 8 DeLillo, 'In the Ruins of the Future'.
- 9 Some of my comments on Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, DeLillo's *Falling Man* and McCarthy's *The Road* previously

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- appeared in my articles 'The Falling Man of the 9/11 Novel', in *University of Bucharest Review: A Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 10:1 (2009), 21-25 and 'Strategies of Endurance: The Myth of American Exceptionalism', *University of Bucharest Review: A Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 11:1 (2010), 45-50.
- 10 The 2001 Polaris photograph by Lyle Owerko, on which the fifteen photo illustrations in the coda of the novel are based, can be accessed at <http://www.owerko.com/index.php#mi=2&pt=1&pi=10000&s=0&p=0&a=1&at=0> [accessed 4 September 2010].
  - 11 Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Fear* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p. 2.
  - 12 Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), p. 36..
  - 13 Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).
  - 14 Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, p. 163.
  - 15 DeLillo, 'In the Ruins of the Future'.
  - 16 Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (New York: Scribner, 2007), p. 220.
  - 17 DeLillo, *Falling Man*, p. 221.
  - 18 DeLillo, *Falling Man*, pp. 221-22.
  - 19 DeLillo, *Falling Man*, pp. 212, 233.
  - 20 DeLillo, *Falling Man*, p. 223.
  - 21 DeLillo, *Falling Man*, p. 246.
  - 22 DeLillo, *Falling Man*, p. 223.
  - 23 Junod, 'The Falling Man'.
  - 24 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), pp. 50-51.
  - 25 John Updike, *Terrorist* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 12.
  - 26 Bharati Mukherjee, 'Beyond Multiculturalism: Surviving the Nineties', in *MultiAmerica: Essays on Cultural Wars and Cultural Peace*, ed. Ishmael Reed (London: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 457.
  - 27 Updike, *Terrorist*, p. 250.
  - 28 Updike, *Terrorist*, p. 309
  - 29 Updike, *Terrorist*, pp. 43, 291.
  - 30 Updike, *Terrorist*, p. 301.
  - 31 Updike, *Terrorist*, p. 307.
  - 32 Updike, *Terrorist*, p. 310.
  - 33 Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (New York: Vintage, 2006), p. 83.
  - 34 McCarthy, *The Road*, pp. 128-29.
  - 35 McCarthy, *The Road*, pp. 278-79.
  - 36 McCarthy, *The Road*, p. 286.