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COACTION OF FACT AND FICTION IN DON DELILLO'S FALLING MAN: A NEW HISTORICIST READING

□ K. Abarna Sri Preethi*
Dr. S. Saira Banu**

ABSTRACT

Since the colossal 9/11 attack on America, or humanity in general, several alternative narratives concerned with the attack and the aftermath has become part of the literary discourse. The evolution of these narratives is based on the conspiracy theories revolving around the cause of the attack. Literary writers intending to sensitize the readers with critical perspectives, made use of the factional plot to weave fictional narratives. Hence a new historicist reading of 9/11 fiction is significant because of the coaction of fact and fiction in plotting the attack. Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* is one such novel which uses the narrative of the attack to juxtapose the perspectives of an imaginary terrorist, who is portrayed as one among the 19 hijackers and a survivor. Delillo's narrative presents a blend of American point of view through Keith, the survivor and also makes an attempt to describe the terrorist world from the perspective of Hammad, the imaginary terrorist. This research paper intends to situate the fictional elements in the narrative and explores the possible counter-narratives related to the plotting of the attack. Further, this article attempts to trace the significance of literature in recording such episodes and its pertinence to comprehend crucial historical moments.

Keywords: Coaction of fact and fiction, 9/11 attack, counter-narratives, historical moments, literary discourses, terrorism.

September 11, 2001, is a day which was responsible for setting an alarm on the war against terrorism. Since then till 2019 history has witnessed invasions and wars. It is heartening to see people vocalizing the call for saying no to war. The terrible pictures from war fronts which ran deep into the obscure soils of history were responsible for such far cries calling for peace. On the day of the attack, several visuals and pictures made the headlines and top stories of the media. The picture of a falling man photographed by Richard Drew was seen as a symbol of the ill effects of terror and war. Don DeLillo's novel of the same title *Falling Man* focuses on the people related

to the attack and analyses their life after the attack. This novel, in general, has judiciously blended fact and fiction to weave a counter-narrative of the 9/11 attack.

The official commission report by the federal government on the 9/11 attack (4) records that four domestic aircrafts belonging to American Airlines and United Airlines were hijacked by 19 young Al Qaeda terrorists. Two of which crashed into the north and south towers of the World Trade Centre, another flight crashed into the Pentagon, headquarters of the U.S Department of Defense at Virginia. The fourth flight crashed into a field in

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