

**Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**University of Abou Bekr Belkaid**



**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English**

**Trauma Narrative and Stylistic study in**  
**Don DeLillo's Falling man and Leila Aboulela's Minaret**

A dissertation submitted in candidacy for the degree of Doctorate in English Literature  
(Language and Literature)

**Presented by:**

Lahrech Lamia

**Supervised by:**

Pr. Serir-Mortad Ilhem

**Members of the jury:**

Dr. Mohadjer Noureddine	MCA	Tlemcen	President
Pr. Serir Ilhem	Professor	Tlemcen	Supervisor
Pr. Brakni Dalila	Professor	Blida	Examiner
Dr. Benadla Djamal	MCA	Saida	Examiner
Dr. Mouro Wassila	MCA	Tlemcen	Examiner
Dr. Dib Mohammed	MCA	Mascara	Examiner

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is strictly the result of my personal work and investigation and that due references and acknowledgment are made whenever necessary to the work of other researchers.

## Acknowledgments

My first and foremost gratitude is to my supervisor, Pr Ilhem Serir, for her unbreakable patience, her continuous support, wise supervision and insightful guidance. I am deeply thankful for her academic expertise, optimism and faith in my skills. I owe her my profound admiration and respect.

I am also sincerely thankful to all my teachers in the doctoral program who have been inspirational and a source of learning for me. Also, I am grateful and appreciative to the member of the jury who have taken the task to examine my work, special thanks to Dr. Mohadjer , Dr. Morro, Dr. Dib, Dr. Benadla, and finally Pr. Brakni who have been my teacher for 5 years, master supervisor and a continuous source of inspiration.

I would also like to take the opportunity to specially thank and acknowledge Abou Bekr Belkaid University for having welcomed me within its community of young researchers and giving me the opportunity to pursue my dreams of taking the path toward a doctoral research degree.

Finally, my gratefulness to my loved ones and family for their support as well as faith they had in me throughout the years of my research.

## Abstract

In the last thirty years, trauma studies have experienced a booming interest and representation among several fields, with most prominent of these being found in the literary field. Representation of trauma experience has become a main topic in many writings. Novelists such as Don DeLillo and Leila Aboulela used their characters' struggles to illustrate how trauma can be experienced and addressed in the fictional world. Both novels "Minaret" (2005) by Leila Aboulela and "Falling Man" (2007) by Don DeLillo have been used as an example to explore traumatic experience at an individual level, how it can be read, expressed, acted out and perhaps worked through. The present research aims to showcase how the representation of trauma in literature is undertaken not only in American novel but also African one. Drawing on the traditional trauma theory and stylistic, this thesis reads through psychic trauma fiction and investigates any irregularities in the trauma experience and the language used between the two culturally different novels.

By the end of this analysis, we come to a conclusion that even if traditional trauma theory gives insight to the trauma experience, it lacks more means to a complete understanding of the individual trauma in different context.

**Keywords:** Trauma Theory, Stylistic, Minaret, Leila Aboulela, Falling Man, Don DeLillo.

## List of Tables

## **Tables for “Falling Man” Don DeLillo Chapter 2**

Table 1: List 1 Adjective Frequency 1.....	127
Table 2 : List 1 Adjective Frequency 1.....	128
Table 3 : List 2 Adjective Frequency 2.....	129
Table 4 : List 3 Adjective Frequency 3.....	130
Table 5 : List 4 Adjective Frequency 4.....	130
Table 6 : List 5 Adjective Frequency 5.....	131
Table 7 : List 6 Adjective Frequency 6.....	131
Table 8 : List 7 Adjective Frequency 7.....	131
Table 9 : List 8 Adjective Frequency 8.....	131
Table 10 : List other Adjective Frequency 9 and more.....	132

## **Tables for “Minaret” Leila Aboulela Chapter 3**

Table 1: List 1 Adjective Frequency 1.....	182
Table 2: List 1 Adjective Frequency 1.....	183
Table 3: List 2 Adjective Frequency 2.....	184

Table 4 : List 3 Adjective Frequency 3.....	185
Table 5 : List 4 Adjective Frequency 4.....	185
Table 6: List 5 Adjective Frequency 5.....	185
Table 7 : List 6 Adjective Frequency 6.....	186
Table 8 : List Other Adjective Frequency 7 and more.....	186

## Table of Content

<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Content.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Introduction: .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Background of the Study: .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
Statement of the Problem.....	15
Objectives of the Study .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
Research Questions.....	16
Hypotheses .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
Scope and Limitation of the Study.....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
Significance of the Study .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
Methods and Organization of the Study .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
<b>Chapter One: The representation of Trauma in American and African Literature.....</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	22
1.2 Theorizing Trauma, Trauma Theory.....	24
1.2.1 An Introduction to the concept of Trauma:.....	24
1.2.2 Theoretical Framework of Trauma Theory.....	26
1.2.3 Features of Trauma Theory: .....	29
1.3 The Development of Representations of Trauma: .....	41
1.3.1 Trauma Theory Reconsidered.....	41
1.4 Trauma Fiction and Literature: .....	46
1.4.1 Trauma and Literary Studies .....	46
1.4.2 Trauma fiction in American Literature .....	47
1.4.3 Trauma fiction in African Literature.....	49
1.5 Stylistics and the Language of Trauma.....	53
1.5.1 An Introduction to the Concept of Stylistic Analysis .....	53
1.5.2 The Concept of Style.....	53
1.5.3 The Concept of Stylistics .....	57

1.5.4 The Area of Interest of Stylistics .....	58
1.5.5 Why Stylistics?.....	59
1.5.6 Framework for Analyzing Prose Style .....	61
1.5.7 Lexical Categories.....	62
1.5.8 Selected Categories for this Research: .....	64
1.6 Conclusion .....	66
<b>Chapter Two: Trauma Experience and Its Narrative in the American Novel Falling Man by Don DeLillo.....</b>	<b>67</b>
1. Introduction.....	70
2. Trauma Experience and its Narrative in Don DeLillo's Falling Man .....	71
2.1 Don DeLillo's Falling Man as a Trauma Fiction.....	71
2.2 Structural Representation of Trauma .....	72
2.3 Characters Trauma Analysis .....	75
2.3.1 Overcoming Trauma.....	77
2.3.1.1 Characters Acting Out .....	77
2.3.1.1.1 Keith .....	77
2.3.1.1.1.1 Direct Victim and Witness .....	77
2.3.1.1.1.2 Keith's Circular Acting Out.....	80
2.3.1.1.1.3 New World, New Definitions.....	82
2.3.1.1.1.4 Traumatic Recollection of Memory.....	83
2.3.1.1.1.5 Timeless State of Absence a Fragmented Self.....	87
2.3.1.1.2 Lianne.....	91
2.3.1.1.2.1 Second Hand Witness and Vicarious Victim.....	93
2.3.1.1.2.2 Link between Trauma, Art and Music in Acting Out.....	97
2.3.1.1.2.3 Awakening a Previous Trauma.....	101
2.3.1.1.2.4 "Falling Man" Role in Lianne's Acting Out.....	102
2.3.1.2 Characters Working Through.....	104
2.3.1.2.1 Language Role.....	105
2.3.1.2.1.1 An Introduction to Language.....	105
2.3.1.2.1.1.1 Keith and Lianne Use of Language.....	105
2.3.1.2.2 Ritual Role.....	112
2.3.1.2.2.1 Keith: The Counting Ritual and Corporeality.....	113
2.3.1.2.2.2 Lianne: Religious and Counting Ritual.....	119
2.3.1.2.2.3 The Representation of Chance.....	121

2.3.1.2.2.3.1 An Introduction to Chance .....	121
2.3.1.2.2.3.2 Lianne Confrontation with Chance.....	122
2.3.1.2.2.3.3 Keith Solace in Poker.....	125
2.3.1.2.3 Stylistic Study of the Use of Adjectives in Falling Man.....	128
3. Conclusion: .....	136
<b>Chapter Three: Trauma Experience and its Narrative in the African Novel Minaret by Leila Aboulela .....</b>	<b>139</b>
1. Introduction.....	141
2. An Overview of Najwa through the Story .....	143
3. Trauma Experience and its Narrative in Leila Aboulela's Minaret.....	147
3.1 Leila Aboulela's Minaret as a trauma fiction.....	147
3.2 Structural Representation of Trauma .....	150
3.3 Characters Trauma analysis .....	152
3.3.1 Overcoming trauma.....	159
3.3.1.1 Character's acting out.....	159
3.3.1.1.1 Najwa's Acting out.....	159
3.3.1.1.1.1 Migrant Trauma Victim.....	159
3.3.1.1.1.2 Space, Time and Identity.....	163
3.3.1.1.1.3 Traumatic Recollection of Memory.....	168
3.3.1.1.1.4 Men's Role In Najwa's Life.....	169
3.3.1.1.1.5 Making Up For The Loss: Filling The "Empty Space Called Freedom".....	176
3.3.1.1.1.6 Negotiating Identities for Loss of Family Bound.....	181
3.3.1.2 Character's Working Through.....	185
3.3.1.2.1 Religion as Refuge to Pain.....	185
3.3.1.2.2 Longing for Companionship.....	187
3.4 Stylistic study of the use of Adjective in Minaret .....	182
4. Conclusion.....	190
<b>GENERAL CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>198</b>

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION:**

As recorded by Caruth (1996) in her book *Unclaimed Experiences: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, “Psychic Trauma is a wound inflicted upon the mind that breaks the victim’s experience of time, self and the world and that causes great emotional grief in the victim” (p. 3,4). She further stated in her other book *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* that most research agrees that “There is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience” (p. 4). With the acknowledgement of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in 1980, a growing interest raised toward the multidisciplinary approach to trauma studies. One of these fields is trauma fiction, which is a genre that appeared in the late 1980s and as Luckhurst (2008) says, “it emerged with *Beloved*, a Toni Morrison’s novel in 1987” (p. 87). Some argue that there are earlier writings that could be considered trauma fiction but it was not until the late 80’s with the coming of PTSD that the public was drawn into trauma studies in literature. These writings share a certain trauma aesthetic and formal radicalism that undertake some contradiction according to which traumatic experiences resist language or representation. The above contradiction results in the denunciation of the linear representation of traumatic happenstances characterizing trauma fiction as well as the usage of worrying varied modes of reference, as well as indirection, and figuration and temporal structures as explained by Whitehead (2004) in her book *Trauma Fiction*. According to Whitehead (2004), the aesthetic practices are not novel to trauma fiction since “Trauma fiction

arises out of and is inextricable from three interrelated backgrounds or contexts: post-modernism, post-colonialism and a post-war legacy or consciousness” (p. 81).

Repetition, intertextuality and fragmentation are the literary techniques that are represented in trauma narrative. Vickroy (2002) asserts that it is represented by “the rhythms, processes and uncertainties of traumatic experience within their underlying sensibilities and structures” (p. 4). Changes in viewpoints and memory, timeless plot, repetition, flashbacks, visual images and several subjects positioning take us through the confusing state of character within the trauma narrative.

Therefore, it would not be entirely inaccurate to state that the world had far taken a turn for the worse before the modern history attacks, yet it was not until the Western World got abruptly awakened by the terrorist’s attacks on the World Trade Center and other targets on 9/11 that the world’s deplorable state became visibly apparent. Consequently, numerous writers raised questions about what the future held for fiction after this rupture. It would later take a decade after the traumatic events before universal fiction took a purposeful stand at reinventing itself. In *Ground Zero’s History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novels*, Däwes (2011) posits that “by the end of June 2011, at least 231 novels from around the world are available in print which can be classified as ‘9/11 novels’” (p. 6). Dawes further posits that “if it seems, at first glance, that all of these texts share the same historical tenor, they are, in fact, marked by a notable degree of diversity” (Uytterschout, 2012, p. 6). Some renowned novelists have similarly written about the gory events of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. These include, Frederic Beigbeder's *Windows on The World* (2003), Lynne Sharon Schwartz's *The Writing on The Wall* (2004), Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children* (2006), Jay McInerney’s *The Good Life* (2006), and Ken Kalfus’s *A*

*Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (2006) among others. Further, some novelists have utilized the scene as a catalyst to examine the Western world, America in particular, shivering in its complacency whilst others have spoken about it from the viewpoint of a Muslim character living outside the US but has been affected by the terror and fear created by it.

The first book discussed in this thesis, *Falling Man* (2007) by Don DeLillo depicts the most horrifying moments of that day and its impact on the individual character. In fact, DeLillo's duplicates the horrifying affairs in the memories of the survivor as well as the aftereffects of the attacks and their harrowing impact on the victims' selves and identities. Thus, if the survivors want to defeat their personal trauma, then they have to comprehend their traumatic memories and save them as narrative memory. In other words, they must attempt to express what they experienced, individually.

This dissertation, in examining the theme of the above mentioned novel will principally tailor its focus on individual trauma rather than a politically and economically influenced cultural trauma.

Trauma is often studied in relation to the Holocaust or World War I. Yet, if it must be sufficiently explored and understood, there ought to be no limitations regarding its study. Therefore, it is to the effect of furtherance that this research seeks to expand the perimeters of trauma studies- by exploring trauma in the African plot and script. Being a continent that continues to endure the lasting impacts of a tumultuous past and an anarchic history, Africa's setbacks seem to be inherent in the roots of governance and societal discord - these are shortcomings that if resolved, would catalyze the political and economic development of the countries, as well as the social well-being of their citizens. Years after the colonial era in Africa,

Anglophone-African works continue to epitomize the subject of pugnaciousness and trauma as related to colonialism. Most of the time, these representations are linked to neocolonialism. Later, it often highlights the relationship between trauma and colonialism. It is agreed that the insistent representations of past violence by post-independence African literature are a way of navigating the multifaceted political and psychological processes of trauma and the accompanying recuperation.

To a large extent, most of the post-Independence Anglophone African novels were written in response to colonialism and colonial discourse. In Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (Zimbabwe), Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (set in Ghana, the United States, and France), Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl* (Nigeria and Britain), Nuruddin Farah's *Maps* (Somalia), in Zoë Wicomb's *David's Story*, Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (Uganda and the Netherlands), Meja Mwangi's *Carcase for Hounds* (Kenya), and J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (South Africa), these themes are prevalent. Although these works differ in aesthetic mode, melancholia and mourning, they share certain trauma representations specific to the African culture and continent.

However, trauma is not a preserve of immediate postcolonial and colonial imaginations. In fact, modern expositions in certain post-independence countries give little attention to colonialism as well as its impacts, but they do other forms of trauma. These may include individual and personal trauma of loss, exile and immigration as is the case for the second novel examined in this thesis; Leila Aboulela's *Minaret*. Since trauma theory has been developed in a specifically western framework, this research intends to extend the field of study through an exploration of this African text. Herein, the thesis argues that the inherent tension within Eurocentric theory can be resolved

somewhat by its application and adaptation for more specific and nonwestern contexts.

To accurately explore the trauma in today's Africa; one must move beyond the notion of 'event theory' and extend the focus of trauma studies (Rothberg, 2008). In the past fifty years, majority of the world's violent and political conflicts have taken place outside of the West (Miller et al., 2006). However, contemporary criticism surrounding trauma is that it only tends to focus on World War I or the Holocaust. The latest Western methodology for managing trauma therefore does not take into account non-Western trauma due to their local and contextual experiences.

By emphasizing the significance of a particular context of a trauma, there is an attempt to expand notions of 'trauma' within a framework that is coherent with a specific non-Western culture, but only stressing specificity to the Islamic context. Shining a spotlight on a non-Western country dealing with trauma helps to broaden our understanding of trauma across different cultures, opening up innovative ways of dealing with trauma. Commenting on the necessity to appreciate traumatic incidents within non-Western environments, Craps et al. (2008) states: "Instead of promoting solidarity between different cultures, trauma studies risks producing the very opposite effect as a result of this one-sided focus: by ignoring or marginalizing non-western traumatic events and histories and non-western theoretical work, trauma studies may actually assist in the perpetuation of Eurocentric views and structures that maintain or widen the gap between the west and the rest of the world" (p. 3). Neeves (2008) similarly comments that the failure of trauma studies to examine non-Western and postcolonial contexts of trauma means "it has become guilty of the same kinds of omissions and forgetting that its own theory argues is detrimental to the processes of recovery and healing" (p. 109). Neeves (2008) further postulates that trauma studies

must move beyond its focus on Euro-American events and experiences in order to “transform [the field of trauma studies] from a mono-cultural discipline into a mode of enquiry that can inform the study of memory within a changing global context” (p. 109).

The present research aligns itself with the critical paradigm of the last citation, by doubting human trauma’s global Eurocentric models’ to explain the African trauma. It is apparent that there is a contradiction between this declared interest in non-Eurocentric theory and the reliance on it in the thesis. The conflict is due to the limited academic research concerning non-Eurocentric theory. The decision to reference largely from critics that have published extensively on Western trauma theory thus helps to underline the need for greater critical attention surrounding trauma in non-Western settings.

The majority of academic research that have been tackling literary trauma theories have focused heavily on an Eurocentric approach and based their research on American or European literature. Also, limited studies have occurred on the language and stylistic aspects of the novels. Moreover, limited research has been carried out on the application of stylistic analysis due to the well-known claim that trauma resists language and representation. Additionally, trauma study is a new field that has been developing for the last 30 years or so. However, this thesis takes the path that if literary trauma theory and stylistic analysis are applied on two different contexts of writing, one can have a better understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses of this approach and consequently enjoy the different styles and techniques used in the representation of trauma experience. This might additionally arouse curiosity and

research for the development of the Literary Trauma theory and a better understanding of trauma experience and its language.

The main objective of this thesis is to study trauma experience and its language in two different novels “Minaret” by Leila Aboulela and “Falling Man” by Don DeLillo by using literary trauma theory and stylistic analysis of adjectives to investigate how trauma and its language are experienced in two different settings. Specifically, another objective of this study is to strengthen academic research concerning the analysis of trauma in non-western writing.

This thesis intends to answer on the following questions:

- To what extent can trauma theory be applied in a similar manner between an American Novel and Anglo-African novel?
- To what extent is trauma experience and language used similarly or differently in both novels?
- How does the stylistic analysis of the use of adjectives enhance the meaning and understanding of the trauma experienced by the characters?

The hypothesis suggested for the research questions are:

- Trauma theory is applicable in both American writing and Anglophone-African writing though it lacks a complete understanding of the African context due to its heavily Eurocentric focus.
- Though there are similarities in the demonstration of the trauma in both novels, the strategies used in working them through differ.

- Stylistic analysis of the use of adjectives in both novels aligns with the incapability of representation of language stated in traditional literary trauma theory.

This thesis limits itself to a traditional literary trauma theory analysis and a stylistic analysis of the use of adjectives in both novels “Minaret” by Leila Aboulela and “Falling Man” by Don DeLillo. Also, the stylistic analysis of adjective limits itself to a quantitative study of adjective only in the first part of both novels.

This study might help current research on literature and language that desire to comprehend in a better way the trauma theory and the language issues in two different contexts. Also, it will shed light on how stylistic analysis could be used as a technique to deeply understand the manner in which trauma can be represented in different ways. Moreover, the research might act as a catalyst for additional research in this field and can promote an academic discussion on how to apply trauma studies to non-Western writing.

The present research will be using literary trauma theory and stylistic analysis as the approaches to be adopted. The novels to be studied are “Minaret” by Leila Aboulela and “Falling Man” by Don DeLillo. Literary stylistic analysis of the use of adjectives is chosen here because it will give an opportunity to integrate a linguistic explanation for the critical interpretation of trauma experience. For this purpose, the analysis of the work will be carefully following literary trauma theory as described by Caruth (1995a) and stylistic as introduced by Leech and Short (1981).

The analysis will be divided to three chapters. The organization of the chapters is as follows:

Chapter one under the title “The representation of Trauma in American and African Literature” will be presenting the literature review and the theoretical framework of the research. This chapter began with an inference drawn from the definition of trauma, as seen through the lens of Trauma theory and also from major contributions made by early prominent theorists such as Caruth and Lacapra who follow Freudian and Lacanian approaches. Hence, the thesis continued with an examination of contemporary viewpoints represented by the neo-Freud and neo-Lacan critics, followed by a discussion on trauma literatures in both American and African literature and finally closed with an introduction to the concept of stylistic analysis of specifically adjectives.

In Chapter two entitled “Trauma experience and its narrative in the American novel *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo”, the purpose of achieving the proposed objectives, and an analysis of the symptoms of PTSD through the established study of Trauma Theory are done. Then, the chapter proceeds to discuss the various facets of trauma representation as depicted in the novel, with reference to how the main character deals with his traumatic experience, which would include “working through” and “acting out” his trauma. Also, a study of the language used to emphasis the traumatic effect and represented in the novel is presented following a stylistic analysis of adjectives in the first part of this novel.

In the final chapter, Chapter three, under the title “Trauma experience and its narrative in the African novel Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret*”, the aim is to analyze the novel *Minaret* as a trauma fiction by employing the established study of trauma theory to explore its Anglophone-African narrative. This phase of the dissertation will

also carry out an incisive deconstruction of characters, particularly that of the protagonist, Najwa, and the processes she endured to cope with her trauma. Also, a discussion on the techniques of literature and representation which permit the thesis to give a viewpoint that only genres such as that of this trauma novel can provide. Then a shift of focus on a stylistic analysis of the adjectives is conducted for the first part of this novel.

By the end a conclusion is given by providing the summary and the findings of this thesis.

**Chapter One:**

**The representation of Trauma in American and African Literature**

**Chapter One: The representation of Trauma in American and African Literature**

1.1 Introduction.....	22
1.2 Theorizing Trauma, Trauma Theory.....	24
1.2.1 An Introduction to the concept of Trauma:.....	24
1.2.2 Theoretical Framework of Trauma Theory.....	26
1.2.3 Features of Trauma Theory: .....	29
1.3 The Development of Representations of Trauma: .....	41
1.3.1 Trauma Theory Reconsidered.....	41
1.4 Trauma Fiction and Literature: .....	46
1.4.1 Trauma and Literary Studies .....	46
1.4.2 Trauma fiction in American Literature .....	47
1.4.3 Trauma fiction in African Literature.....	49
1.5 Stylistics and the Language of Trauma.....	53
1.5.1 An Introduction to the Concept of Stylistic Analysis .....	53
1.5.2 The Concept of Style.....	53
1.5.3 The Concept of Stylistics .....	57
1.5.4 The Area of Interest of Stylistics .....	58
1.5.5 Why Stylistics?.....	59
1.5.6 Framework for Analyzing Prose Style .....	61
1.5.7 Lexical Categories.....	62
1.5.8 Selected Categories for this Research: .....	64
1.6 Conclusion .....	66

## 1.1 Introduction

The 20<sup>th</sup> century will no doubt remain one of the darkest periods of human existence - it could so aptly be called the century of Trauma, primarily owing to the series of horrendous events of the era that shook the earth to its core. These devastating tragedies range from the innumerable forms of genocide that featured the Holocaust, the First and Second World Wars, the advent and, for the first time in history, the use of nuclear weapons. The modern and latter decades of this traumatic era witnessed even further universal calamities, such as: the Communist mass internments, the 9/11 attacks, dislocations and executions, and colonial and post-colonial wars world-wide, with the violence in Africa and Southeast Asia particularly recording various minor wars and conflicts often prompted by ethnic or religious disputes. The above are just few events off of a list that carries lengthy scroll of tragic, gruesome happenings. Yet, it is irrefutable that the bearings of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will go on to outdo their predecessors in the measures and weights of their traumatic content. The post-traumatic aftermath of this era currently stands as a source for the creation of cultural texts in different modes and genres of interpretation, which include memoirs, documentaries, political analysis, therapeutic discourse, poetry, drama and film, amongst several others. Afforded with such a plethora of varied discourses, novelists often turn to this rich material of after-effects for tales of trauma and survival. Even now, several books have appeared to purposely discuss the effects of the period's events on individuals.

A significant number of trauma-fiction characters are frequently described by their authors to be suffering from various types of syndromes, the most popular being post-traumatic stress disorder or as commonly known: PTSD. Therefore, to adequately broaden the scope of the subject's syndrome, the study has chosen to

explore two relevant novels: Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Leila Abouleila's *Minaret*. Further, the introduction and employment of Trauma Theory is imperative as it has useful parameters for an elaborate analysis of both novels. However, to build a theoretical framework for this thesis, it becomes paramount to first bring to focus the ground-breaking work on Trauma Theory, which the thesis would do here, and summarize it before delving into the subject proper.

One of the first and most important theories crucial to our trauma discourse started with Cathy Caruth who is Frank H. Rhodes professor of Humane Letters at Cornell University. According to Robert Jay Lifton, who is a psychiatrist, he stated in one of the trauma meeting that he attended that she is "one of the most innovative scholars on what we call trauma, and on our ways of perceiving and conceptualizing that still mysterious phenomenon" (Cathy, 1995c). She has authored of the following books: *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). Further, Cathy Caruth is one of the main heads in modern trauma research and her outstanding work figure as the basis for any research done in this field.

Most importantly, she relates her work to Freud and drew two main topics in her research that include the belatedness that characterizes trauma and the peculiar contradiction and paradox that exist between the trauma of survival and trauma of death. However, this research also relies on other researchers such as Fielman, Dominick LaCapra and Kai Erikson and others that follow the Freudian and Lacanian approaches. This chapter will delve into an exploration of the trauma theory as described by the followers of this traditional approach to literary trauma theory.

## 1.2 Theorizing Trauma, Trauma Theory.

### 1.2.1 An Introduction to the concept of Trauma:

Although, deriving its name from the Greek language “Wound”, or as defined nowadays by the term, “Trauma” promptly poses a difficult task in the discussion of the subject itself. Despite being a frequently debated topic across several domains and widely interpreted in various forms, a precise definition and meaning of trauma appears inconclusive and unclear. Though we might find variety in the exact definition of the concept trauma, which differs depending on the context and discipline chosen, all sides of the debate agree that if in fact trauma is a wound, then it is most assuredly one of a very unique kind. Caruth (1991) avers that “In classical medical terminology ‘trauma’ refers not to the injury inflicted but to the blow that inflicted it, not to the state of mind that ensues but to the event that provoked it” (p. 3). By centering our understanding only on contextualizing the traumatic event, we fail to sufficiently address the victim’s profound experience of the trauma. Further, Caruth (2003) states that “In 1980, the now familiar broad umbrella term ‘Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder’ was assigned by the American Psychiatric Association by way of acknowledging the need to recognize and understand the after effects of trauma” (p. 192). In attempts to elucidate the aftermath and experience involving trauma, certain critics such as Duggan (2007) and Anker (2009) among others allude to Caruth’s explanation of trauma who postulates it “as a catastrophic experience in which the response to the event is delayed and occur through uncontrolled repetitive appearances of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (Caruth, 2003, p. 192). Caruth’s arguments on trauma theory significantly broadened the clinical views of trauma, especially through its introduction and application in the field of humanities.

The trigger event of any trauma is a crucial component to its existence, as it breeds a delay in dealing with the actuality of the syndrome, which consequently bears a more important and severe impact of the trauma experience on an individual's psyche. Lieberman (1972) cites Freud to back the claim when he says:

It may happen that someone gets away, apparently unharmed, from the spot where he has suffered a shocking event ... In the course of the following weeks, however, he develops a series of grave psychical and motor symptoms, which can be ascribed only to his shock ... He has developed a 'traumatic neurosis. (p. 88)

Basically, this would translate to "the event has not yet fully sunken into the person's consciousness, but rather seems to be lingering in the subconscious, manifesting itself by means of several symptoms" (Ganzel, 2007, p. 127). Quoting Cathy Caruth, Lieberman further expands "this definition by emphasizing on the psychological delay of a traumatic event and its consequences, one of which includes, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)" (Ganzel, 2007, p. 127). In this case, the structure and reception of the experience are delayed "It is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it" (Ganzel, 2007, p. 127). This seems a paradox, since the episode appears initially not to have been experienced, yet is being relived at the same time. Nonetheless, it is the haunting effect of these episodes that proves problematic among other symptoms, as the affected individual eventually struggles to cope with the original event of the trauma while simultaneously reliving it, repeatedly.

The phenomenon is referred to as belated immediacy (Ganzel, 2007, p. 127). It explains that the effect of not consciously registering the full impact of an event to mind creates a false reality that the affected person never in fact participated or lived

through the trauma-triggering event, principally because that experience is yet to be assimilated into their consciousness. The repercussion of this false reality defines the event as a “recurrent source of pain and as a site of perpetual re-interpretation” (Ganzel, 2007, p. 127). This further illustrates that “The delay of the experience is a form of self-protection, ultimately distancing it from the event, consequently worsening that encounter by keeping it in an unresolved state. The reliving of the event becomes compulsive. It transforms into a sort of open wound, the relationship between the event and its meaning is disabled” (Ganzel, 2007, p. 127). The eventual outcome of this circumstance renders time and period undefined, as the past event recurs constantly in the present timeline with the victim still consciously unaware of the experience.

### **1.2.2 Theoretical Framework of Trauma Theory**

It is paramount that the concept of trauma be extensively understood if we must cogently comprehend both the themes of our referenced novels, as well as the high-epidemic nature of the subject matter, regarding the ramifications of its effect on individuals. On this basis, it is, therefore, important to note the definition and profound perceptions of trauma, more-so to understand the manner in which trauma, by its experience, is clearly interpreted. Lately, there has been a recorded increase in the theoretical analysis of these concepts, with authors drawing inferences from the Freudian and Lacanian adaptations of the term trauma. These authors are also inspired by the intersection of interests of a post-structural faction that seeks for advancement in minority groups and discourses such as feminism and post-colonialism and in the political empowerment of these victimized, marginalized groups.

However, the prevalence of social constructivism made it an obvious tool to be used in analyzing the relationship between text and identity; a development that consequently relegates the role of other interpretational mediums that tend to express fragmentary, abject and disorderly experiences in their respective narratives. This factor highlights the stealthy emergence of interdisciplinary discourse of trauma theory being the present discipline of reference. Among major contributions made to elucidate this subject were works from Cathy Carruth, who has edited volumes including *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995); and the appearance of the published article “On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies” by Geoffrey Hartman’s in *PsyArt* in 2004, or Rosemary Winslow’s “Troping Trauma: Conceiving of Experiences of Speechless Terror” (2004) further elucidated it.

Although Freud struggled with a simplistic theorization of trauma, even failing to accurately summarize the phenomenon satisfactorily, his followers still made use of his insight and knowledge about trauma as indicated in the following extract from Hartman’s article:

The [(post)Freudian] theory holds that the knowledge of trauma, or the knowledge which comes from that source, is composed of two contradictory elements. One is the traumatic event, registered rather than experienced. It seems to have bypassed perception and consciousness, and falls directly into the psyche. The other is a kind of memory of the event, in the form of a perpetual troping [literally ‘turning’, but Hartman also means ‘metaphorizing’] of it by the bypassed or severely split (dissociated) psyche. (Hartman, 1995, p. 537)

The eventual result of a traumatic experience forms the concept of disruption due to “an event outside the range of ordinary human experience” (American Psychiatric Association, 2004), and as such, traumatized individuals are unable to consciously assess, evaluate or rationalize the original event. Here, the conscious psyche can only access the unresolved memory of the event, presenting itself in the form of a supplementary experience deciphered by default as a series of symptoms. They in most cases entail a form of compulsive repetition and additional periodic behaviours. The nature of such behaviours could form an embedded design of avoidance activities, as is common with irrational fears and isolated phobias. An alliance of therapists including Drs. Ryan, Foderaro and Bloom, who were attending to post-traumatic patients derived a systemized order for these symptoms, known as the 9 A’s of trauma, and listed them as follows: Attachment, Affect, Anger, Authority, Awareness, Addiction, Automatic repetition, Avoidance, and Alienation. The ramifications of these symptoms bring about a deficiency in an individual’s ability to establish or sustain a relevant relationship, citing severe attachment issues as just part of several underlying symptoms, even within close relations (familial, social and emotional). The symptoms could worsen with the manifestation of other behaviours such as: addictive behaviour, night disruptions or sleeping deprivation, episodes of dissociative states, and compulsive and repetitive behaviours, all of which will lead to a feeling of isolation and alienation from their surrounding and an unreasonable fear of the future.

The above horrendous labyrinth of problems describes the features of the main characters in trauma stories, whether they are fictive or authentic, as will be discussed shortly. In their historicized and constructivist reading of the “genealogy of trauma”, which would be the introductory passage of their book; *Understanding Trauma* –

*Integrating Biological, Clinical and Cultural Perspectives*, Kirmayer, Lemelson and Barad posited the following:

Despite the stark events it names, trauma is not a natural category but a culturally constructed way to mark out certain classes of experiences and events. The salient examples and cultural prototypes of trauma have changed over time, along with our ways of thinking about illness and suffering, our concepts of mind and personhood, and the moral politics of victimhood, blame, and accountability. (Leys, 2000; Micale & Lerner, 2001)

Trauma was taken from the field of medicine and adapted in different domains to extend knowledge not only on a scientific, medical and psychiatric field but also to a social and cultural sphere and most importantly in our case to literature.

### **1.2.3 Features of Trauma Theory:**

Trauma wields such enormous power in its being because as Caruth (1996a) explains, “the person who falls victim to traumatic pathology does so precisely to the extent that he or she stops being present to the event in the moment of its occurrence” (p. 9). She further notes that the consciousness of the event is delayed because “while it occurred, there was no assimilation of it” (Caruth, 1996a, p. 9). She writes: “The impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time” (Caruth, 1996a, p. 9).

There is a strangeness that defines an event as being traumatic and this strangeness is embodied in the description of the event as a delayed consequence of a missed encounter, for trauma itself borders on the concept of absence and can be wholly grasped in that sense. The referred ‘absence’ speaks not to a void in

geographical location or time but to positive presence; a stark and limpid perception of a vacant, empty space, a gap in consciousness inherent to the event. This lack of presence or feeling of absence at the core of traumatic experience translates to a ghostly state and owing to this salient characteristic of trauma, traumatized individuals often become so possessed by this event and most of the times describe themselves as living ghosts.

In its peculiar state, this ‘absence’ also plays an advantageous role other than its predominantly negative consequences. As Caruth emphasizes in one of her most insightful and misunderstood observations about trauma where the trauma takes us to a path of better understanding and an array of options for the experience and the ways trauma is understood. According to her research, the core establishment of repetition brought by “traumatic belatedness” leads the traumatized victim to find ways of coping with the trauma by witnessing it in a belated state and toward others. Toward the end of her introduction to *Trauma: Explorations of Memory*, Caruth (1995c) explains how and why trauma is not only considered a source of “Departure” or “absence” but also a calling to surviving trauma via contact with other people:

The final import of the psychoanalytic and historical analysis of trauma is to suggest that the inherent departure, within trauma, from the moment of its first occurrence, is also a means of passing out of the isolation imposed by the event: that the history of a trauma, in its inherent belatedness, can only take place through the listening of another. (p. 10–11)

A traumatized individual is circumstantially compelled to a life of insufferable isolation – that, the very act of surviving trauma necessitates them to devise new, customized ways of relating with their immediate environment. The aforementioned fact makes a genuine case for why reflections on trauma can make significant

contributions to our present ideologies on history, politics and ethics; as Caruth (1995c) further argues:

The meaning of the trauma's address beyond itself concerns, indeed, not only individual isolation but a wider historical isolation that, in our time, is communicated on the level of our cultures. . . . A speaking and a listening *from the site of trauma*—does not rely, I would suggest, on what we simply know of each other, but on what we don't yet know of our own traumatic pasts. In a catastrophic age, that is, trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves (p. 11).

It is gleaned from the author's call that "our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves" (Caruth, 1995c, p. 11) where she strongly illustrates the essential role literature could adequately play in the tackling and resolution of our strangest experiences as diversified beings. Veritably, literature holds one of the most effective, viable platforms available to man to address trauma, disseminate discoveries and overcome it. This notion will be further explored in the thesis' discussion on working through and acting out.

#### **1.2.3.1 Overcoming Trauma:**

Logically, overcoming trauma is a painstaking process that spans over an extended period. Psychological disorders such as trauma gain root with time and by cause, thus administering treatment for its cure will not occur in the course of a day. Traumatized individuals would be required to undergo various stages of treatment for them to 'heal'.

Whereas Freud (1959b) used the terms mourning and melancholia to describe the different stages of a person's post-traumatic impacts, LaCapra (2001) preferred the respective expressions 'acting out' and 'working through', terms that were also later adopted by Freud. Although these terms are not synonyms, they are interchangeable owing to the expressive forms they give. Mourning signifies 'working through' in summarized and simplified language, while Melancholia connotes 'acting out', in the same regard, according to LaCapra (2001). Janet (1989) terms; 'narrative memory' and 'traumatic memory' share same explanation as these two oppositions.

Melancholia or acting out implies that the traumatized individual lingers in the past, as they still repeatedly undergo the painful memories, in the form of compulsive behavior or nightmares. Working through a trauma however hints at the affected individual's gradual steps to recovery from the traumatic implications of the triggering event. This stage is a preparatory step to acceptance, signifying that the traumatized person is prepared to acknowledge the realities of their trauma to be part of their lives and can finally begin to mourn, since that is the last stage of grief, as they ultimately learn to come to terms with it. Moreover, the victim "is also able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future" (LaCapra, 2001, p. 22).

It is indeed paramount to note that acting out and working through are not stark contrasts but are stages indispensable to the process that any traumatized individual must undergo for healing to occur and for them to competently deal with trauma.

Furthermore, Freud believes it pertinent to make a clear difference between mourning and melancholy. He explains thus: “While the latter represents an active working-through of a traumatic loss, the former is characterized by inertia and self-hatred. The melancholic is apathetic ... incapable of love and achievement” (Versluys, 2009, p. 20). With regard to Freud’s elucidation, it would therefore, “be uncharacteristic to identify both stages separately. One frequently has to go through the stage of acting out to get to the working through” (Codde, 2009). However, this theory becomes intricate with Pierre Janet’s terms in perspective; where he refers to ‘narrative memories’ as common, everyday memories and ‘traumatic memories’ as the fragmented memories (Janet, 1989), which are difficult to translate into narratives since they mostly comprise incoherent flash-backs. Nevertheless, these difficulties can be resolved by “*the act of bearing witness*” - a factor the thesis will discuss in the furtherance of ‘working through.’ But before that an introduction to the concept of acting out will be presented.

#### **1.2.3.1.1 Acting Out**

There are numerous manners that an individual can use to ‘act out’ their traumatic experiences. Nightmares, being the more popular medium in most cases, appear to often bring the victim back to the scene of the trauma unconsciously. Possibly, an affected individual could still experience flashbacks of the traumatic episode, even while wake and fully conscious.

LaCapra (2001) defines ‘acting out’ as a state “in which one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes...In acting out, tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene” (p. 21). Consequently, the characters have to handle more than an unpleasant or a horrible dream since the ‘traumatic nightmare’

continues haunting them, even after they have woken up. That the past is “relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 70) could explain the persistent haunting presence since the person would be totally unaware and will no longer have the capacity to differentiate dream and reality. Another response to acting out could be through the manifestation of a compulsive behavior and amnesia, a lack of memory, or sometimes through hypermnesia, which is an excess of memory (Codde, 2009). It is often owing to the deficiency in memory (amnesia) that victims often attempt to compensate by accessing the event through repetitive actions that Freud (1924) summarized as follows: "The patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory, but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it" (p. 150).

Additionally, this compulsive behavior is seen in the victim’s inability to make thought-connections or arrive at accurate conclusions, as they also tend to isolate memories. The impairment is birthed through the victim’s helpless urge to repeat, an urge that imminently replaces the impulse to remember. A typical instance of events that could trigger such behaviors would be the historical traumas of the Holocaust and 9/11 since words simply cannot suffice to narrate the dreadful experience of those happenings. Unconscious, continued remembrance and even more particularly its repetition are two pivotal actions crucial to the definition of ‘acting out’, just as they are the major bridges leading to the ‘Working through’ stage of the traumatic encounter, where the victim begins to gain awareness of their experience and all it entails.

Consequently, the hostile and hurtful natures of memories give apparent cause for an increase in the resistance to remembering. Freud (1924), in his due

acknowledgment of the role of resistance as factor, similarly states: “The greater the resistance, the more extensively will acting out (repetition) replace remembering” (p. 151). The resistance and reluctance of victims to share and acknowledge their predicaments or experiences in turn largely limits the influence therapists could employ in treatment, making it difficult for an expedient breakthrough to occur. However, this wall of resistance provides therapists with incisive information about their patients.

Any information concerning a traumatic event is crucial to overcoming trauma, but information derived particularly through a patient’s resistance to bear their suffering can help break that same cycle. Helping the victim reach further into the labyrinths of their thoughts and consciousness until they are confronted with their repressed memories of tragedy is a skill therapists must possess and master to successfully end the pattern of resistance. This is important as these repressed memories hold missing fragments of critical information that must be pieced together and keyed into the victim’s existing mental scheme to form a cohesive sense of the events.

Van der Kolk and Van der Hart echoed this theory in an essay inside Caruth’s edited volume on trauma (Caruth, 1996, p. 176). Caruth (1996), nevertheless, explains an additional outstanding aspect regarding trauma, which interestingly appears not to conform to the straightforward solution; she plainly states that “traumatic recollection...is not a simple memory” (Caruth, 1995, p. 151). Pierre Janet had previously made similar remarks when he postulated on the difference between narrative memories and traumatic memories. The paradoxical nature of these arguments sufficiently buttresses its claim, for, even though the images from the traumatic incident stay as real as possible and precise photography, “they are largely

inaccessible to conscious recall and control” (Caruth, 1995, p. 151). This refers to the ability of control victims lack over these images, as they often appear randomly and abruptly.

Another dichotomy that typifies the practice of acting out is notably the distinction between “absence” and “loss”. It is apparent that both terms signify a void, a lack of presence, and emptiness; however, it would be pertinent to remark that absence does not necessarily imply that a starting point or origin of something had formerly existed. On the contrary, loss indicates the former existence of an original possession. LaCapra (2001) reiterates that, “in converting absence into loss, one assumes that there was (or at least could be) some original unity, wholeness, security, or identity that others have ruined, polluted, or contaminated and thus made ‘us’ lose” (p. 58). The 9/11 attacks and wars of independence in Africa are valid instances for reference, with thousands of people having experienced fatal forms of loss, mostly being mortal than material. LaCapra (2001) further mentions that “when absence, approximated to loss, becomes the object of mourning, the mourning may (perhaps must) become impossible and turn continually back into endless melancholy” (p. 68). Simply put, it is impossible to mourn someone or object that never existed in the first place.

Thus, it is paramount that the trauma patient understands the crucial need to make a clear distinction between absence and loss. The fundamental reason for this differentiation will be duly explained in our discussion of ‘empathetic unsettlement’, which stands as a subtitle under the ‘Working through’ discourse.

### **1.2.3.1.2 Working Through**

An essential part of progressing from the ‘acting out’ phase to the ‘working through’ phase heavily relies on the of the victim’s ability and disposition to confide in someone about their trauma ordeals, and this is necessary if they must break free of “the temporal confusion and cycle of repetition” (Janet, 1989). According to Pierre Janet, one can give trauma a place in one’s recollection by “converting traumatic memory into narrative memory” (Versluys, 2009, p. 3). The easiest way to do this is by creating a (chrono) logical narrative.

An active listener, or in some cases the therapist, plays a pivotal role in the successful execution of a logical narrative. During the process, the docile party acts as “the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time” (Laub, 1992, p. 57). The therapist must assume the responsibility of unmasking the anonymous, repetitive behavior shown by the victim, and eventually bring them to grasp the trauma as part of their present identity. As Freud (1924) notes; “Descriptively speaking, it (logical narrative) is to fill in gaps in memory; dynamically speaking, it is to overcome resistances due to repression” (p. 148).

It is worthy to note that it is exclusively in testifying that a victim transforms to the listener and a witness or the therapist automatically becomes a secondary witness to that effect. However, it is forewarned that a risk portends in being a secondary witness, as the listener is liable to share a mild experience of the trauma through the vicarious nature with which it was narrated. Dominick LaCapra and Dori Laub’s corresponding postulations on these matters report that there exist two forms of listening to a survivor’s experiences. Most significantly, in listening to the victim’s testimony, an interviewer has to exhibit genuine interest and show that they understand the throes of the trauma patient. This method of trauma-therapy is referred

to as ‘empathic settlement,’ and it allows for a healthy feedback and most importantly, a human connection. The method absolves the interviewer from fully identifying with the victim, hence providing a buffer between both parties as it could become harmful if the listener invests an overwhelming interest in the association, with the latter liable to inherit the victim’s trauma. LaCapra termed this to be a “Vicarious experience”, as opposed to the healthy response, which is called “a virtual experience” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 47; Lacapra, 2004, p. 125).

Listening to a first-hand witness often takes on a vicarious turn and as such, the interviewer must ensure that the aforementioned witness continues to give limpid distinctions between absence and loss, mostly for the fact that original witnesses often readily forget the difference. In the case where a testifying victim expresses the loss of a loved one, it is advised that the therapist or interviewer measure their invested interest, as incautiously sympathizing or empathizing with the victim could as well transfer their experience of loss on the secondary witnesses, even though, in reality the latter has no loss to mourn. For this reason, it is important to stay objective when playing the role of a secondary witness. If the listener mistakes between loss and absence, it would be difficult for the first witness to recall it in the future. This then implies that “melancholic paralysis or manic agitation may develop within the survivor and this may lead to the generalization of huge historical trauma’s, in which everyone can function as a possible victim” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 64). Thus, “empathy is an affective component of understanding” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 102) which makes it difficult to control.

Laub (1995), in his study on the Holocaust, came to the conclusion that “the survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their stories, they also needed to tell their stories in order to survive” (p. 78). This results in more pressure

being put on the survivors, as they are circumstanced by the event to own the task and particularly, the responsibility as witnesses of life's tragic end, which mainly defines what is a survivor.

In the words of Caruth (1996):

Trauma is not simply an effect of destruction but also, fundamentally, an enigma of survival. It is only by recognizing traumatic experience as a paradoxical relation between destructiveness and survival that we can also recognize the legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience. (p. 58)

In this perspective, the role of the listener is of great importance since the victim cannot make their own testimony without a witness; consequently, the listener turns into the witness to the story as narrated by primary witness. Thus, the listener's role becomes as a guide who makes sense of inherent incomprehensibility of the trauma by allowing the victim to express and discuss about their experience without interrupting or commenting only when the victim is in need of encouragement or motivation to continue her narrative.

LaCapra (2001) observes that "in testimonies the survivor as witness often relives traumatic events and is possessed by the past. These are the most difficult parts of testimony for the survivor, the interviewer and the viewer of testimonies" (p. 97). The interviewer's response bears a significant impact on the victim during these parts, and as such, it frequently poses an ordeal for the interviewer to formulate an appropriate response to these traumatic testimonies that they, themselves have never experienced.

Nonetheless, progressing to this stage poses a daunting task to accomplish as "those traumatized by extreme events, as well as those empathizing with them, may

resist working through because of what might almost be termed a fidelity to trauma, a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 22). The severity of certain events, as is the case with the Holocaust and 9/11 attacks, forces trauma to embed itself as part of the victim’s identity - one which could in turn prove tedious for the victim to rid. This scenario is also remarked in the event that a victim loses relatives or loved ones and the experience manifests as a form of commemoration or memorial for these deceased intimates. This manifestation complicates the relegation of the trauma to the past, as this would also mean that the victim is symbolically shutting the deceased in the past; a choice that most grapple to contend with.

Remarkably, a horrendous event can, in certain instances, form a reasonable part of an individual’s identity. LaCapra (2011) says that “all myths of origin include something like a founding trauma, through which the people pass and emerge strengthened” (p. 161). Society often shoulders a huge function in the materialization of Lacapra’s argument, whereby a tradition to commemorate national tragedy is annually held and is aided by the media outreach with its broadcasting mediums, both on television and in print, citing 9/11 as an apt reference. Here, “the working through is especially prohibited by a need to have a dedication or fidelity to the dead instead of being based on suppression or a lack of remembrance” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 144).

In conclusion, after effectively working through a traumatic experience, it would appear that “one is both back there and here at the same time, and one is able to distinguish between (not dichotomize) the two” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 90). Basically, the victim remembers the ordeals of the past since it is part of the constituents of the events of trauma and can eventually become obsessed by it to a fixed degree, although, while still being within grasp of the present. Here, the victim becomes

conscious of time, understanding that the present holds a vital consequence and differs from the past, in that the latter time is only a healthy part of their memory. This rich discipline has become an inspiration trove for novelists who tap from its veins for materials on survival and trauma related tales, although, the potential risk of significantly increasing the post-traumatic phase as is common with trauma narratives sufficiently persists. Furthermore, literature could very possibly function as an enhancing factor to the healing of trauma or at most lend a voice to its victims, which would add a befitting tenth A – for Art to the systematic order of trauma symptoms/responses. And that brings us to the juncture of examining trauma in literature and its development.

### **1.3 The Development of Representations of Trauma:**

#### **1.3.1 Trauma Theory Reconsidered**

In “*The problem is, I’m not sure I believe in the thunderclap of trauma*’: *Aesthetics of Trauma in Contemporary American Literature*” Alan Gibbs discusses some of the newly and contemporary trend in the trauma studies. This aligns with Roger Luckhurst’s concerns about the asset of trauma as a theme. Gibbs (2013) investigates one of the results of the fact that the newly well spread trend called trauma “has so fully entered public discourse, it has begun to influence both writers and, interdependently, critics and theorists” (p. 148). He is not merely perturbed that a precise number of narrative traits and devices have become numbly popular, easily recognizable methods but he also airs his grievance for the mute collaborations between theorists, writers and critics, by stating that much recent fiction has been instrumental in “reifying” contemporary trauma theory “into an often prescriptive aesthetic” (Gibbs, 2013, p. 148).

In his discussion about the reception of Jonathan Safran Foer's work, Gibbs (2013) identifies a hermeneutic circle birthed from the mutually beneficial relationship between fiction and theory, which leads us to the conclusion that theory-based criticism often is linked to theory-based fiction. Most of this advancement has to do with the widely preferred status quo and the visibility enjoyed by these theories. It then calls to question if the prevalence of unconventional forms of trauma novels by Arabic and African authors is partly attributed to the fact that there is yet to be an impactful academic focus on trauma theory in these countries. Gibbs (2013) identifies possible ways out of this impasse via realism (Carol Shields) or by means of what he calls "traumatic meta-fiction" (Doctorow, Mark Z. Danielewski or Tim O'Brien): "Writing which is more likely to undermine conventions of trauma writing and to challenge accepted theories regarding the representation of trauma and its effects" (p. 149).

The literary criticism of trauma studies gained widespread attention with the publication of Cathy Caruth's 'Unclaimed Experience': *Trauma, Narrative, History and Kali Tal's Worlds of Hurt*, even by the standards of 1996 trauma literature. However, these earlier research gave form to the beginning of the literary trauma theory via the popularization of the notion of trauma as an uncharacterized event. Caruth, who pioneered a psychoanalytic post-structural approach, introduced a theoretical trend that suggests that trauma is an irresolvable crisis of the unconscious, which exposes inherent contradictions between language and experience. This Lacanian perspective paints the concept of trauma as a scene of absence that halts linguistic value rather than referential expression, which made silence the main idea while criticizing how trauma functions within literature.

The above traditional model of trauma stroked an array number of researchers and critics who remain outside of the post-structural theme, primarily owing to the irreversible damage that trauma causes to the psyche. It is explained thus, that the supposed neurobiological characteristics of trauma that repels representation and initiates dissociation were of focal importance to highlight as to what extent the suffering was profound. These defined characteristics also determine the cause-whether by an external source (individual perpetrator, collective social practice or natural catastrophe). Though this model has been used as a means to justify that language is incapable of situating the event in time, other models that oppose this claim have been introduced.

The development of the literary trauma theory is better grasped in relation with the dynamic classifications of trauma psychologically speaking and the social, rhetorical and semiotic concerns that comprise the examination of trauma in society and literature. The traditional method couples up the neurobiological theories (mind and memory) with semiotic theories (language, associations, and symbolization).

We need to keep in mind that the traditional method will fail if there is a change in the psychological definition of trauma. This means that the customary Lacanian approach is effective specifically when trauma is defined within the scope of theories following the Freudian way that portrays trauma as experiences that lead to dissociation. In varied manners, the excitement of the classic model centers around the evident marriage involving psychological laws, which govern the functions of trauma, to the semiotic laws which control language's mean. Due to this definition, contemporary critics observe contradictions to the approach of trauma.

Other alternative models to trauma theory allow trauma to be defined in a range of representational possibilities. Alternative models challenge the governing

principles of the traditional ones, which elucidate trauma on the basis of universal effects and characteristics. Critics such as Leys and Cvetkovich, set up a different psychological test, which gave several conclusions regarding trauma's impact on society, perception and language. These differing psychological viewpoints hold true in defining trauma claims to the extent that it permits a new stand on the study of trauma. To this effect, trauma therefore assumes a larger framework and could potentially engage semiotic and psychoanalytic theories to re-evaluate how we comprehend trauma's role in literature. Recent research illustrates promising interest in demonstrating the rhetorical applications of silence or pathological dissociation instead of making use of psychological research. Modern-day critics have established Neo-Freudian, neo-Lacanian, and novel semiotic techniques through emphasizing on the semiotic, rhetorical as well as social implications of trauma. Few examples could be Greg Forter in a neo-Freudian analysis, Barry Stampfl in a Peircean semiotic one and finally neo-Lacanian represented by in Herman Rapaport's.

This alteration in literary trauma concept has produced a series of important practices that put additional emphasis on particular cultural contexts and social components of traumatic experience. These contemporary methods are wide-ranging but could be generally referred to as the multi-faceted model of trauma as a result of the range of the approaches and theories employed.

The researchers who follow this new trend of contemporary trauma studies tend to take a multidisciplinary approach by analyzing trauma through not only the lenses of trauma theory in literature, but also psychoanalysis and post-colonialism or cultural studies. Rothberg and Forter follow this stream and use a neo-Freudian and postcolonial approach. Others such as Luckhurst, Mandel, Yaeger, and Visser use social and political influences within their critics. This pluralistic model distracts from

the focus on trauma as a non-representational idea. It rather leans toward a focus on the specific parts of trauma, which identify meaning via a grander consideration of the cultural and social contexts of traumatic experiences. This point of view leads to diversity in research when it comes to the application of language in trauma narratives. These latter researchers who stand on a ground of a more contemporary approach are called revisionist. These critics not only either take a certain concept from the traditional methods or retrieve from it but also contest the customary theory of trauma to be non-communicational, arguing from a standpoint that admits the variability of society and literature.

Over time, crucial and groundbreaking introductions have surfaced to defy this concept of past and they have brought new ideas about how trauma can be studied through psychological, linguistic and social grounds. These significant approaches explain additional chances concerning trauma's currency based on social, linguistic and psychological mechanisms. The pluralistic model of trauma hints that it is critically explored as an area that instigates the examination of the association between behavior, the psyche and language- minus presuming the traditional definition of trauma, which confirms its non-representational and pathological universalism. The framework's criticism may influence the acknowledgment the effects of suffering on communities and individuals, take into account the function of literature in a ruthless world, or examine the manner in which language expresses extreme experiences. This view point demonstrates a range of theoretical modes, which entail insights from digital culture, cultural studies, and social psychology; it further draws perspectives from semiotic, postcolonial and psychoanalytical, theories. Thus, a singular theorization of trauma will not conform to the varied and contradictory depictions of the same in literature since texts acquire an array of values

that divulge cultural and individual assimilation of the society, memory and self.

Thought for the purpose of this study a focus on the traditional literary trauma theory will be the main method used to analyse our two novels.

## 1.4 Trauma Fiction and Literature

### 1.4.1 Trauma and Literary Studies

Unique and rare is any phenomenon that becomes a legitimate topic of study in several fields such as science, humanities, law and medicine. Trauma holds a cogent stance of contradiction and privilege in relation to interdisciplinary research. Although, with all the contemporary studies and research it has been hard to truly explain it concretely and understand it. Most of the groundbreaking researches that have elucidated a better understanding of trauma are found in the field of literature.

In the trauma studies' arena, it is highly agreed that most of the influential research that have been done in trauma come as a result of the work done by Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman. From the 1990s, both Shoshana Felman and Cathy Caruth have been working instinctively in an innovative manner on the edges of psychoanalysis, literature, and trauma studies.

In 1995, Cathy Caruth published a list of essays entitled *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. A year later, she worked on a complete study of trauma known as *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Since the publication of both these works, Cathy Caruth has become a leading figure in the trauma theory, and her works have become a mandatory point of reference for all researchers who seek to understand phenomenon. On the other hand, Shoshana Felman's work on trauma started in 1992 with her book, which she co-authored with the psychoanalyst Dori Laub, known as *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and*

*History*. Moreover, in 2002, she published a book entitled *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*, where she investigates the association between psychoanalysis and literature. Even though there are several divergences between both researchers, they both created a new path toward the study of trauma in literature. Further, they both agree on the “Belated” aspect of trauma.

Therefore, through literature, human experiences are told in manner that no other field could express or understand. Through literature, not only do we write but we bear witness to the unspeakable story of trauma that cannot be represented entirely in other domains.

#### **1.4.2 Trauma Fiction in American Literature**

It would not be entirely inaccurate to state that the world had far taken a turn for the worse before the modern history attacks, yet it was not until the Western World got abruptly awakened by the crashing of those planes into the World Trade Center and other targets on 9/11 that the world’s deplorable state became visibly apparent. Many writers questioned what could be next for the field of fiction and literature due to this event. It would later take a decade after the traumatic event before universal fiction took a purposeful stand at reinventing itself. In *Ground Zero’s History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novels*, Birgit Däwes posits that “by the end of June 2011, at least 231 novels from around the world are available in print which can be classified as ‘9/11 novels’” (Uytterschout , 2012, p. 6). Dawes later states that “if it seems, at first glance, that all of these texts share the same historical tenor, they are, in fact, marked by a notable degree of diversity” (Uytterschout , 2012, p. 6). Some renowned novelists tackled the traumatic events of that 9/11 terrorist attacks. For instance, Jay McInerney’s *The Good Life* (2006), Claire

Messud's *The Emperor's Children* (2006), Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), Lynne Sharon Schwartz's *The Writing on The Wall* (2004), Ken Kalfus's *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (2006) and Frederic Beigbeder's *Windows on The World* (2003) among others make the list. Some other novelists have used the setting as a stimulus to examine the Western world, and particularly the United States of America, shivering in its complacency.

Subsequently, the book discussed in this thesis, *Falling Man* (2007) by Don DeLillo portrays terribly horrendous moments of that day: "By the time the second plane appears" while Keith and Lianne were watching a video tape to review the attacks, Keith comments: "we're all a little older and wiser" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 135). Baelo-Allué (2012) states that "In the case of 9/11, the degree of traumatic response was different for those who were inside the towers, compared to that of those witnessed it directly from outside the towers, and those who watched it on TV" ( p. 64), like Keith who was in the north tower during the event. According to Kaplan (2005), there are different kinds of victims/witnesses as she mentions that:

Equally important to trauma is one's specific positioning vis-à-vis an event. And as a result, it is necessary to distinguish the different positions and contexts of encounters with trauma. At one extreme there is the direct trauma victim while at the other we find a person geographically far away, having no personal connection to the victim. In between are a series of positions....People encounter trauma by being a bystander, by living near to where the catastrophe happened, or by hearing about a crisis from a friend. (p. 2)

In fact, *Falling Man* replicates the traumatic happenstances in the memories of the survivors and the aftermath of the attack as well as its traumatic consequences on

their selves and identities. If survivors desire to conquer their personal distress, it is incumbent upon them to understand their traumatic memory and then store them in their portion of narrative memory. They must attempt to broach their individual experiences. This dissertation, in examining the theme of the above mentioned novel, will principally tailor its focus on individual trauma rather than a politically and economically influenced cultural trauma.

### **1.4.3 Trauma Fiction in African Literature**

As already mentioned, trauma is often studied in relation to the Holocaust or World War I. Yet, if it must be sufficiently explored and understood, there ought to be no limitations to its study. Therefore, it is to the effect of furtherance that I seek to expand the perimeters of trauma studies, by exploring trauma in the African plot and script. Being a continent that continues to endure the lasting impacts of a tumultuous past and an anarchic history, Africa's setbacks seem to be inherent in the roots of governance and societal discord - these are shortcomings that if resolved, would catalyze the political and economic development of the countries, as well as the social well-being of their citizens.

Though colonial era in Africa ended decades ago, Anglophone-African writing still continues to depict the subject of violence and trauma related to colonialism. Most of the times, these representations are linked to neocolonialism. Later on, this often highlights the relationship between trauma and colonialism. Nevertheless, it is agreed that the insistent representations of past violence by post-independence African literature are a way of steering the convoluted political and psychological processes of trauma and its accompanying recuperation. Though the

main element of this research is not to be related to the trauma to colonialism but rather studied it as an individual trauma.

To a large extent, most of the post-Independence Anglophone-African novels were written in response to colonialism and colonial discourses. In Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (Zimbabwe), Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (Uganda and the Netherlands), Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl* (Nigeria and Britain), Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (set in Ghana, the United States, and France), Nuruddin Farah's *Maps* (Somalia), Zoë Wicomb's *David's Story*, Meja Mwangi's *Carcase for Hounds* (Kenya), and J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (South Africa), these themes are particularly prevalent.

Although these works differ in aesthetic mode, melancholia and mourning, they nevertheless share certain trauma representations specific to the African culture and continent. Contemporary trauma studies have grown out of Sigmund Freud's conceptualizations of mourning and melancholia; as such, studies in justice take the example of the psychoanalytic vocabulary of trauma. As a consequence, psychoanalysis gives a strong language for the discussion of representation of trauma in literature. However, it is crucial to state that this research is not suggesting that trauma operates similarly across all postcolonial or all African literature. This is due to the fact that trauma is not exclusive to colonial and immediate postcolonial imaginings. Contemporary writings in some post-independence nations (in Africa and elsewhere) are no longer concerned with colonialism and its continuing ramifications, but with other forms of trauma such as individual and personal trauma of loss, exile and immigration as is the case for the second novel examined in this thesis, which is Leila Aboulela's *Minaret*. Since trauma theory has been developed in a specifically Western framework, I intend to extend the field of study through an exploration of

this African text. It is argued that the inherent tension within Eurocentric theory can be resolved somewhat by its application and adaptation for more specific and nonwestern contexts.

To accurately explore the trauma in today's Africa; one must move beyond this notion of 'event theory' and extend the focus of trauma studies (Rothberg, 2008, p.8). In the past fifty years, majority of the world's violent and political conflicts have taken place outside of the West (Miller et al., 2006, p. 423). However, contemporary criticism surrounding trauma tends to focus on World War I or the Holocaust. The latest Western model that is being used to manage trauma, therefore, does not take into account the non-Western trauma due to their local and contextual experiences.

By emphasizing the significance of a particular context of a trauma, the study attempts to expand notions of 'trauma' within a framework that is coherent with a specific non-Western culture, but only stressing specificity to the Islamic context. Shining a spotlight on a non-Western country dealing with trauma helps to broaden our understanding of trauma across different cultures, thereby opening up innovative ways of dealing with trauma.

Commenting on the necessity to appreciate traumatic incidents in non-Western settings, Stef Craps states:

Instead of promoting solidarity between different cultures, trauma studies risks producing the very opposite effect as a result of this one-sided focus: by ignoring or marginalizing non-western traumatic events and histories and non-western theoretical work, trauma studies may actually assist in the perpetuation of Eurocentric views and structures that maintain or widen the gap between the west and the rest of the world. (Craps et al., 2008, p. 3)

Mairi Emma Neeves similarly comments that the failure of trauma research to analyze post-colonial and non-Western contexts of trauma implies that:

It has become guilty of the same kinds of omissions and forgetting that its own theory argues is detrimental to the processes of recovery and healing'. Neeves further comment that trauma studies must move beyond its focus on Euro-American events and experiences in order to 'transform [the field of trauma studies] from a mono-cultural discipline into a mode of enquiry that can inform the study of memory within a changing global context. (Neeves, 2008, p. 109).

This research is aligned with the critical paradigm of the last citation, by casting doubt on the capacity of the global Eurocentric models of trauma to account for the African trauma. It is realized that there is a contradiction between the declared interest in non-Eurocentric theory and the reliance on it in the thesis. The conflict is due to the lack of academic research concerning non-Eurocentric theory. The decision to reference largely from critics that have published extensively on Western trauma theory thus helps to underline the need for greater critical attention surrounding trauma in non-Western settings.

Another approach that will be used in this research is stylistic through a quantitative analysis of adjectives in both novels to highlights the use of language in trauma narratives. The next titles will be an introduction to stylistics and its implications in this research.

## **1.5 Stylistics and the Language of Trauma**

### **1.5.1 An Introduction to the Concept of Stylistic Analysis**

There is an extensive knowledge of literature existing in the study of literary essays under linguistic orientation. In the exploits of literary analysis, the functions of language often erroneously count as irrelevant. Consequently, the omission of this pivotal factor contributes to the neglect and non-acknowledgement of significant plots in the interpretation of literature. In the same vein, it frequently happens that in our consumption of literature, we observe certain moods, tones or feelings but are unable to adequately explore these sensations. However, the stylistics analysis of such texts monumentally enhances a sufficient grasp of the language used and the sensations experienced. It also supplies our intuitions with valid proof with regard to the comprehension of literary themes.

The objective of the analysis is to illustrate the application and use of linguistic and stylistic concepts as employed by the author to dexterously evoke the book's theme and intended effects. Hence, this review aids the comprehension of the narrative and simplifies its manipulation of language. In furtherance of the aforementioned role, the intellectual benefits of this examination breed an important advantage to the investigation of whether the use of a certain stylistic is relevant to the trauma experience and its representation but before doing so an introduction to the concept of style and stylistic is presented in the following sections.

### **1.5.2 The Concept of Style**

There have been raging debates over the stratagem of style in relation to literary texts and its definition across various facets. Lehman (1996) theorized that

style can be ascribed to languages, periods, and genres. For instance, scholars with a deft knowledge of Shakespeare's works recognize the authorship of his plays through his literary style. Thus, a style, in its concept, could represent the renaissance period and another for edification, and enlightenment. In the context of languages, it is said that French embodies clarity - simplicity in style, while German is renowned for its obscurity. However, style in its term, possesses a foray of several other applications, despite its allusion to individuals, genres, periods and languages.

Chapman (1973) posits that style is the common adoption of a register by a number of people in a certain recurring situation. He further states that styles are the product of a social situation, which implies a mutual, common relationship among language-users. It therefore follows that stylistics belongs to a part of sociolinguistics-language studied with reference to society. Interests kindled by sociolinguists involve a closer observation on the effect that linguistic styles have on the language of speakers' groups due to ethnicity, social class and across various divides. The features developed in stylistics are likely attained from intermittent and temporary association with its implications in accordance with the measure of the speaker's interaction, either within the context of a working environment or leisure. Essentially, communication proves to be pivotal in the workings of style, it is in fact an essential feature employed as the means of exchange in large, small, close-knit or scattered groups and with attributes concurred upon to be expressive by group members. Abrams (1981) connotes style to be "a manner of linguistic expression on prose or verse" (p. 203). He goes on to explain that the traits of style within a work or as represented by a writer, could be susceptible to a diction-based or word-choice analysis, that would mean syntax and sentence structure, the depth and forms of language pattern, etc. Thus, it is understood that style, with regards to literature, is

primarily characterized by the linguistic behaviors of a literary work and its representational attributes enabling the selection of literary themes that allow the depictive expression of thoughts into words. There is a noteworthy similarity between style and stylistics in relation with linguistics, essentially due to the fact that stylistics is considered as a scientific study of style, itself. However, the more essential rudiment of the field deals with the employment and application of the theories of linguistics to the examination of essays.

Leech and Short (1981) refers to style as being the domain of language use (e.g. what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre, or a particular text). This statement, therefore, implies that style is a tailored use of language by a writer to communicate the specific theme of a narrative to the audience. In referring to style as the forms of language use, it denotes style as being part of a linguistic concept of Ferdinand de Saussure's *Parole et Langue*. The concept informs that an individual employs the use of a language through several forms, in exhibiting only the referential code of that particular language compared to the inclusion of all the properties of the language that comes into the fore in studying it.

The concept further details that, in making reference to 'style A' or the style of X, we imply to a pervasive or recurrent function in a text. Stylistics, as the concept continues to explain, is fundamentally concerned with the language of literature. Significantly, this concept explicitly simplifies the relationship between style and literary or aesthetic function (Leech & Short, 1981). In furtherance of this notion, Cuddon (1991) denotes style as the characteristics of expression in prose or verse, the mannerisms of a writer's expression. The review and evaluation of style includes the scrutiny of a writer's choice of words and figures of speech, it enumerates the devices (rhetorical and otherwise), the form of his sentences (whether they be loose or

periodic), the structure of his paragraphs, undeniably of all conceivable aspects of the language and the manner of his application of the language. This then clarifies stylistics to be an analytical science which oversees every expressive facet of language; lexicology, morphology, prosody (the study of poetry), phonology, and syntax.

Berhanu (2009) also embolden the above-mentioned theories that “style refers to the process of selection and combination involved in writing a fictional work. That means it denotes the writer’s choice of words (diction) and the way such choices are arranged in sentences and longer units of discourse” (p. 38). Coyle et al. (1993) also stated the term style (sometimes linguistic criticism), “is the linguistic study of literature; and the most important questions to be addressed in the study of literature are why and how particular meanings and effects are presented in particular literary works” (p. 1084). Conclusively, an ideology is reached in the knowledge that stylistics conducts the investigation of an author’s literary language and its additions to the structural sketch of literary significance. Similarly, Widdowson (1975) also describes the term stylistics as an area of mediation between two disciplines i.e. both literary criticism and linguistic play crucial roles in literature. The principal task of literary criticism serves to translate and assess literary texts as an artistic endeavor, while linguistic deals primarily with the very codes and specific messages of significance, in as much as these factors emulate the fashions of the structured codes. Similarly, Short (1996) argues that “stylistics is concerned with relating linguistic facts (linguistic descriptions) to meaning (interpretation) in as explicit a way as possible” (p. 5). Hence, it could then be deduced that stylistics, within the field of linguistics, is the study and interpretation of texts.

### 1.5.3 The Concept of Stylistics

Short (1996) posited that “stylistics is a method or an abstract tool employed in the literary analysis of texts through linguistic description” (p. 1). Imperatively, he adds that stylistics spans the borders of two subjects: literature and linguistics (Short, 1996). Therefore, it is evidently possible to note a resemblance in the workings of stylistics and linguistics or literary criticism, as the case may appear, hinging on the engaged perspective.

These definitions and descriptions as deftly summarized by Short (1996) spurs a deduction that denotes stylistics as an approach to language that is linguistic in nature, in detailing the relationship between language and the function of art in literature. The analysis of style in its entirety aims at an object tending toward the discovery of customized artistry in the insinuating tone expressed by the writer’s intent of language. A distinctive property is attributed to writers and texts respectively. Hence, the attributes that suggest or mildly impose their significance in one text will certainly differ in essence within the construct of an additional text by the same or a varied author. In other words, a comprehensive grasp of the narrative would require a constantly renewed acquaintance of not just every text, but the artistic effect of the ensemble and the method with which linguistic elements fit into all. Essentially, style represents a writer’s thought processes in their depiction of a theme, in the attributive methods of their purposed communication to the intended audience and the choice of language. Therefore, style is not an ornament – it transmits the crucial details of significance and evolution that concisely describe the author’s individualism – their basic attitudes, presuppositions, moral stance and their affinity with the plot and audience. More-so, the dutiful task of literary stylistics remains to examine aesthetic and thematic values exuded by linguistic forms, expressing the

author's objective, tone and attitude - all of these being elements that augment the affective or emotive impact of the narrative. These factors contribute to representational features and adequately enhance the function of fictional reality for a unifying theme.

Stylistics, according to Simpson (2004) is used to explore language, and more specifically, to explore creativity in language use and its contribution in the construction of meaning. Stylistics by context makes for a vastly informed study and comprehension of language. The exploration of language in itself allows for pursuit of knowledge in the grasping of literary texts. Also, one finds a pertinent reflexive ability in pursuing an understanding of literary texts, as it provides an illuminative explanation on its derived language system and informs of the 'rules' of language in penetrating through texts governed by compromised rules. Coyle (1993) further consolidate the idea that "it is self-evident that literature is written in language and so in order to discuss literary texts and our understanding them, we must concentrate on the language of those texts, at least to some extent" (p. 1082). Furthermore, an investigation of the different area of stylistic should be in order in the next section.

#### **1.5.4 The Area of Interest of Stylistics**

Stylistics portrays the defined methods with which language is employed and used for the creation of texts. According to Simpson (2004) "to do stylistic analysis is to explore language, and, more specifically, to explore creativity in language use" (p. 7). The components included in the definitions of stylistics, highlights its major study aim as literature. Nonetheless, the aspects of creativity and innovation in the use of language are obscure features in literature. Several forms that also belong to the aforementioned modes of literary writing including journalism; advertising, as well as casual conversation manifest a great deal of stylistic dexterity (Simpson, 2004).

Therefore, stylistics analysis can be used to approach different kinds of texts- literary or non-literary (Wisniewski, 2007).

Fundamentally, stylistics, as theorized by Thornborrow and Wareing (1998), was inclined to attain the complete meaning of a text only through the text itself. Nevertheless, the scope of modern stylistics spans beyond the constraints of that theory. Simpson (2004) maintains that stylistics is interested in language as a function of texts in context, and it acknowledges that utterances (literary or otherwise) are produced in a time, a place, and in a cultural and cognitive context and these extra-linguistic parameters are inextricably tied up with the way a text 'means'. In essence, this implies that the more complete and context sensitive the description of language, then the fuller the stylistic analysis that accrues (Simpson 2004). Modern stylistics is advancing, as stylistics methods become enabled and enriched by theories of society, culture and discourse. Through acquiring insights from discourse analysis, cognitive psychology and feminist theories, it has established divisions like discourse stylistics, feminist stylistics and cognitive stylistics. Also, a recent attempt in the field is trying to gather information about the constituent parts of language and the way these parts can be combined (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998).

### **1.5.5 Why Stylistics?**

Many objectives exist for the analysis of stylistics, although its major purpose in linguistics serve to represent and characterize the elements of language employed in detailing a narrative. Simultaneously, the analysis could also be applied in literary studies to facilitate the simplification, interpretation and exegesis of literary texts. The study of both cases compels the necessity of painstaking diligence to the text, as it embodies the concept and theme of literature. The practice of carrying out these

analyses provides a partly comprehensive understanding of the probable meanings in a text.

Carter (1982) cites that in reading literature, we often experience certain sensations and moods, tones or feelings by virtue of contact with the text but ironically, we also often seem to be without the proper tool to burnish the confidence required “to explore more fully then explicitly formalize those same feelings” (Abrams, 1981, p. 5). Stylistics analysis stands as a valid platform furnishing the required linguistic tools that aide in unequivocally accessing those sensations. Furthermore, “the analysis substantively assuages our intuitions of a text” (Carter, 1982, p. 5). It is the conviction of some stylistics experts that “the primary interpretive procedures used in the reading of a literary text are linguistic procedures. Linguistic analysis of texts therefore can be used 'to make our commentary on the effects produced in a literary work less impressionistic and subjective’” (Carter, 1982, p. 5). Another author states that the simplification and study of linguistics possesses the capacity to contribute to our comprehension of the language category and it can point to us as in the case of poems, where we already know of the significant features we have missed because of our amateurish ignorance of the workings of language (Vendler, 1966 as cited in Carter, 1982). Simpson (2004) also believes the purpose of stylistics analysis is “to explore language, and, more specifically to explore creativity in language use. It is thus, an irrefutable fact that the study and comprehension of stylistics richly expands our scope of reasoning language, additionally, exploring language provides a substantial pursuit on our understanding of (literary texts)” (Simpson, 2004, p. 7).

Yet a different objective of a linguistically biased, stylistics approach involves the fact that the registers and varieties of a language require to be extensively

examined so as to identify the formal linguistic features for categorizing them. It is obvious that any use of language displays certain linguistic features, which allow it to be identified with one or more extra-linguistic contexts, a certain register thereby emerging (Simpson, 1997; Crystal & Davy, 1969). With reference to Thornborrow and Wareing (1998), some of the important aspects of stylistics are as follows: (i) the use of linguistics to approach literary texts; (ii) the discussion of texts according to objective criteria rather than according to purely subjective and impressionistic values; and (iii) emphasis on the aesthetic properties of language (for example, the way rhythm can give pleasure). What is important for us in this research is stylistic in the analyzing of prose that is discussed in the next title.

#### **1.5.6 Framework for Analyzing Prose Style**

To paraphrase Leech and Short (1981), the analysis of style in all its entirety seeks to uncover the artistic precepts conveyed implicitly through the writer choice of language. Attributes are hence by default ascribed to all writers and all texts. Consequently, representations suggesting or mildly imposing significance in one text will certainly differ in its essence within the construct of another text by the same or a different author. Incongruous methods are inexistent for the selection or distinction of significant texts, signifying there must be a constant renewed acquaintance of not just every text, but also for the artistic effect of the ensemble and of the linguistic details fitting into all.

In this regard, it is pragmatic to create a checklist of traits that either holds relevance to a specific text or not. And it is precisely for this cause that a range of questions was included in this discourse (see checklist in subsequent sections). Through the responses obtained, a sequence of data in accordance to the literary effect of each passage will be duly established. We emphatically state that the list is solely

for heuristic purpose: It aids the collection of data based on a systematic function. It certainly is not exhaustive, but could be considered as a list of ‘good bets’: standards that are expected to yield relevant information. The stylistic values associated with the linguistic data must be largely taken on trust at present basis (Leach & Short, 1981).

According to Leach and Short (1981), the categories for the checklist are subdivided into four general headings: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and cohesion and context. Short (1996) in his book entitled ‘Exploring The Language of Poems, Plays and Prose’, also notes the checklist that was mentioned by Leech and Short (1981). This insinuates that a painstaking review of the checklist would guarantee the collation of tangible data of substantive interpretational interest. The documentation of cumulative analysis is evidently a sensible initiative, one that allows for a tally of relevant results. For the purpose of this research a presentation of only the lexical categories will be given and a limited choice to the study of adjectives will be undertaken only on a quantitative level. The following sections will explain further this choice

### 1.5.7 Lexical Categories

This is referred to as the syntactic subdivision of elements belonging to a language’s lexicon. These elements exist in the context of words. Leech and Short (1981) ramify the lexical categories’ checklist into five areas such as adverbs, verbs, adjectives, nouns, and general.

- a. **General** – Is it complex or simple vocabulary? Formal or colloquial? Descriptive or evaluative? General or specific? To what lengths does the writer employ the emotive and other word relations in contrast to the referenced meaning? Are there idiomatic phrases present within the text? If yes, state the type of dialect or register with which these idioms are related...

Do the use of uncommon or unique vocabulary occur in the text? Enumerate the relevant morphological categories, if there is any, existing in text (e.g. compound words, words with particular suffixes)? Words are known to belong to Semantic fields?

- b. **Nouns** - Are known to belong to the syntactic order involving words that identify people, places, things, ideas or concepts with participants that tend to behave as any in this subsequent group: subjects of the verb, objects of the verb, indirect object of the verb, or object of a preposition (or postposition). In furtherance, members of this syntactic order often possess embedded and definite grammatical gender (as is seen in languages which connote gender). Would the nouns be called abstract or concrete? Are there types of abstract nouns occurring (e.g. nouns referring to events, perceptions, processes, moral qualities, social qualities)? Is there a use of proper names (state use, if yes)? Collective nouns?
- c. **Adjectives** – Belongs to a class of words that modify nouns. An adjective precisely defines the features of a noun's referent. Do the adjectives recur often? What kinds of characteristics do the adjectives denote? Psychological? Visual? Auditory? Color? Referential? Emotive? Evaluative? etc. Are adjectives restrictive or non-restrictive? Gradable or non-gradable? Attributive or predicative?
- d. **Verbs** – They are part of a syntactic order of words that generally characterize events, actions, making up either solitarily or within a phrase, the minimal predicate in a clause and presiding over the number and the forms of other components with tendencies to occur in the clause. Are there any verbs conveying a relevant part of the text's meaning? Are the verbs static (referring to states) or dynamic (referring to actions, events, etc.)? Do they 'refer' to movements, physical acts, speech acts, psychological states or activities, perceptions, etc.? Are

they linking (intensive), intransitive, transitive etc.? Are they factual or non-factual?

- e. **Adverbs** – An adverb, only restrictively defined, is a word that belongs to part of a group of words that alter verbs for categories such as direction, time, place and manner. Do adverbs occur often? What semantic functions do they perform (manner, place, time, degree, etc.)? Is there any significant use of sentence adverbs (conjuncts such as so, therefore, however, adjuncts such as certainly, obviously, frankly)?

### **1.5.8 Selected Categories for this Research:**

In this study, certain chosen categories will be taken into consideration, mainly the Lexical Categories and specifically the study of adjective. The study of the use of adjectives will be found in two selected chapters: Chapter two where we study the use of adjectives in *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo and Chapter 3 where we investigate the use of adjectives in *Minaret* by Leila Aboulela. A quantitative approach will be taken into consideration in the analysis of solely the first part of the novel with an examination of few examples from both novels. However, it is important to keep in mind that a study of the count of adjectives in the novels is our aim in this research.

#### **1.5.8.1 Definitions of Adjectives:**

Adjectives are characterized as expressions “that alter, clarify, or adjust the meaning contributions of nouns”, in order to allow for the expression of “finer gradations of meaning” than are possible through the use of nouns alone (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 526). According to Crystal (2008), adjectives which might be abbreviated as A, adj, ADJ belong to the grammatical category of words referring to

the principal series of items that particularize the aspects of nouns from a formal perspective. Crystal (2008) states that the narrow and broad presentations of the term "adjectives" will be found in grammars. Conclusively, an adjective could encompass everything between a noun and a determiner, and an instance of this assertion is made evident in the following phrase: 'the vicar's fine old garden chair' (Crystal, 2008, p. 12). However, a large number of linguistics have preference towards confining it to items that correspond to more or all the standards mentioned above. The other items would therefore be referred to as; "adjective – like " or 'adjectives. ' (Crystal, 2008). Radford et al. (2009) argue that adjectives typically refer to properties which people or things possess, being terms serving to modify nouns, e.g. happy man, noisy engine. The duo linguists affirm that adjectives also appear in front of nouns, hence sharing a similar trait with articles. Consequently, if an adjective and an article both combined with a noun, the combination occurs in a fixed order (a happy man, \*happy a man, the noisy engine, \*noisy the engine). It is essential to note the attributes of adjectives in stating its definitions. This is imperatively important to note in its pertinence to the stylistic analysis of the novels, as we will subsequently offer some examples of the attributes of adjective. To what kinds of attribute do adjectives refer to? Physical? Psychological? Visual? Auditory? Colour? Referential? Emotive? Evaluative? To emphasize the use of adjective as used by our authors.

The analysis of adjectives has been added in this research to explore the notion of failure of language when it comes to describing trauma. Specifically adjective study since it is this category that add description, details, coloring and emotion to a text. The role of stylistic here is to emphasize the trauma fiction genre and the writing style used in it.

## 1.6 Conclusion

This chapter began with an inference drawn from the definition of trauma, as seen through the lenses of Trauma theory and also from major contributions made by early prominent theorists such as Caruth, Freud and Lacapra. Subsequently, this research attempted to demonstrate the theoretical framework of trauma theory and its features as introduced by followers of Freud and Lacan. Hence, the study continued with an examination of contemporary viewpoints represented by the neo-Freud and neo-Lacan critics, to a discussion on trauma literature in both American and African literatures and finally to conclude with a introduction of the use of stylistic and its importance in this research.

In her book “*The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*”, Felman (1992) suggests that although the study of trauma requires an ability to bear witness to wounds that cannot heal, nevertheless, these open wounds possess the potential of being repurposed to become a powerful and vital source of truth, providing apertures through which a victim sees the world anew. Throughout her works, Felman (1992) highlights the necessity for novel quests as she states: “not so much for answers as for new *enabling* questions, questions would open up new directions for research and new conceptual spaces for the yet unborn answers” (p. 16).

Through the course of this research and exploration of Trauma theory, this thesis modestly aims to shed light on relevant questions and new directions. The next chapter extensively deliberates on employing the concepts of working through and acting-out as a general discipline. Since they are “intimately related parts of a process” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 2), the following section will principally focus on the diverse modes with which traumatic experience and individual trauma is represented through trauma theory in “Falling man” Don dellilo.

**Chapter Two:**

**Trauma Experience and Its Narrative in the American Novel *Falling Man* by**

**Don DeLillo**

## **Chapter Two: Trauma Experience and Its Narrative in the American Novel**

### **Falling Man by Don DeLillo**

1. Introduction.....	70
2. Trauma Experience and its Narrative in Don DeLillo’s Falling Man .....	71
2.1 Don DeLillo’s Falling Man as a Trauma Fiction.....	71
2.2 Structural Representation of Trauma .....	72
2.3 Characters Trauma Analysis .....	75
2.3.1 Overcoming Trauma.....	77
2.3.1.1 Characters Acting Out .....	77
2.3.1.1.1 Keith .....	77
2.3.1.1.1.1 Direct Victim and Witness .....	77
2.3.1.1.1.2 Keith's Circular Acting Out.....	80
2.3.1.1.1.3 New World, New Definitions.....	82
2.3.1.1.1.4 Traumatic Recollection of Memory.....	83
2.3.1.1.2.1.5 Timeless State of Absence a Fragmented Self.....	87
2.3.1.1.2 Lianne.....	91
2.3.1.1.2.1 Second Hand Witness and Vicarious Victim.....	93
2.3.1.1.2.2 Link between Trauma, Art and Music in Acting Out.....	97
2.3.1.1.2.3 Awakening a Previous Trauma.....	101
2.3.1.2.2.4 “Falling Man” Role in Lianne’s Acting Out.....	102
2.3.1.2 Characters Working Through.....	104
2.3.1.2.1 Language Role.....	105
2.3.1.2.1.1 An Introduction to Language.....	105

2.3.1.2.1.1 Keith and Lianne Use of Language.....	105
2.3.1.2.2 Ritual Role.....	112
2.3.1.2.2.1 Keith: The Counting Ritual and Corporeality.....	113
2.3.1.2.2.2 Lianne: Religious and Counting Ritual.....	119
2.3.1.2.2.3 The Representation of Chance.....	121
2.3.1.2.2.3.1 An Introduction to Chance .....	121
2.3.1.2.2.3.2 Lianne Confrontation with Chance.....	122
2.3.1.2.2.3.3 Keith Solace in Poker.....	125
2.3.1.2.3 Stylistic Study of the Use of Adjectives in Falling Man.....	128
3. Conclusion: .....	136

## 1. Introduction

September 11, 2001 is a date historically woven into the tragic beginnings of modern dispensation that had the world trembling to a standstill as it witnessed horrific scenes of a boisterous World Trade Center crumble to ruins. Commonly termed as 9/11 - a coinage from the month and date of the attack's occurrence- this epochal tragedy remains one of the worlds' vastly covered events, with all the mediums of expression exhausted to that effect. Ranging from written publications to documentaries, art and music, figures arose from domestic and international spheres with their respective mediums to express the trauma imprinted by the devastating attacks of that dark afternoon. Culled from this lot are David Llewellyn's *Eleven* and Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*, both European fictions depicting the traumatic ripple effects that 9/11 had across the Atlantic, while the film *September 11* explored worldwide reactions that trailed the monstrosity. Simultaneously, there was almost a visible moral objective in the endeavors of several authors and film makers to capture and portray the ramifications of the attacks, from personal and collective viewpoints.

The wake of the towers' collapse prompted an unprecedented increase in book publishing, making it one of the highest surges in America's publishing industry - an event provoked by writers' inclination to chronicle the traumatic experiences suffered as a consequence. John Updike's "The Terrorist" (2006) serves as one of the prominent literary efforts on the subject, as it analytically dissects through the instigating factors and influences of religious fundamentalists. In similar fashion, Alissa Torres' graphic novel; "American Widow" took aim at the grief and frustration of a pregnant widow - a theme that bears the symbolic connotation of America's embattled prospects.

Throughout the diverse representations published, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* stood out and veered from the conventional theme to position the spotlight on survivors of the life-altering tragedy, characterizing the struggle in their loss and in what was an excruciating attempt at normalcy. The focal point of this chapter will seek to extensively illustrate Don DeLillo's representations of individual trauma as re-enacted in his book, *Falling Man*. Furthermore and most importantly, the chapter will demonstrate, in detail, the necessary procedures pivotal to overcoming this genre of trauma by employing the adaptations of the book's co-protagonist; Keith and Lianne.

In the spirit of achieving the proposed objectives, this research will advance to analyze the symptoms of PTSD through the established study of Trauma Theory. Then, proceed further to discuss the various facets of trauma representation as depicted in the novel, with reference to how the main character deals with his traumatic experience, which would include "working through" it, or not - in that he remains restrained in the "acting out" phase. An analysis of adjective in the first part of the novel will be also undertaken to emphasis the trauma impact as experienced by the characters.

## **2. Trauma Experience and its Narrative in Don DeLillo's Falling Man**

### **2.1 Don DeLillo's Falling Man as a Trauma Fiction**

Ascribed as being amongst the most substantially influential books of the post 9/11 era, Don Dellilo's *Falling Man* (2007) accurately embodies and vocalizes the ordeals of individual trauma roused by the shuddering collapse of the towers. The book opens with the male protagonist attempting to make his way

through the rubble strewn across the streets. The first plane had just gone through the North Tower of the World Trade Center and the resulting pandemonium compels Keith to navigate through his route with apparent difficulty. The first chapter gives no specific identification of the characters, enabling the reader to own a vicarious experience of the trauma narrative and allowing them a virtual witnessing of the chaos with no temporal or spatial references. Hence, the reader becomes the character, as both are simply observers of a massively overwhelming event.

The purposefully vague description of the character is an ingenuous narrative tool that deliberately serves to portray the shock and surprise caused by the suddenness of the attack as Rothberg (2009) explained in his book “Writing, Trauma and Home”. Although narrated entirely in the third person, the author often shifted plots between Keith Neudecker, his wife Lianne, and then to an unrelated, unlikely character, Hammad, who was one of the terrorists. This fragmented structure in the book’s plotline creates a disrupted chronology, allowing the story loop between the intervals of post and pre 9/11 periodical sequence. The constant shift between character plots coupled with the dissonance in chronology of unfolding events combines symbiotically to furnish the first chapter with the chaos and confusion that were prevalent in the wake of the attacks, and represent the typical structure of trauma fiction in its entirety.

## **2.2 Structural Representation of Trauma**

In his essay; “The Ruin Of The Future”- a precursory ode to *Falling Man*, DeLillo (2001) reports his process of conception to the early chapters of the actual book thus; “The writer begins in the towers, trying to imagine the moment,

desperately” (p. 39). DeLillo’s creative procedure casts a mild contrast with the eventual first chapter as the novel begins with a descriptive narrative of Keith on the streets, scrambling to seek his way through the debris that had flooded the paths and past the anarchy. Furthermore, the first intriguing paragraphs implicitly emphasize an impossible feat “to imagine the moment” that preceded this scene throughout the book.

The eventualities of Keith’s physical state and whereabouts at the precise moment the planes made impact with the towers only became apparent in the concluding paragraphs of the first chapter. Hence, indicating the circular structure of this narrative that not only discredits every notion that referential allusion is solely achieved at a linguistic level but also further-on affirms its existence at the structural level of the story. Essentially, it follows that the structural form of a story is just as important as its content in the representation of trauma. Remarkably, the absence of names or any form of salient description in the characteristics and identification of the characters remains a fascinating feature of the book’s first chapter. DeLillo (2007) deliberately draws a blank slate on the identity of the protagonist to allow for the positioning of self as driver of the plot, primarily for the objective of providing the reader with a quasi-reality perception of the immediate and unfolding chaos. One is therefore, promptly thrown in the middle of a pandemonium without any preliminary introduction: there is no indication of time or place, all that would later be accounted for as the story progressed.

Falling Man is narrated in the third person and the point of view shifts mostly between Keith and Lianne, but also includes Hammad—one of the terrorists—and Florence, another survivor. There are three main parts, each

named after a character in the story: Bill Lawton, Ernst Hechinger and David Janiak. In each of these parts there is a cross-cutting of the perspectives, actions and thoughts of the main characters in the days, months and years after the attacks. These fragmented vignettes produce constant chronological disruptions, especially in the Hammad sections that take place before 9/11 and that close each of the three parts. The narrative is almost circular: it starts with a dazed Keith Neudecker walking away from the towers just after the collapse of the first tower and ends at the moment just before the opening scene when Keith comes out onto the street in his escape from the burning tower. These narrative disruptions become the equivalent of Keith's state of mind, which is described in the novel in these terms: "He used to want to fly out of self-awareness, day and night, a body in raw motion. Now he finds himself drifting into spells of reflection, thinking not in clear units, hard and linked, but only absorbing what comes, drawing things out of time and memory and into some dim space that bears his collected experience" (p. 66). The traumatised minds of the main characters shape the fragmented narrative and its pace.

The main character is seen to be a mere observer – he becomes a recording lens documenting all that transpired around him without any interference or response by his person. This characterization translates to a sense of bewilderment. According to Vickroy (2002), "trauma writers position their readers in the similarly disoriented positions of the narrators and characters through shifts in time, memory, affect and consciousness" (p. 28). The narrative craft employed in the delivery of *Falling Man*'s plot creates the acute sensation of confusion, the kind that often accompanies a traumatic event. Periodically, the scenes of the novel in their varied sequences spanned across September 11 - the

day of the actual attack- through to several subsequent years after the carnage. Furthermore, the constant shift in the chronology of events and characters combine to relay the notion of confusion present in the storyline, which provides the reader a vacant platform to share in the characters' disoriented state.

As the narrative evolved, the book's structural frame became apparent in the different manners that Keith and Lianne separately dealt with the sudden ramifications of unfolding events. The author highlights these disparities in the individual narrative of both protagonists, as Keith's story commences with him on the streets, tiptoeing past the rubbles and resulting debris from the impact of the first plane that had just hit the Towers. And it ends with a flashback: he finds himself in the Towers, reliving the shock. LaCapra's description of such scenarios would suggest that Keith was experiencing a circular acting-out of his trauma.

Lianne - being the female protagonist and Keith's wife – appears to work through her encounters of the traumatic events. She becomes the only character that sought to find a semblance of redemption. The last paragraph on Lianne informs that, "she [was] ready to be alone, in reliable calm, she and the kid" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 236). With close relatives and acquaintances gone, she looked set to give priority to her son. She falls back on the concrete structure of family sustenance. More details about Keith and Lianne overcoming their trauma will be analyzed in the following titles.

### **2.3 Characters Trauma Analysis**

"Falling Man" portrays as a novel that insists on the theme of individual trauma rather than its collective genre. The narrative brings to the fore the distinctive response with which each character reacts to and deals with the

incidents of 9/11 terrorist attacks. Keith and Lianne exemplified those distinctive reactions common to trauma victims as previously discussed, yet another instance of such contrasting forms of coping mechanism are at the book's second couple; Nina and Martin. Nina Bartos, as the narrative would later reveal, is Lianne's mother. She is a retired academic who lives with her partner Martin, a German art dealer. Although they reside in New York, the couple was spared the throes of any immediate impact of the attack, which is undeniably owing to the couple's location from the scene of the heinous tragedy. This factor also probably contributed to the approach with which Nina and Martin coped with the devastation, rationalizing it as an incident to be dealt with in the context of a historical event. However, Keith and Lianne's reactions strikingly differ with such rationales. The gruesome event defied their cognitive mechanisms and caused severe psychological disruption, resulting in their inability to have any recollection of their former lives before the event or as to what normalcy looks like. Their lives evolved according to the ramifications of that day's macabre terror acts. Given the diverse branches of the event's repercussions, the novel goes on to depict the traumatic experiences of several characters, but for the sake of a unilateral grasp on the theme, the spotlight will fall uniquely on Keith and Lianne's response to the event and the thesis will attempt to analyze their acting-out and working through the trauma.

## **2.3.1 Overcoming Trauma**

### **2.3.1.1 Characters Acting Out**

#### **2.3.1.1.1 Keith**

##### **2.3.1.1.1.1 Direct Victim and Witness**

Prior to our exploration of Keith's acting-out phase, a brief insight into the events that caused his trauma would offer significant measures of relevance to the body of this discourse. It all starts with Keith's plight in escaping the World Trade Center towers after the planes' impact. Here, DeLillo (2007) paints an image of "people running past, holding towels to their faces or jackets over their heads...[with] smoke and ash...rolling down streets and turning corners...seismic tides of smoke" (p. 3). It stealthily became obvious with the narrative that Keith was himself in the towers and that he was wounded. "There was glass in his hair and face, marbled bolls of blood and light" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 3). As Keith walks away, we learn that; "He heard the sound of the second fall, or felt it in the trembling air, the north tower coming down...a soft awe of voices in the distance. That was him coming down, the north tower" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 5). The above highlights the proximity that Keith had towards the trauma, which essentially puts him as a direct, first-hand witness and victim. However, it would not be until the concluding paragraphs of the book that the reader finally arrives at a comprehensive understanding of the ordeals Keith had to endure before his escape and the traumatic effects it imbibed in him.

There were several sceneries simultaneously occurring within Keith's conscious space - he had felt the impact of the collision in the towers and witnessed throngs of people fleeing to safety but one of the psychologically impacting scenarios that convey the overwhelming representation of tragedy and

trauma was him witnessing the death of his close friend, Rumsey. The moment Keith became aware of the disastrous incident; he immediately rushes in search of Rumsey, who he eventually finds, but in critical condition. “He [Keith] squatted alongside and took his [Rumsey] arm and looked at the man, talking to him. Something came trickling from the corner of Rumsey’s mouth, like bile...He saw the mark on his head, an indentation, a gouge mark, deep, exposing raw tissue and nerve” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 241). Still, Keith attempts to make him go the direction of everyone else in the melee. DeLillo (2007) writes: “The whole business of being Rumsey was in shambles now. Keith held tight to the belt buckle. He stood and looked at him and the man opened his eyes and died. This was when he [Keith] wondered what was happening here” (p. 243). Keith’s confused state at that stage points to early evidence of his traumatization. He struggled to fathom the stark reality of the events about him.

Trauma victims are not often aware of the sequences of traumatic events while it happens, and their consciousness is usually belated. As Caruth (1995b) notes as she explains this Freudian concept: “Yet what is truly striking about the accident victim’s experience of the event... is not so much the period of forgetting that occurs 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, Freud says, apparently unharmed” (p. 7). Witnessing colossal panic, and more intensely death, contributes to a break in the psyche - this is aptly expressed in Keith’s state of “unconsciousness” when he recollects getting out of the towers. DeLillo (2007) writes: “They walked down, thousands, and he [Keith] was in there with them; he walked in a long sleep, one step and then the next” (p. 243). The phrase “in a long sleep” illustrates a psychological absence. This

psychological split creates a distortion of the psyche and causes Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Caruth (1996a) writes: “What causes, trauma, then, is a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind’s experience of time” (p. 61).

The above citation is symbolically represented in the following: “Someone took his arm and led him forward for a few steps and then he walked on his own, in his sleep, and for an instant he saw it again, going past the window, and this time he thought it was Rumsey” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 144). He confused it with Rumsey, the man falling sideways, arm out and up, like pointed up, like why am I here instead of there” (DeLillo, 2011, p. 244). Rumsey’s death unconsciously creates a gap in Keith’s psyche or rather blocks the part which would ordinarily have aided him process and translate the events he had witnessed. It is in this incoherent state that there ensues a psychological struggle to distinctly separate the past from the present, his attempt to grasp reality only shows what he consciously intends to forget but which is too overwhelming to suppress, hence the image of the falling man. His behavior clearly shows that not only has he been traumatized, but that he is an individual with a strong tendency to stay in acting out and certainly experience difficulties in working through.

#### **2.3.1.1.1.2 Keith’s Circle Acting Out**

The circular structure of *Falling Man* depicts that the experienced trauma is continually relived, with the characters being compelled into traumatic repetition. After several episodes in the bewilderment of realism, Keith eventually becomes stuck in a time-loop, without the ability to differentiate between past and present, and is equally trapped between a specific past and the future in an endless series of acting out. Trauma is an ever present phenomenon and the novel’s structure represents the

mental development of the main character; Keith, who remains tethered in his reenactment of the original event: “They walked down, thousands, and he was in there with them. He walked in a long sleep, one step, and then the next...he thought his mouth and eyes were sinking into his skin. Things came back to him in hazy visions, like half an eye staring - these were moments he’d become lost as they were happening and he had to stop walking in order to stop seeing them” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 311-312).

He is blatantly unaware of his conscious environment neither is he aware of how the events witnessed and some in which he participated, impacted him: “Someone took his arm and led him forward for a few steps and then he walked on his own, in his sleep and for an instant he saw it again, going past the window, and this time he thought it was Rumsey. He confused it with Rumsey, the man falling sideways, arm out and up, like pointed up, like why am I here instead of there” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 312). Keith’s “sleep” continues as his senses are replete with stimuli that he cannot attempt and afford to comprehend. “He thought it was Rumsey,” forgetting that he had left Rumsey in his office after seeing him die. He was confronted with an experience beyond human understanding and is, consequently, altered by the traumatic experience.

Within a short period, his once safe work environment became a crucible of torment: dead colleagues, blood everywhere, debris, smoke, ashes and people falling to their deaths:

It was not a street anymore, but a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night. He was walking through rubble and mud and there were people running past holding towels to their faces or jackets over their heads ... they ran and fell, some of them, confused and ungainly, with debris coming down

around them, and there were people taking shelter under cars. (DeLillo, 2007, p.3)

DeLillo relies on visual images which are, according to Luckhurst (2008) “where the psychic registration of trauma truly resides” (p.147) making them the very foundation of traumatic memory. A world of “falling ash and near night,” the desolate landscape of “rubble and mud” and the despair that permeated the air, with “people running past” are reenacted in the novel’s opening lines (p. 1). There is almost no emotional or cognitive response to these impressions. Keith does not appear to have the ability to fit them in a framework of understanding. “He saw people shedding water as they ran, clothes and bodies drenched from sprinkler systems. There were shoes discarded in the street, handbags and laptops, a man seated on the sidewalk coughing up blood - Paper cups went bouncing oddly by” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 4). Further, DeLillo (2007) posits that “Shoes,” “handbags,” “laptops,” and “paper cups” acquire the meaning of the disaster and are warranted the same meaning as the man “coughing up blood” (p. 4). They lose their status of everyday, banal object and became part of the terror. This change of perspective persists for years in Keith’s case.

Unlike other characters, such as Martin and Nina, Keith is unable to fully narrate the details of his experience in the attack. As previously mentioned, this part of the discourse will explore the different elements of acting out as experienced by Keith.

#### **2.3.1.1.1.3 New World, New Definitions**

A paradigm shift that became intently obvious to Keith through his ordeals was made stoutly clear by the phrase: “This was the world now” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 3). This new world refers to one immersed in office supplies and other random objects, which are ripped out of their symbolic context and have now abruptly become part of

a new scene of terror. Starkly, the western, urban reality is brutally replaced by a primary struggle for survival. According to Tal (1996), “survivors emerge from the traumatic environment with a new set of definitions” (p. 16). Vickroy (2002) continues in that same vein to state, that “a traumatic experience can sometimes produce an indelible effect on the human psyche that can change the nature of an individual’s memory, self-recognition, and relational life” (p. 11). These “new definitions” definitely redefined the manner in which he views and experiences the world as it gradually alters the core of his self and his identity. In the first months after the events, he believed that life was “meant to be lived seriously and responsibly, not snatched in clumsy fistfuls” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 137); however, this hastily concluded ideology would later change as time progressed. This change appears evidently more vivid when he would transform into the elements of his boisterous and vivacious world of casinos, where he is ironically but utterly convinced that “most lives make no sense” (DeLillo, 2011, p. 216).

Although this was not a new, suddenly adopted perception for Keith, it was not a temporary consequence of foresight influenced by the 9/11 terror. It is a long-lasting change that persists in the months and years after the attacks. The relation between his thoughts and observations are irreversibly altered, and reality itself assumes an unfamiliar form. Thus;

It was something that belonged to another landscape, something inserted, a conjuring that resembled for the briefest second some half-seen image only half believed in the seeing, when the witness wonders what has happened to the meaning of things, to tree, street, stone, wind, simple words lost in the falling ash. (DeLillo, 2011, p. 103)

Amidst the chaos, it soon became impossible for Keith to find any definite sense to the subsisting life around him - he found that most things held constantly changing representations, from the least significant objects to life's important elements. Hence, making sense of it all was too laborious and often futile.

#### **2.3.1.1.1.4 Traumatic Recollection of Memory**

The changes Keith went through are unequivocally explained in the study and analysis of Trauma Theory. The traumatizing experience caused a breach in Keith's memory, as he seems to be incapable of consciously accessing the terrible scenes he has witnessed and in which he was actively part of within the Towers. Therefore, the working of a traumatized mind is fundamentally different from the normal mechanisms of memory during the process of a victim's attempt to remember his traumatic experience. Caruth (1995a) illustrates further that:

Perhaps the most striking feature of traumatic recollection is the fact that it is not a simple memory. Beginning with the earliest work on trauma, a perplexing contradiction has formed the basis of its many definitions and descriptions: while the images of traumatic re-enactment remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control. (p. 151)

The opening and closing chapters of *Falling Man* describe Keith's confrontation with the attacks, highlighting his frantic efforts to escape, literally and figuratively. According to Caruth (1995a), the reason trauma has no place in a consciously accessible memory is because "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time" (p, 151). DeLillo (2007) subtly portrays Keith as a mere observer of the event and details the impressions of all his senses to be crucial in

the opening chapters, but there is rational consideration to structure these impressions into a meaningful narrative. As Vickroy (2002) writes; contemporary fiction can transfer the traumatic experience “by focusing on a broad range of survivors’ viewpoints, eliciting detailed descriptions and individual sense memories (e.g., what they saw, heard, smelled, etc.)” (p. 21). The next passage is a suitable example of this:

In time he *felt* the towers stop leaning. The lean *felt* forever and impossible and he sat and *listened* and after a while the tower began to roll slowly back. He didn’t know where the phone was but he could *hear* a voice on the other end, still there, somewhere. He *saw* the ceiling begin to ripple. The *stink* of something familiar was everywhere but he didn’t know what it was. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 240)

This excerpt serves as cogent representation of Keith’s incoherent yet perceptible state of mind at the opening and closing chapters of the novel, as it illustrates that there is a clear focus in his sense memory. In these few sentences, we come across five sensory verbs and impressions from which four of the five senses are expressed. In the first and last chapters, there is almost no emotional or cognitive response to these impressions. Keith does not possess, in that current state, the ability to fit these impressions in a framework of understanding. There is an obvious lack of cognitive response that indicates he is not consciously experiencing the events as they are happening. The opening chapter presents an anonymous man void of any specific characteristics, which emphasizes Keith’s absence during these moments.

Hence, Caruth (1995a) infers that this absence during the traumatic event results in the inability to consciously recall the events. The traumatic memories float around in the brain and suddenly appear uncontrolled as a belated response to retrospectively master the event. This response “takes the form of repeated, intrusive

hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event” (Caruth, 1995a, p. 4). In *Falling Man*, there are several indications that Keith compulsively relives the event through dreams and flashbacks, as the next excerpt shows: “These were the days after and now the years, a thousand heaving dreams, the trapped man, the fixed limbs, the dream of paralysis, the gasping man, the dream of asphyxiation, the dream of helplessness” (DeLillo, 2011, p. 230). The final chapter hints at flashbacks from which Keith suffers in the years after the attacks. DeLillo (2007) states that “Things came back to him in hazy visions, like half an eye staring. These were moments he’d lost as they were happening and he had to stop walking in order to stop seeing them” (p. 243).

The novel proceeds to introduce another character to prove the intricate, yet concise concept of trauma. It would be narrated that Keith had sought to overcome the debilitating symptoms of his trauma and had met Florence Givens in the quest of this purpose. They found and enjoyed familiar traits in each other’s company and went on to have an affair. The mode of trauma confrontation between Keith and Florence exemplifies an important aspect of trauma, in that trauma is not inherent to an event. They were both in the Towers, on the same floor, where they supposedly witnessed the same horrible scenes, but circumstances would only have Keith suffer the experience as trauma. Caruth (1995a) points at this aspect of trauma when she says that “the pathology [of trauma] consist solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception” (p. 4). Although the two witnessed the same event, they responded differently to it.

While Keith struggle to consciously access that particular memory, Florence explicitly reeled through every detail she recalled of the event, in order to sufficiently understand it. This is similar to the idea that DeLillo (1997) proclaims in ‘In the

Ruins': every detail is important in an attempt to grasp the event. Florence found haven in the knowledge that they had both witnessed same horrific events and felt safe within it enough to testify:

She wanted to tell him everything. This was clear to him. Maybe she'd forgotten he was there, in the tower, or maybe he was the one she needed to tell for precisely that reason. He knew she hadn't talked about this, not so intensely, to anyone else. (DeLillo, 2007, p.55)

Despite being with a fellow survivor, with whom he shared similar experiences, nonetheless, Keith found it an impossible task to speak out on his ordeals from the same event. Instead, he listens carefully, "noting every detail, trying to find himself in the crowd" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 59). On yet another visit to Florence, she again starts to go over all the details of that day in September, as it occurred to them that:

They could talk about these things only with each other, in minute and dullest detail, but it would never be dull or too detailed because it was inside them now and because he needed to hear what he'd lost in the tracings of memory. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 90-1).

The event became part of them, and although "the images of traumatic reenactment remain absolutely accurate and precise; they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control" (Caruth, 1995c, p. 151). Keith needs to hear Florence's reconstruction of the events, because he is not able to trace his memories. During these encounters, Keith as well as Florence would try to possess control over the traumatic event, but while she attempts to reconstruct her memory by fitting it into a narrative, Keith can only listen, "mouth pressed against his hand" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 57), and face the impossibility of tracing his own memories. Eventually, in a desperate attempt to control the past that he is unable to grasp, he starts an affair with

Florence. The sexual and physical possession that was inherent in their relationship can be seen as Keith's attempt to master the traumatic event, embodied through her.

#### **2.3.1.1.1.5 Timeless State of Absence and Fragmented Self**

The "new set of definitions," as Tal (1996) calls it, applies not only in Keith's approach to a paradigm shift but even more importantly, it transforms the innate perception of his person. A part of Keith seems to be left in the ruins of the tower and it would appear that in this lingering state, a newborn version of his being came to life. The book reports that he returns to his apartment in the days after 9/11 to take some personal effects but finds himself wandering the space, "thinking of the man who used to live here and he checked the bottles and cartons for a clue" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 27). The strangeness of the lull habitation is not the only affectation he finds unsettling but the person who used to live there also appeared oddly unfamiliar to him. In an attempt to seek a recollection of his identity and restore his pre-traumatic self, he corrects his name that had been misspelled on his mail. There was no reason why, because "it wasn't him, with the name misspelled, that's why" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 31). It was apparent that Keith had lost his former self in those towers, and he was not the only one who noticed. Lianne would look at him and would see that although he was physically present, he just was not there. He was absent: the Keith she knew had vanished. He had returned from the scene of the attacks, covered in blood and dust - he stood in the doorway with a "gaze that had no focus in it" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 87). And when he showered a few days later, Lianne only saw a "dim figure far away inside plexiglas" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 23). In the days after the attacks, "He was a hovering presence ... He was not quite returned to his body yet" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 59). Thus, Keith is described as a blur; his person is undefined neither can it be grasped.

In the moment after the attacks, Keith seems to be caught between two identities: A pre 9/11 and post 9/11 Keith. To a reasonable degree, Lianne re-orders his life and guides him into the role of a father and husband.

She didn't want to believe she was being selfish in her guardianship of the survivor, determined to hold exclusive rights. This is where he wanted to be, outside the tide of voices and faces, God and country, sitting alone in stillrooms, with those nearby who mattered. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 20)

Due to Keith's "absence", Lianne tries to structure his post-9/11 life by offering him stability in the concerns of family life. After a considerable period spent with Lianne and Justin; his son, the dutiful initiative took hold to momentarily mend the gaps and cracks in his psyche but it would not last, as gradual changes soon began to manifest until the traumatic events returned with an intensity that overwhelmed him. In his process of acting out, the concept of time fades away. The boundaries between past, present and future vanish and Keith seems to live in a timeless existence. There is a structural element existent in *Falling Man* that represents this loss of time. As previously mentioned, the story starts when Keith walks through the rubble of what is left of the Towers on September 11. The story ends with a description of Keith back in the Towers, living through the horror of the event again. This, yet again, demonstrates Keith's stagnancy in a timeless circle; "He began to think into the day, into the minute. It was being here, alone in time, that made this happen, being away from routine stimulus, all the streaming forms of office discourse" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 65).

As a result of the continuous time loop, his stream of thoughts becomes tangled up:

"Now he finds himself drifting into spells of reflection, thinking not in clear units, hard and linked, but only absorbing what comes, drawing things out of

time and memory and into some dim space that bears his collected experience”

(DeLillo, 2007, 66).

When he leaves his family for poker, he goes back to live the elusiveness of time. During one of those tournaments, he meets one of his old poker friends, Terry Chang; “They talked a minute longer, then went to their designated tables without making plans to meet later. The idea of later was elusive” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 200). Trapped between the past and future, he is stuck in the present. Keith’s concept of time is a “durational” one rather than a “chronological” one (Vickroy, 2002, p. 5). A durational time concept means that the victim continues to “experience the horrors of the past through internal shifts back in time and space rather than experiencing the past as differentiated from the present” (Vickroy, 2002, p. 5). Keith remains trapped in time, which implies an endless acting out without any hope for an alternative future. Most elements that point to Keith’s suffering from the trauma are made explicit in the final chapter. Throughout the better part of the book, we know relatively little of Keith’s psyche since in conversations; he talks about everyday things without revealing any deeper thoughts or emotions.

Keith’s downward spiral significantly reflects the book’s title: *Falling Man*. He flounders in his struggle to embrace the reality of the gory events he witnessed and eventually loses grip on essential societal structures responsible for the coherent tangibility of human life: he distances himself from his wife and his son, isolates his friends, and deliberately refuses contact with any figure from his pre 9/11 life. The continuous and cataclysmic sequence of psychological plights that plagued him into a place of retreat forces the figurative definition of his person as a falling man. In a more literal sense, “Falling Man” would refer to the individuals who jumped or fell from the WTC Towers. These images seem burned in Keith’s mind and he constantly

battled to fathom the true happenstance of actual people throwing themselves down and falling from the Towers towards sudden death. One of his first utterances to Lianne when he arrived at her apartment would be that “there was a shirt coming down out of the sky” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 88). The final chapter concluded by making explicit allusions to the impact that these falling men had on Keith. An excerpt of it follows thus:

“...Then something outside, going past the widow. Something went past the window, and then he saw it... He could not stop seeing it, twenty feet away, an instant of something sideways, going past the window, white shirt, hand up, falling before he saw it” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 242).

As Keith leaves the building in the latter stages of the book, DeLillo (2007) refers yet again to the image of the falling people: “Then he saw a shirt come down out of the sky. He walked and saw it fall, arms waving like nothing in this life” (p. 246).

The image symbolizes Keith’s trauma. The impalpable image that he cannot describe, that he is unable to understand or fit in with the rest of his memory is what he witnesses but also who he has become. The fact that he does not see a falling man, but “a shirt come down out of the sky”, a “white shirt, hand up”, symbolically represents the void of the post 9/11 Keith, who seems to have lost himself. Keith shows not only the different results of trauma, but he also embodied both the victim that survived and the witness who suffers from psychic trauma. With a deeper understanding of Keith’s PTSD symptoms, a more comprehensive and observable significance of trauma’s effect on an individual comes to light. Thus, most decisions that Keith undertake are a consequence of his trauma.

### **2.3.1.1.2 Lianne:**

With Keith's source and reaction to trauma extensively detailed and analyzed, the subsequent subject of trauma to naturally explore would be that of his wife; Lianne. All through the entire narrative, she never seemed or acted like the typical trauma victim, majorly owing to the mode through which she experienced the event. When the attack happened, Lianne watched it on her TV from home. As much as she seems distant from the event, that does not mean that her reaction is less. Erikson (1995) explains this as follows:

It only makes sense to insist that trauma can issue from a sustained exposure to battle as well as from a moment of numbing shock, from a continuing pattern of abuse as well as from a single searing assault, from a period of severe attenuation and erosion as well as from a sudden flash of fear. The effects are the same, and that, after all, should be our focus. (p. 185)

In addition to acknowledging the trauma being experienced by Lianne, this assertion will indicate the effect that the particular facet of trauma had on her as well as the way she faces the issue.

In an intentional effort to delimit the concept and complicate the obvious implications of trauma, DeLillo (2007) creates a character to exhibit and represent the travails of a second-hand trauma witness as an equal victim. He created Lianne. Despite her means of witnessing the event, she demonstrated similar symptoms as Keith, one of which was her confrontations with PTSD. Her tribulation as a as both a victim and witness is valid by consequence of trauma's universal effect. Lianne's trauma symptoms are triggered by norms of her routine activities, such as art and music. As the narrative stealthily lets up, her grief and torment appears to be more profound, as it would reveal that the 9/11 tragedy reaches through to old scars and

revive the initial trauma involving the suicide committed by her father. One specific variety of art- the performance art of “Falling Man”- serves as the trigger to this effect; however, she finally copes in an approach opposite to Keith’s by eventually moving to working through rather than remaining in the acting out phase.

#### **2.3.1.1.2 .1 Witness as Second-Hand or Vicarious Victim**

It is foremost crucial to examine Lianne’s character as defined by the circumstances of the narrative and scrutinize the diverse scenarios through which she becomes traumatized by the tragedy of September 11, especially when compared to Keith. Upon Keith’s arrival to Lianne’s apartment, which would be his first destination after escaping the horrors of the World Trade Center, “[s]he turn[s] off the TV set...protecting him from the news” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 87). For Lianne, the immediate as well as simultaneous witnessing of the harrowing event, which included watching it unfold on the news and living through it with Keith, a direct witness of the incident, contributed majorly to her identifying as a trauma victim. This kind of trauma signifies a new notion that deserves further examination, particularly concerning other 9/11 literature. As Rothberg (2009) explains:

For most of us, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were experienced as something we saw—as a spectacle—and what we saw had an immediate impact on what we felt. The passage from seeing to feeling associated with terrorism in the age of instantaneous communications technology—and its effect on more traditional forms of media, such as literature—is an important point to hold on to in our discussion of 9/11. ( p. 125-26)

Lianne experienced 9/11 through the media and she becomes, Kaplan (Kaplan, 2005) calls it, a vicarious trauma victim. Further, she explains in her book “Trauma Culture”:

“Vicarious traumatization may be a component of witnessing, but instead of only intensifying the desire to help an individual in front of one, witnessing leads to a broader understanding of the meaning of what has been done to victims, of the politics of trauma being possible” (Kaplan, 2005, p. 123).

Kaplan’s assertion infers that those who become traumatized via witnessing possess a seeming grasp of the ordeals experienced by direct victims, which in itself can result in their own acquisition of PTSD symptoms.

Vicarious trauma is a cogent phenomenon that could potentially lead to the emergence of similar symptoms as the primary victims of trauma. DeLillo (2007) comments on the significant role of witnessing:

It was something that belonged to another landscape, something inserted, a conjuring that resembled for the briefest second some half-seen image only half believed in the seeing, when the witness wonders what has happened to the meaning of things, to tree, street, stone, wind, simple words lost in the falling ash. (p. 103)

She began to constantly question what had happened that had switched her point of view and, in conclusion, affected her psyche and made her a witness, more specifically a vicarious trauma victim. She illustrates how she felt while watching the tower falling, when she said to Nina her mother:

“...But when the towers fell...”

“I know.”

“I thought he was dead.”

“So did I,” Nina said. “...So many watching...”

“Thinking he’s dead, she’s dead.”

“I know.”

“Watching those buildings fall.”

“First one, then the other. I know,” her mother said.

(DeLillo, 2007, p. 11)

Lianne and her mother’s dialogue openly speak out about the feeling and thoughts of most people who watched the 9/11 horror happening. Both of them clearly articulate that other people acknowledged that they were witnessing death directly on TV. Moreover, both of them recognize the effect of what they saw. Yet, that would not be the only time Lianne experiences witnessing. DeLillo (2007) writes:

Every time she saw a videotape of the planes she moved a finger toward the power button on the remote. Then she kept on 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 spirit that carried lives and histories, theirs and hers, everyone’s, into some other distance, out beyond the towers. (p. 134)

Similar to Keith, Lianne wanted to live the event again and again, it became an obsession. According to DeLillo (2007), “She bit her lip and watched. They would all be dead, passengers and crew, and thousands in the towers dead, and she felt it in her body, a deep pause, and thought there he is, unbelievably, in one of those towers, and now his hand on hers, in pale light, as though to console her for his dying” (p. 134-35). Her views of the world had changed, the way she felt about life changed, what happened became a part of her daily life. We see this again when DeLillo (2007)

writes, “She read newspaper profiles of the dead, every one that was printed. Not to read them, every one, was an offense, a violation of responsibility and trust. But she also read them because she had to; out of some need she did not try to interpret” (p. 106). These thoughts and sensations demonstrate Lianne’s profound connection to the event. The survival guilt hunted her and she felt obliged to honor the dead.

Everything changed for her and she lost of point of reference on how to live her life. The event impacted her psyche and paralyzed her being. DeLillo (2007) writes: “Everything seemed to mean something. Their lives were in transition and she looked for signs. Even when she was barely aware of an incident it came to mind later, with meaning attached, in sleepless episodes that lasted minutes or hours, she wasn’t sure” (p. 67). Lianne is desperately trying to make sense of what happened. She became emotionally unstable and consequently started to show and experience effects of a traumatic person.

She could not stop anymore the flow of thoughts related to the event. She became anxious, agitated and her mind stuck on the terror. She tells Keith, “I wake up at some point every night. Mind running non-stop. Can’t stop it” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 124). She doesn’t feel ownership of her thought anymore or feels it is hers. She states that they are “[thoughts I can’t identify thoughts I can’t claim as mine” (p. 125). She is unable to make sense of what happen to recognize her feeling or thoughts. She became fragmented psychologically.

Moreover, she has the urge to witness what she underwent, similar to a trauma victim’s need to express their narratives to other people. While telling her story, she begins to recall fragments of her repressed memory, which reveals that she was not completely aware of all the details when the attacks first happened. She “[wanted to tell them but did not. Tell them everything, say everything. She needed them to listen”

(DeLillo, 2007, p. 128). The need to make other people witness her harrowing experiences demonstrates the devastating impact of the 9/11 attacks on her. Her mental stability, behavior and affect all seemed changed and complex.

### **2.3.1.1.2.2 Link between Trauma, Art, and Music in Acting Out**

Don DeLillo showcases the anxiety and weakness of Lianne through her relation with music and art. Growing in a household that always valued art, Lianne had always felt a keen interest and admiration for art. Though after the attack art became one of those things that belonged to the past and a reminder on how life was different and uncertain.

Di Prete (2006) illustrates how trauma victims can be influenced by art: “Art 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 the self” (p. 107). Di Prete (2006) is speaking about how the emotional connection to art can lead to a form of coping with the trauma. It can also play the role of trigger.

Lianne experienced her changing views on art while admiring an artwork in her mother home. DeLillo (2007) writes:

Two of the taller items were dark and somber, with smoky marks and smudges, and one of them was partly concealed by a long-neck bottle. The bottle was a bottle, white. The two dark objects, too obscure to name, were the things that Martin was referring to. “What do you see?” he said. She saw what he saw. She saw the towers. (p. 49)

Images are stuck in Lianne’s mind leading to her reliving the traumatizing image. Then, she follows with an unusual response to the music coming from Elena’s, her

neighbor, place, which is a demonstration of the weakness of her psyche. DeLillo (2007) says:

They lived on the top floor of a redbrick building, four-storied, and often now, these past days, she walked down the stairs and heard a certain kind of music, wailing music, lutes and tambourines and chanting voices sometimes, coming from the apartment on the second floor, the same CD, she thought, over and over, and it was beginning to make her angry...A woman named Elena lived in that apartment. Maybe Elena was Greek, she thought. But the music wasn't Greek. She was hearing another set of traditions, Middle Eastern, North African, Bedouin songs perhaps of Sufi dances, music located in Islamic tradition, and she thought of knocking on the door and saying something. (p. 67)

In Lianne's mind, the music is foreign and anything foreign for her is linked to Islam and terror. That anyone would attempt to play that nature of music is infuriating to her senses as it reels back the excruciating memories of 9/11. It provokes Lianne to a point of anxiety and fury every time she hears it:

She wanted to knock on the door and say something to Elena. Ask her what the point is. Adopt a posture. This is retaliation in itself. Ask her why she's playing this particular music at this highly sensitive time. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 68)

Lianne thinks that this kind of music is disrespectful to the dead and is more a sign of honoring the perpetrators. This bottled up rage would later come into full display when she faces her neighbor Elena:

“What is it? Music, that's all. I like it. It's beautiful. It gives me peace. I like it, I play it.”

“Why now? This particular time?”

“Now, later, what’s the difference? It’s music.”

“But why now and why so loud?”

“Nobody ever complained. This is the first time I’m hearing loud. It’s not so loud.”

“It’s loud.”

“It’s music. You want to take it personally, what can I tell you?”

.....

“Of course it’s personal. Anybody would take it personally. Under these circumstances. There are circumstances. You acknowledge this, don’t you?”

“There are no circumstances. It’s music,” she said. “It gives me peace.”

“But why now?”

“The music has nothing to do with now or then or any other time. And nobody ever said it was loud.”

“It’s fucking loud.”

“You must be ultrasensitive, which I would never think from hearing the language you use.”

“The whole city is ultrasensitive right now. Where have you been hiding?”

(DeLillo, 2007, p. 119-120).

Although Elena explained that it is just music and she enjoyed listening to it, Lianne took the matter emotionally. The music became a trigger that caused her anxiety and feeling of uneasiness. It drew her back to her memories and caused flashbacks. Lianne

keeps referring to “circumstances,” which reveals the magnitude of her PTSD. Whatever she sees and hears links her back to her trauma.

Lianne gets angrier after her discussion with Elena and ends up reacting violently to the situation. Herman (1992/1994) explains: “Because of their difficulty in modulating intense anger, survivors oscillate between uncontrolled expressions of rage and intolerance of aggression in any form” (p. 56). We see this uncontrolled rage soon after Lianne’s first nonproductive exchange with Elena:

She [Lianne] twisted her open hand in Elena’s face, under the left eye, and pushed her back into the entranceway...Lianne mashed the hand into the eye and the woman took a swing at her, a blind right that caught the edge of the door. Lianne knew she was going crazy even as she turned and walked out, slamming the door behind her and hearing the dog bark over the sound of a solo lute from Turkey or Egypt or Kurdistan (DeLillo, 2007, p. 120).

Even Lianne thinks that she is “going crazy.” Her irrational anger is yet another sign of how deep she is traumatized.

### **2.3.1.1.2 .3 Awakening a Previous Trauma**

One consequence of post traumatic disorder involves taking back the character to old traumas. In Lianne’s situation, she remembered her father’s suicide: “Jack Glenn, her father, did not want to submit to the long course of senile dementia. He made a couple of phone calls from his cabin in northern New Hampshire and then used an old sporting rifle to kill himself” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 40). Appearance of old trauma is a case that is highly observed in vicarious trauma victims. Kaplan (2005) states, “the difficulty of fully distinguishing trauma from vicarious traumas emerges; one can see the way that symptoms of prior traumatic events are triggered by new ones” (p. 2). This can later on cause a stronger reaction. As Herman (2005) explains,

“While specific, trauma-related symptoms seem to fade over time, they can be revived, even years after the event, by reminders of the original trauma” (p. 48). In spite of this fact, there is no connection between 9/11 and her father’s suicide and that the second trauma is an old one that Lianne had recovered from, with one leading to the remembrance of the other. Kacandes (2003) notes that “[radically different traumas can be experienced as similar by those who have already been traumatized” (p. 168). However, the two traumas are not similar but one triggers the other.

While working with the Alzheimer group and listening to their writings about 9/11, Lianne reconnects with her father’s memory: “She read everything they wrote about the attacks. She thought of her father. She saw him coming down an escalator, in an airport maybe” (67). She links 9/11 with her father and persists in hearing the stories again and again.

When Lianne says to Keith “My father shot himself so I would never have to face the day when he failed to know who I was” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 130), we observe again the connection that she makes between her two traumas. Lianne states this while: “They were watching a late-night newscast...as a correspondent in a desolate landscape, Afghanistan or Pakistan, pointed over his shoulder to mountains in the distance...There was stock footage on the screen of fighter planes lifting off the deck of a carrier” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 130-31). Her participation in this group impacts Lianne in three ways: first, she is reminded of her dad’s suicide; second, she is triggered and continues on the path of anxiety about getting Alzheimer’s like her dad the late; and third, this might be a way for her to work through her trauma: “Lianne herself, bearing her father’s mark, the potential toll of plaque and twisted filaments, had to look at this woman and see the crime of it, the loss of memory, personality and identity, the lapse into eventual protein stupor” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 125). This could be

a two sided coin as it would either hinder Lianne's psyche and keep her fixated on her trauma or open up the door to her healing.

#### **2.3.1.1.2.4 "Falling Man" Role in Lianne's Acting Out**

We proceed to the examination of the performance artist "Falling Man," and the role that he played in the suffering of Lianne Lianne's suffering. DeLillo (2007) writes:

She'd [Lianne] heard of him, a performance artist known as Falling Man. He'd appeared several times in the 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 towers when people fell or were forced to jump. He'd been seen dangling from a balcony in a hotel atrium and police had escorted him out of a concert hall and two or three apartment buildings with terraces or accessible rooftops. (p. 33)

Observing the "Falling Man" is like having a traumatic flashback. Freud (1978/13) explains: "dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright" (p. 13). This performance is like a daydream of the 9/11 event. It causes Lianne to reenact the event and the horrific feeling that overwhelm her. Caruth (1996a) writes: "The returning traumatic dream...is, purely and inexplicably, the literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits" (p. 59). The witness is in a state of reliving the horror again and again against his will. He is forcing flashback to the event which leads to recreating the symptoms of PTSD on both Lianne and other viewers. Greenberg (2003) comments that "[p]erhaps the most wrenching image from the attacks is that of the falling bodies and the

accompanying realization that people selected such gruesome fate over remaining in horror” (25-26). DeLillo uses this artistic representation of the “falling man” as the main element of the narrative not only to relive the tragedy but also to introduce us to how trauma could be individualistic.

Lianne stands as a victim to this performance artist:

“She wished she could believe this was some kind of antic street theater, an absurdist drama that provokes onlookers to share a comic understanding of what is irrational in the great schemes of being or in the next small footstep. This was too near and deep, too personal” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 163).

Lianne is taken back to that uncomfortable and stressful feeling when she was watching people falling from the tower:

“But why was she standing here watching? Because she saw her husband somewhere near. She saw his friend, the one she’d met, or the other, maybe, or made him up and saw him, in a high window with smoke flowing out. Because she felt compelled, or only helpless, gripping the strap of her shoulder bag” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 167).

Her fear and anxiety comes from the fact that she thought her husband was one of the falling bodies. Lianne’s trauma is to a certain extent similar to that of Keith. Since her trauma is linked to different elements of her psychological self, her reactions differ compared to those of Keith. Her suffering is real.

### **2.3.1.2. Characters Working Through**

In the previous title, trauma theories have proven to be a valuable tool to gaining insight in the situation and behavior of trauma victims in immediate response to the trauma: how are they affected by the impact of the traumatic event? However,

the traumatic event's impact is only one side of the story. In this part, the focus of the research shifts from the acting-out of trauma to the process of working-through it. This section will discuss the different ways in which the characters of *Falling Man* try to get control over their traumatic experiences. Firstly, the thesis will discuss the importance of language for Keith and Lianne in *Falling Man*. Repeatedly; they are confronted with various situations that show the limits of language. These confrontations raise the feeling of loss of control. Secondly, the thesis will analyse the function of rituals that take up a central role in the characters' attempts at gaining control. Through the rituals, Keith and Lianne will have the illusion of control. Finally, the research will look at the representation of chance in the novel. For the protagonists, the confrontation with chance implies the confrontation with the impossibility of control. This section will argue that in *Falling Man*, DeLillo (2007) pictures a very bleak vision of the process of working-through. With these three parts, the research will try to show that the attempt to gain control is impossible and that the illusion of control is the highest that can be achieved.

#### **2.4.1.2.1 Language Role:**

##### **2.3.1.2.1.1 An Introduction to Language:**

Before dealing with the role of language, the author will attempt to briefly discuss the workings of language in general. The process that takes place between the sensory input of information and the linguistic output is a complex one where a smooth transition of information cannot be guaranteed. Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theories claim that a sign or a linguistic unit consists of a signifier and a signified. The signified is a concept that is represented by signifiers, which are arbitrarily chosen sound images that derive their meaning from mutual differences. The association between thought and language is the subject of much philosophical

discussion. The idea that thoughts precede language was popular with the neo-classicist literary critics, while Sapir and Whorf claim the opposite idea that language precedes thoughts. Sapir (1958) states that:

[h]uman beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. [...] The fact of the matter is that the “real world” is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. (p. 69)

Sapir (1958) points out that language determines the way that people perceive and reflect on their world. The concepts of thought and language are interrelated and this has a number of consequences.

In *Falling Man*, references to language are numerous and display the weakness of man’s system of communication and its implications. The first part of the novel is titled “Bill Lawton.” In the aftermath of the attacks, Justin and two of his friends, the siblings, are acting mysteriously about a man called Bill Lawton. Keith and Lianne try to get more information about the man’s identity and at the end of the first part Justin lets the cat out of the bag and reveals the mystery: one of the siblings misheard a name on TV, “[h]e was hearing Bill Lawton, they were saying bin Laden” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 73). As a signifier, the name Bill Lawton sounds American or English, whereas in fact the signified is the man who is responsible for (amongst others) the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Although this mix-up emerged from the mind of an innocent child, it nevertheless shows that language might just as easily impede rather than facilitate the process of incorporating reality into the cognitive system. Furthermore, this confusion of names shows the arbitrariness of the relation between signifier and signified. Because of this arbitrariness, a signifier can never entirely

represent the signified - in the same way that trauma can never be entirely represented. From a deconstructionist point of view “language cannot refer adequately to the world and indeed may not truly refer to anything at all, leaving literature and language, and even consciousness in general, cut off from historical reality” (Caruth, 1995b, p.74). Although language may seem like a way to establish control and structure, the fundamental structure of language obstructs this idea.

#### **2.3.1.2.1.1 Keith and Lianne Use of Language**

With the structure of language and its weak elements concisely explained, the analysis of Keith and Lianne’s mode of confrontation with the limits of language naturally becomes the subsequent discourse. These repeated confrontations evoke the feeling that they are beginning to let their grasp slip on not just their trauma, but also over their chaotic surroundings. It is abjectly visible that Keith’s cognitive structure is stifled in its function to lucidly interpret his traumatic experience; this which automatically renders Keith incapable of any reasonable control over the events of his actual life.

As Caruth writes: “[t]he trauma is the confrontation with an event that, in its unexpectedness or horror, cannot be placed within the schemes of prior knowledge” (Caruth, 1995b, p. 153). Keith’s affair with Florence boldly highlights the contrast between both survivors. Florence possessed a verbal authority over the events she encountered in the towers and she expresses this authority in a meticulous fashion of language and detail, in her sublime attempt to report the experience:

[s]he tried to think of the word for the thing. He waited. She looked past him, thinking, and it seemed important to her, as if she were trying to recall the man’s name, not the name of the tool he was carrying. Finally he said “Crowbar”. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 57)

We understand that Florence feels the need to express her memories and ascribe meaning to her traumatic experience, although she may occasionally find difficulties with proper articulation. The relationship between Keith and Florence has no seed in love, but rather based “on what they knew together” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 137). Further, “There was sex, yes, but not romance. There was emotion, yes, but generated by external conditions he could not control” (DeLillo, 2007, p.166). Keith and Florence’s meeting was occasioned by chance (Keith took her briefcase), but it is the traumatizing experience that roused up a bond between them and it continued to be the fundamental foundation of their relationship.

Language is a tool of communication in the course of daily lives, and Lianne is confronted with several instances where, on a meta-level basis, language itself is the subject of communication. The opening scene of her character in the book begins with a description of the detail she takes in editing a book on ancient alphabets for a university press. In the reality of this endeavor, the information is given and the tone is set for how her interest has influenced the methods in which language can be and have been used. Furthermore, this shows that Lianne is clinging onto systems of knowledge. Her son Justin is seen - as indicated in the narrative - to use an odd variety of language that draws the attention to itself:

For days on end he restricts himself to the use of monosyllables. He was getting better at this; Justin was, barely pausing between words. At first it was an instructive form of play but the practice carried something else now, a solemn obstinacy, nearly ritualistic. (DeLillo, 2007, p.160)

This monosyllabic inarticulateness could refer to the simplified language that is used in the works of Beckett and other writers of the absurd, where this notion of language inadequacy is a central topic. This ineptness of language is the central issue in

Lianne's writing sessions with the Alzheimer patients. Through the deterioration of their brain, the patients are slowly losing their language, their memory and their identity. Thus:

Sometimes it scared her, the first signs of halting response, the losses and failings, the grim prefigurings that issued now and then from a mind beginning to slide away from the adhesive friction that makes an individual possible. It was in the language, the inverted letters - the lost word at the end of a struggling sentence. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 30)

Language is no longer an adequate means to express their person. Lianne suggested that they would sign their stories with their first name, and the first letter of their last name "as if they were characters in European novels" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 30). From a different viewpoint, this can be seen as the patient's inevitable loss of identity. One of the patients, Rosellen S., finds herself lost in New York, robbed of her ability of self-expression. This would also be the culpable reason Lianne's father committed suicide, fearing he would become incoherent and lose lucidity to dementia.

She [Rosellen] was not lost so much as falling, growing fainter. Nothing lay around her but silence and distance. She wandered back the way she'd come, or thought she'd come, and went into a building and stood in the entranceway, listening. She followed the sound of voices and came to a room where a dozen people sat reading books, or one book, the Bible. When they saw her, they stopped reciting and waited. She tried to tell them what was wrong and one of them looked in her handbag and found numbers to call and finally got someone, a sister in Brooklyn, it turned out, listed as Billie, to come to East Harlem and take Rosellen home. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 94)

The term, “falling” as used in the above excerpt relates to the same figurative connotation of Keith falling. The inter-relation between cause and effect in the progress of trauma is unavoidable; an instance of this would be Rosellen and Keith’s trauma responses, as they both lose their systems of communication, which consequently results in their loss of influence over crucial situations.

Initially, Lianne appears to be helping the patients memorialize her father, but it would later become clear that he has unwittingly transferred his fear into her subconscious. “This was an occasion that haunted Lianne, the breathless moment when things fall away, streets, names, all senses of direction and location, every fixed grid of memory” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 156). In endeavoring to help the patients commemorate her father, Lianne also tunes that medium as a channel to confront her fear, as well as that of her father’s; which was the slipping grip on reality. She felt that urge to dauntlessly look down on her fears, to strip it of its powers and that was exactly what she found in helping the patients, as it constantly brings her father’s suicide to remembrance and keeps the memory of him intact. It was starkly conveyed throughout the novel that Lianne constantly searched for control and stability, she desperately sought to survive. It would be redundant to overstate the importance of her family’s stability to survival, and the quest for meaning in its symbolization. It would be redundant to state as it was hitherto mentioned. Eventually, she would later turn to religion and give in to counting compulsions. This will be explained further under the title of “rituals.”

As mentioned above, the falling man plays an important role with his re-enactments of the traumatic event. Lianne experiences intense emotions when she is confronted with the performances of Falling man. For Lianne, the events of 9/11 are closely associated with her father’s suicide. In the period after the attacks, “[s]he read

everything they wrote about the attacks. She thought of her father; she saw him coming down an escalator, in an airport maybe” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 67). Whenever she would run from an unexpected confrontation with the falling man in the middle of his performance, she instinctively associates the falling man to her father: “[d]ied by his own hand” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 169). The novel continually portrays that Lianne repeatedly connected the images and notions of the terrorist attacks with her father’s suicide. These events are both characterized by the important roles of language and representation. As much as she suffered the horror of 9/11’s tragedy, she was more so terrified of falling into speechlessness, scared of losing the structuring power of language. Two pivotal events crucial to a discourse on the borders of language are the violent outbursts of Keith and Lianne. Similar to Žižek’s description of America’s attack of Afghanistan, Lianne and Keith’s outbursts could be explained as “the ultimate case of impotent acting out” (Žižek, *Welcome*, p. 35). Keith and Lianne are both in their forties, and belong to the middle social caste; it is quite unlikely that they would engage anyone, not especially a stranger in a fight. However, a scene describes Lianne to be bothered about some loud music playing in her apartment building; she goes downstairs and made her complaint known to the woman responsible for the noise disruption. Shockingly, when talking seemed insufficient to resolve the argument, Lianne goes on to hit the woman in the face.

Although there is no causal relation between these two events, the first event is directly influenced by the same motive that birthed the consequence of the second event. Ironically, her help with the Alzheimer patients centralizes on training their linguistic skills and memory, yet her violent outburst would indicate the inadequacy of language. The story of Rosellen’s misfortune frightens Lianne as it gives her a comprehensive insight into the ramifications of how losing the capacity of language

implies losing the grid of memory and everything it holds. The sudden outburst of violence is an accurate instance of the consequences of a confrontation with the limits of language. Lianne's inability and failure to resolve a dispute with words translates to an admission of psychological defeat which led to her assault on the woman.

Keith's reaction to inexpressibility occurred while he shopped for mattress with Florence. He overhears two men make unsavory remarks about her and in similar fashion to Lianne's response, he engages both men in a brawl. As earlier discussed in the first part, this phase dealt with the manners through which trauma is experienced, first with Keith being trapped in a circle of acting-out and therefore becomes unable to verbalize his trauma, then there is Lianne who encounters several confrontations with the limits of language, with all being closely linked to her father's suicide. The searing images of the falling man and the incoherent displays of Alzheimer's patients prompted the memory of her father and the fear he dreaded of losing his language and system of reference. Conclusively, these confrontations with the limits of language evoke the feeling of a loss of control.

#### **2.3.1.2.2 Rituals' Role**

The failing of language implies a loss of control: when the system used to construct and express thoughts proves to be inadequate to that effect, a sense of security and safety is lost. The main characters in *Falling Man* are searching for ways to regain control. They tend to do so by performing rituals, either physically (Keith) or mentally (Lianne).

#### **2.4.1.2.2.1 Keith: The Counting Ritual and Corporeality to Work through Trauma**

A psychological deficiency that is characterized by both a desire for control and the performance of rituals is OCD, or obsessive compulsive disorder. Rumsey, a friend of Keith who died in the terrorist attacks, admits he has compulsions:

He counted parked cars in the street, windows in a building a block away. He counted the steps he took, here to there. He memorized things that crossed his consciousness, streams of information, more or less unwillingly. He could recite the personal data of a couple of dozen friends and acquaintances. (DeLillo, 2007, p.121).

According to Keith, it is “something people do, all of us, in one form or another” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 121). Language and math are both systems of knowledge that are bound to give a sense of security and control. Although both systems have a comparable structure with vocabulary and grammar, there are a number of fundamental differences. The most relevant difference in this context is the fact that while mathematics is a universal system that builds its logic and coherence on irrefutable laws, language is a more personal system that gives some leeway for differences and nuances. The security that lies in the simple rules such as addition or subtraction can have a reassuring effect. It is not the eventual outcome, but the use of the system that is important. Rumsey for instance counted toes on the feet of women. “It was the counting that mattered, even if the outcome was established in advance. Toes on one foot, toes on the other. Always totaling ten” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 121). It is not about the outcome, it is the purely ritual element of counting. The particular setting of the novel in a world city like New York enhances the need and absence of a consistent system of understanding. Keith, Lianne and Rumsey are confronted with

high levels of insecurity in their professional lives as well as their personal lives. For Rumsey, it is reassuring that he has some sort of control, even if it concerns something as banal as counting toes: “Ten is probably why I do it. To get that sameness, Rumsey said. Something holds, something stays in place” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 122). According to Moulding and Kyrios (2007) “several authors have characterized OCD by the notions of control within the disorder; noting how the individual strives to control their thoughts, how they attempt to control the world through rituals, and how they have concerns regarding the potential loss of control over their own thoughts and actions” (p. 1). Furthermore, there is a direct relation between the rituals and the feeling of control: “[l]ower levels of sense of control predicted higher levels of compulsions” (Moulding, 2007, p. 1).

Di Prete (2006) explains in her book *“Foreign Bodies”*: *Trauma, Corporeality, and Textuality in Contemporary American Culture*, that often psychological trauma is worked out through a corporeal representation of that trauma, especially in contemporary fiction. She states: “In displacing the traumatic referent to its imagined and imaginary counterpart...the symbol also mimics psychic dynamics of repression and dissociation, which rise to protect the mind from an experience too intense and devastating to be accommodated from within” (p. 5). Keith attempts at several points to overcome his trauma through corporeally focusing on his physical therapy. Although most of the damage that Keith suffers from the terrorist attacks is psychological in nature, he also suffers from minor fractures in his wrist. Keith attempts to work through his own trauma by using his body. After having surgery on one of his wrists, he becomes obsessive in his rehabilitation. He is given a considerable amount of exercises that turn to be coping force for him. Di Prete (2006) gives a reasoning to this: “This body --- turned foreign, alien, unfamiliar as the

result of traumatic experience, becomes the vehicle through which trauma is told and possibly, worked through” (p. 2). In other words, the body becomes an instrument of healing for the mind. Keith’s constant repetition of wrist exercises illustrates the link between his desire for control and the performance of rituals. These exercises are primarily intended to help him to recover physically, but they turn out to give him psychological support as well. This gradual shift from the physical to the psychological recovery can be read in the context of Freud’s analysis of trauma.

It may happen that someone gets away, apparently unharmed, from the spot where he has suffered a shocking accident, for instance a train collision... It is the feature one might term *latency*. (Freud, 1981/95, p. 84)

It is clear that Keith is traumatized from the start, but the actual response against the attacks comes several months after the attacks. After a period of “absence”, Keith decides to spend his time as professional poker player. In her reading of Freud, Caruth (1995a) explains that Freud saw a direct relation between the physical wound and the psychological one. Freud (1981/1995) begins his discussion of trauma by noting the “bewildering” fact that psychological trauma does not occur in strict correspondence to the body’s experience of a life threat, that is, through the wounding of the body; a bodily injury, Freud notes, in fact “works as a rule *against* the development of a neurosis” (Freud qtd. in Caruth, 1995a, p. 60).

From this point of view, Keith’s obsession with his exercises should be considered as a bid to focus on the physical wound in order to reduce the seriousness of the psychological trauma. DeLillo (2007) states:

He found these sessions restorative, four times a day, the wrist extensions, the ulnar deviations. These were the true countermeasures to the damage he’s suffered in the tower, in the descending chaos. It was not the MRI and not the

surgery that brought him closer to well-being. It was this modest home program, the counting of seconds, the counting of repetitions, the times of day he reserved for the exercises, the ice he applied following each set of exercises ... There were the dead and maimed. His injury was slight but it wasn't the torn cartilage that was the subject of this effort. It was the chaos, the levitation of ceilings and floors, the voices choking in smoke. (p. 49-50)

The sessions are "restorative" for Keith, a "countermeasure" to his suffering, not only physically but also psychologically. Keith attempts to work through his own trauma by making "the dead and maimed," the other victims, "the subject of his effort." He marks time with these exercise sessions, counting "seconds" and "repetitions" that can lead him on a path towards healing but that also keep him stuck in his reenactment of his own traumatic experience, in a perpetual state of alienation and melancholia. The constant repetition of his exercises stems from his desire for control and gives him a form of psychological support. The focus on the physical wound reduces the seriousness of the psychological trauma; a fixed set of rituals helps create a feeling of structure and meaning; it is his only stable crutch.

There is some ambiguity concerning the effect of the exercises: the movements that will help to physically heal the wrist are combined with a consistent counting, which has a comforting effect. Similar to Rumsey, Keith seems to find reassurance in the steadiness of numbers. Lianne interprets the ritual consistency of Keith's exercises in a religious manner:

Even the program of exercises he did for his postsurgical wrist seemed a little detached, four times a day, an odd set of extensions and flexions that resembled prayer in some remote northern province, among a repressed people, with periodic applications of ice. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 59)

Lianne associates Keith's movements with prayer. Similar to religion, a fixed set of rituals helps to create a feeling of structure and meaning. In *Falling Man*, religion plays a minor role in everyday life in New York. The diminishing role of religion in everyday life gives rise to a modernist void. Although religion has long been the ultimate authority to answer life's questions, science has come to be a dominant voice in philosophical debates. The rational nature of science might typically exclude irrational gestures, but these characters' compulsion to count is presented as an irrational and even religious ritual that is suited to fit a secular way of living. The reassuring motions and the act of counting are Keith and Rumsey's alternative to religious ritual and prayer. As the years go by, there is no sign anymore of the bodily injury, yet Keith maintains his routine of motions and counting. His job changes, his sexual partners change, his daily occupations change, but the element that remains invariably is these repetitions:

The wrist was fine, the wrist was normal. He'd thrown away the splint and stopped using the ice. But he sat alongside the table, two or three times a day now, curling the left hand into a gentle fist, forearm flat on the table, thumb raised in certain setups. He did not need the instruction sheet. It was automatic, the wrist extensions, the ulnar deviations, hand raised, forearm flat.

He counted the seconds, he counted the repetitions. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 106)

It is not only Lianne's viewpoint that emphasizes the resemblance with religion. The vocabulary of these passages also refers to religion (reciting phrases). The similarity between the various descriptions of the exercises in the novel moreover gives the repetitions the air of a mantra and insinuates an atmosphere of spirituality. In the next excerpt, the same phrases return:

There was no problem with the wrist. The wrist was fine. But he sat in his hotel room, facing the windows, hand curled into a gentle fist, thumb up in certain setups. He recalled phrases from the instruction sheet and recited them quietly, working on the hand shapes, the bend of the wrist toward the floor, the bend of the wrist toward the ceiling. He used the uninvolved hand to apply pressure to the involved hand. [...] He counted the seconds. He counted the repetitions. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 235-6)

Keith obsesses about his physical exercises. Although he completely healed physically and there is no need for him to continue with his physical therapy, he continues his routine purposely as a way for him to heal mentally.

Several years after the terrorist attacks, Keith has cut himself loose from every form of structure and consistency and spends his time flying around the world to participate in poker tournaments. Although everything is in constant flux, the repetitions of these wrist exercises remain a part of his daily life. Unfortunately for Keith, the emphasis lies on the fact that he can only achieve a sense of structure and stability. The fact that he keeps doing his routine implies that he cannot find the structure he is looking for. By giving in to these compulsions, he admits at the same time that the reason to perform the rituals, namely the loss of control, is still present. The repetitions are a counterproductive attempt to work through his trauma. As Keith's life progresses, he loses more and more grip on reality, before eventually slipping into the surreal world of casinos.

#### **2.3.1.2.2 Lianne: Religious and Counting Ritual in Working through Trauma**

Lianne also develops a compulsion to count. Besides this habit, she opines to turn to religion in her search for stability. Keith had no inclination for piety, whereas Lianne finds herself torn between religion and science. On the one hand, she wants to

believe in God, but on the other hand “[s]he 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” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 65). Lianne identifies herself to be a well read and an evolved woman with no room to indulge religious practices. She feels the intuitive responsibility to commit to a specific path; science or religion: “Take one with the other. But she didn’t want to” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 65). Lianne’s father was a traditional lapsed Catholic. Initially, she distances herself from this belief, but later learns to appreciate it in college. Her disparity with that choice returned after the attacks; she begins to feel reluctant about embracing religion and again attempts to separate herself from the concept.

God would crowd her, make her weaker. God would be a presence that remained unimaginable. She wanted this only, to snuff out the pulse of the shaky faith she’d held for much of her life. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 65)

At the end of the novel, however, she attends church. Pyszczynski, Sheldon and Greenberg (2003) in their article “In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror” help to clarify Lianne’s return to religion. Pyszczynski, Sheldon and Greenberg (2003) state that one of the reactions to 9/11 is the intensifying quest for meaning and value.

The events of 9/11 clearly undermined the integrity and consequent anxiety-buffering qualities of the cultural worldviews of many Americans and others around the world. [...] Not surprisingly perhaps, people flocked to churches, synagogues, and mosques, seeking answers and trying to restore a sense of meaning and value in a world seemingly gone crazy. (p. 100)

With the terrorist attacks, a feeling of anxiety and vulnerability replace that of security that formerly reigned in the US. This collective notion of insecurity

intensified Lianne's personal fears of losing control and, maybe indirectly, pushed her in the direction of religion as well. However, despite her registered presence at church, it would be piously erring to term her religious. "She didn't believe this; the transubstantiation, but believed something half fearing it would take her over" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 233). Although she is not convinced by the religious theories, she still believes in the concept of hope and a semblance of refuge it gives. It is perhaps a force that unites all to a sensible reality.

Just like Rumsey and Keith, Lianne develops a compulsion to count. The doctor would ask her to count down from one hundred by sevens during the scans when she would visit the medical center to check her mental abilities. She adopts the habit and continues this exercise routinely in her daily life. According to DeLillo (2007), "It made her feel good, the counting down, and she did it sometimes in the day's familiar drift, walking down a street, riding in a taxi" (p. 188). For Lianne, the act of counting is an establishing of her normalcy. It is an affirmation for her that she is not falling subject to senile dementia like her father.

The latter stages of the novel would later narrate that she had put her identity into question to verify her state of mind, with the results of the medical examination stating she is perfectly normal:

Brain normal for age. She was forty-one years old and within the limited protocols of the imaging process, pretty much everything seemed to be unremarkable. The ventricles were unremarkable, the brainstem and cerebellum, base of skull, cavernous sinus regions, pituitary gland. All unremarkable. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 187-8)

For Lianne, the counting seems to be a litmus test of her normalcy: there are no signs of dementia or any other form of cognitive malfunctioning. She held the conviction of

lucidity based on her proficiency in counting down. That would mean she is still in control, it would mean that her identity remains intact and that reality is still firm within her grasp. Thus, Keith and Lianne both perform rituals in an attempt to gain control. However, all they achieve with these rituals is a sense of control not control itself. *Falling Man* is not a novel of redemption. Instead, only a very bleak vision on working-through is displayed.

### **2.3.1.2.3 The Representation of Chance**

#### **2.3.1.2.2.1 An introduction To Chance**

Chance is another prominent theme in *Falling Man*. It is Keith and Lianne's response to this element of chance, their feeble resistance to and acceptance of it, which partially explains their lives in the aftermath of 9/11. In this part, the paper will discuss the chaotic surroundings in which the characters are searching for control. The confrontation with chance is inevitably a confrontation with the impossibility of control.

#### **2.3.1.2.3.2 Lianne's Confrontation with Chance**

The second chapter of *Falling Man*, which is the first one that focuses on Lianne, immediately forwards a confrontation with chance. The chapter is set three weeks after the attacks. When Lianne receives a postcard from a friend who is visiting Rome, she is surprised to see that:

It was a reproduction of the cover of Shelley's poem in twelve cantos, first edition, called *Revolt of Islam*. [...] It was a matter of simple coincidence, or not so simple, that a card might arrive at this particular time bearing the title of that specific book. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 8)

Lianne is unable to accept the chaos and omnipresence of chance. When she resorts to religion, she clearly attempts to believe in a world that is characterized by harmony and order and that is not governed by chance. Although religion and chance are two forces that can randomly and for no apparent reason change the course of events, the biggest difference is that with religion, there is always the idea that all events, even if they seem inexplicable, are part of a bigger plan. This concern can also be seen as an attempt to search for a deeper meaning, a narrative that holds things together. “Their lives were in transition and she looked for signs. Even when she was barely aware of an incident it came to mind later, with meaning attached, in sleepless episodes that lasted minutes or hours, she wasn’t sure” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 67). For Lianne, things are not allowed to be meaningless or arbitrary: they must contain a deeper purpose that eclipses the idea of a plot-less world. Lianne is looking for a narrative that holds the seemingly unrelated events together. Keith’s relation to chance and to ungovernable circumstances differs from Lianne’s incessant quest for meaning. When he was in the North Tower on September 11, he was confronted with chance in its most brutal form. First of all, as mentioned previously, Keith was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Secondly, whereas Keith survived the attacks, his friend and colleague Rumsey was lethally struck upon impact. Keith tries to rescue his friend, but realizes that “[t]he whole business of being Rumsey was in shambles now” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 243). Keith necessarily has to accept chance, has to fathom the fact that some things happen for no apparent reason.

There is a striking confrontation between Keith’s acceptance of chance and Lianne’s refusal thereof. When Keith walks away from the debris of the Towers on September 11, “It wasn’t until he got in the truck and shut the door that he understood where he’d been going all along” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 6). Keith had no intention of

going to Lianne's apartment- he was unaware of where he was heading. Perhaps there was an instinctive impulse that drove him there, but it was definitely no conscious intention. When a few weeks later Lianne asks him why he came to her apartment, he has to give her a reason.

Why did you come here?

That's the question, isn't it?

For Justin, yes?

This was the answer she wanted because it made the most sense. [...] But it was also only half the answer and she realized she needed to hear something beyond this, a broader motive for his action or intuition or whatever it was.

(DeLillo, 2007, p. 21).

Lianne cannot accept a purely unmotivated act; she needs to hear an explanation, something that gives meaning. However, Keith merely repeats her question instead of answering it, indicating his acceptance of the arbitrariness of chance.

A comparable instance of chance occurs when Keith grabs a briefcase as he is running away from the Towers. He'd seen it, even half placed it in some long-lost distance as an object in his hand, the right hand, an object pale with ash, but it wasn't until now that he knew why it was here. He picked it up and took it to the desk in the study. It was here because he'd brought it here. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 35)

Again, Keith does not rationalize his actions: he simply accepts the fact that the briefcase is there because he took it. When he returns the briefcase to Florence, its rightful owner, she tries to explain the event which echoes Lianne's quest for meaning. For Florence, the fact that Keith took the briefcase is not a matter of chance:

That's why. So you could bring it here. So we could get to know each other.

That's why you took it and that's why you brought it here, to keep me alive.

He didn't believe this but he believed her. She felt it and meant it. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 109)

In both these examples, Keith expresses no desire to fit his actions into a larger scheme of meaning. He accepts the randomness of his actions, whereas the women are searching for an intentional reasoning behind his actions. Lianne's half-hearted turn to religion and her counting compulsion offered anything but control or stability. For Lianne however, the novel ends with a moment of redemption. She falls back on the structure of her family: she and her son. She lies on her bed and realizes that

It was the body and everything it carried, inside and out, identity and memory and human heat. [...] The child was in it, the girl who wanted to be other people, and obscure things she could not name. [...] 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. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 236)

Her parents are both dead, Keith is disappearing from her life and she barely has contact with her friends. At the end of the novel, Lianne is stripped down to a minimum: she and her son. Although she seems to have found a way to work-through her trauma, this could only be achieved by (unwillingly) letting go of the people that were close to her.

#### **2.3.1.2.2.2 Keith's Solace in Poker**

Keith's preoccupation with chance eventually becomes the only focal point in his life, as he spends most of his time playing poker in casinos all over the world. Before the attacks, Keith used to play poker with his friends and colleagues. It was a moment for "testing the forces that govern events" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 96). Gradually

“they began to reduce the dealer’s options” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 96). As the evenings progress, they impose more and more rules: no more food, no gin, no vodka, no sports talk. Limiting the endless possibilities that surround the game gives the players the chance to create “a structure out of wilful trivia” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 98). The imposition of rules and the creation of a structure counterbalance and outweigh the importance of the poker game itself. At this stage, the poker game is a reason to come together with friends. Several years after the attacks, Keith starts to play poker again, but he is playing a very different game compared to the sessions with his friends. Pyszczynski, Sheldon and Greenberg (2003) say that after 9/11, people “sought comfort by diverting their attention to other matters, by drinking, gambling, renting videos, watching television, and shopping” (p. 96). Perhaps one of the reasons why he commits himself to poker is indeed to divert his attention and to run away from constantly remembering the horror he experienced. Simultaneously, it is a way to commemorate his old poker friend Rumsey. Consequently, in remembering his friend, Keith remains caught up in his trauma. In the structure of the game lies another reason for Keith’s obsession with poker. Generally, a card game revolves around the element of chance, fifty-two different cards in an ever-changing order, but there are gradations in the role that chance plays in the different types of card games. The fact that there are poker competitions and that poker tournaments are being broadcasted on TV proves that this is more than a game that revolves entirely around chance. If this would be purely a game of chance, holding tournaments and keeping rankings would be entirely useless. Poker is a game that is won by using skills such as probability-analysis. It is a card game that starts from chance, but gives the players the possibility to manipulate that chance to their own benefit.

The cards fell randomly, no assignable cause, but he remained the agent of free choice. Luck, chance, no one knew what these things were. [...] But the game had structure, guiding principles, sweet and easy interludes of dream logic when the player knows that the card he needs is the card that's sure to fall. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 212)

In this excerpt, Keith admits that the game is based on chance and that this element is beyond control. Nevertheless, the poker game has guiding principles that allow the players to assess their chances and make the right decision at the right time. The person, who masters the guiding principles of the game, has at least the impression that he has a form of control over the chance that lies at the root of the game. For Keith, the emphasis lies not on winning or losing money, but the fact that he wins small amounts of money on a regular base, implies that he has the skills to “control” the game, although it is never possible to fully control it. Unfortunately for Keith, the poker games are nothing more than a meaningless ritual. This ritual gives him a consistent structure, as counting does, but it remains a void ritual, devoid of meaning.

In his new career as a semi-professional poker player, Keith not only recreates his past, but finds comfort in the game of poker, much like the weekly poker games he used to have with Rumsey and their other friends prior to the attacks. The rules of the game and this link between past and present offer him a form of psychological stability, at the same time allowing him a type of escapism. By adopting an almost nomadic lifestyle, flying around the country for poker tournaments, he manages to remain detached from his surroundings and from his own thoughts, the game, allowing him to distance himself from his own consciousness and from those around him: “He didn't wonder who she [a poker player] was or where she'd go when this was over, to what sort of room somewhere, to think what kind of thoughts. This was

never over. That was the point. There was nothing outside the game but faded space” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 242-243). The “never over,” continuous nature of the world in which he now exists allows him maintain himself cut off from any form of structure and consistency. The hyper real world of the casinos where one can never tell whether it is day or night, a simulacrum of the real world that exceeds reality and is a closed world, allows Keith to perceive the outside world as “faded space,” with which he has virtually no contact. The casinos are also a world that is suspended in time allowing Keith to persist in his sense of numbness. Although Keith becoming a poker player can be seen as a form of escape from the constant remembering of the traumatic experience, it is also a way of persisting in trauma, by commemorating his friend Rumsey and creating the illusion of control. By maintaining this connection to the past, Keith continuously repeats the trauma as a way to hold on to the traumatic event so as not to betray the friends he lost, thus persisting in his state of melancholia:

There were no days or times except for the tournament schedule. He wasn't making enough money to justify this life on a practical basis. But there was no such need. There should have been but there wasn't and that was the point. The point was one of invalidation. Nothing else pertained. Only this had binding force ... There were the days after and now the years, a thousand heaving dreams, the trapped man, the fixed limbs, the dream of paralysis, the gasping man, the dream of asphyxiation, the dream of helplessness. A fresh deck rose to the tabletop. (DeLillo, 2007, p. 293-294)

He keeps time with the “times” and “days” of the “tournament schedule.” It is the only thing that has “binding force,” which manages to keep Keith involved and not allow him to fade. He is constantly reliving the traumatic experience in “a thousand heaving dreams,” stuck in this timeless loop in a state of “paralysis” and

“helplessness,” perpetually acting out his trauma. Only the “fresh deck” permits him to function and offers a soothing ritual to which he can relate. He finds comfort and solace in the routine of the tournaments but Keith remains caught up in the acting out of his trauma. Unlike Lianne, there is no sign of redemption for Keith. A posed question on how Keith is working-through his trauma would give the simple answer of none; there is no working-out. DeLillo (2007) sketches a very bleak picture of Keith’s circular acting-out without the slightest spark of hope. In his acting-out, Keith is stuck in a timeless circle with only his rituals and his poker games to give him a sense of control and stability.

#### **2.3.1.2.3 Stylistics Study of the Use of Adjectives in Falling Man**

One can observe from analyzing “Falling Man” that it is surprisingly minimalistic as Don DeLillo uses mostly dialogue and details in place of the use of adverbs and adjectives: the most important element in writing this novel is how Don DeLillo limits himself from describing facial expressions and emotions in letting us know who are the characters and how they relate to each other. For the purpose of this research, a stylistic analysis of solely the first part of the novel titled Bill Lawton will be done to demonstrate the frequency and the aim of using adjectives. The first part was selected in this research since it encompasses the description of the moment the protagonist Keith was experiencing the terror of the attacks, which gives us an insight into how the trauma started and was experienced by the character. The beginning of the novel shows Keith escaping the north tower and is given a ride to the apartment of his wife, Lianne, who he has been separated from for a period of time. This part gives an insight into the character’s attempts to gasp what has happened.

Not only will adjectives be counted but also organized according to their frequency and then few examples will be given on the use of certain adjectives and their attributive meaning (psychological, color, physical, etc.). The objective of this study is not to explain every adjective within the text but rather to provide the quantity used so to justify the unspeakability of language when it comes to narrating trauma and to prove the validity or invalidity of the Trauma theory when it comes to the role language can play.

The following table illustrates the different adjectives used, and their frequency within the first part of *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo. The work is divided into different tables named as follows :

- Adjective list 1 groups all the adjectives that appear once
- Adjective list 2 groups all the adjectives that appear twice
- Adjective list 3 groups all the adjectives that appear three times
- Adjective list 4 groups all the adjectives that appear four times
- Adjective list 5 groups all the adjectives that appear five times
- Adjective list 6 groups all the adjectives that appear six times
- Adjective list 7 groups all the adjectives that appear six times
- Adjective list 8 groups all the adjectives that appear six time
- Adjective list other groups all the adjectives that appear nine and more times

**Table 1 : List 1 Adjective Frequency 1**

<b>Table 1: List 1</b>			
Sinking undamaged backhanded changed compliant inspiring old-fashioned blue, vintage, rough, cryptic, thorough, righteous uncanny, faintest, arched, mute, adjoining, ulnar, descending, Sick crucial, stationary, interesting, easy comical useless perceptible Political Religious Alone	broad, lower, reddish brown, Important Dismal Heartened Defensive Private Deeper Shapeless Unflinching Gracious Generous Opposite aged smoked painful Invisible Holy Vulnerable tight Opposing Middle Eastern North African Islamic absorbing Natural	muffled, blurred, massive, Darker spare Somber Smoky Obscure Uninvolved Involved Soapy Senile Halfhearted Perennial Plunging Transatlantic Erratically Laden Shapeless Free-floating Protective Quietest Ramblings Traditional Devoted totalitarian raw Crazier	violent, metallic, classical, Overweight Ripe Jet-lagged Well-worn Bald Groomed Handsome Draining Tender Quizzical Sordid Longer Segmental Whiter Sexual Forgiving Normal alert familiar awake sleepless Double Triple Aggrieved

**Table 2 : List 1 Adjective Frequency 1**

<b>Table 2 : List 1</b>				
confused, ungainly, distant, seismic cutting, marbled, still, smashed, seated, stratified, scant, simplest, stiff, chafed, cobbed, unfinished, cingeen, align, short-term, long-term, detailed, , Loud gentlest longest everyday injured drafty, Parallel Clipped Tentative Seewing yellow, stuttering, electronic, varied, Diagonal American Lapsed Suave Devotional	earthly, incomplete, fanciful, lifelong, lucky, quick, scorched, trailing, unavailable, physical, tired, rainy, Russian, countervailing, divorced Surprised Distorted scientific thrilling sacred unimaginable shaky idle hidden limited, incipient, full, engaged, edged, moving, collective, drunk, dumb, Distinguished Educated Cursed Sheer Crying Earnest Weaker	huge, irregular, Italian, stronger, ominous, latent, authoritative, curious, different, Raging, unspeakably, figurative, abstract, Fatal, Floating, moist, tiny, striking, fostering, , interested, hollow, tall, seasoned, narrow, young detached odd repressed clearer periodic Safe Open Worst Sprawling Swilling Priceless Guilty Sweeping burning,	quiet, strange, terse, uninformative, broader, intense, numbly, ethnic, answerable, ancient, meticulous, soulful, unreadable, devastated, enormous, endless, furtive, stacked, failed, corrugated, skeletal, settled, calculated, pressed sweet rare saturated sleeker, gleaming, florid, highest, Fresh Pointless Male Dazed Sunning Neutral Dusty long	uncollected, whole, narrowest, faint, uncomplicated, lonely, intact, damaged, homeless, wary, unavoidably, possible, steadfast, folding, halting, struggling, lasting, dreamy, Spanish, eldest, nervous, third-class, running, blunt Mashed spiked flimsy Crowded Jumpy Herbal Facial Phony Unnoticeable False Fast Collapsed Fallen unmarked fitful,

**Table 3 : List 2 Adjective Frequency 2**

Table 3: List 2	
<p>Stamped Modern standard bouncing Reassuring thin deeper unfailing smaller True Forced Urgent Brave Fade Slight Happy Huddled Human Clean Parted Red Black Sonic Blind Ready Crazy Smart Angry bad busy</p>	<p>Respectful green, European Taller Sparkling Naked Free Organic Funny Greek Particular Alike Upright Modest Homesick Loyal Living Massed Nice Careful Sure Good Dim Wrong Sensitive Sheer Unbearable Powerful helpless</p>

**Table 4 : List 3 Adjective Frequency 3**

<b>Table 4: List 3</b>
Slow
Elderly
Scattered
Kind
obscure
big
Flat
Gentle
Near
Real
Fine
simple
Heavy
Closer
Desperate
Great
Serious
Closed

**Table 5 : List 4 Adjective Frequency 4**

<b>Table 5: List 4</b>
Wet
Light
Clear
Same
Right
Birth
Large
Calm
High
White
Steady
Soft
Gray

**Table 6 : List 5 Adjective Frequency 5**

<b>Table 6: List 5</b>
Certain Deep Calm Better Pale Ordinary Dark

**Table 7 : List 6 Adjective Frequency 6**

<b>Table 7: List 6</b>
Empty Awful Close

**Table 8 : List 7 Adjective Frequency 7**

<b>Table 8: List 7</b>
Falling Lost Hard

**Table 9 : List 8 Adjective Frequency 8**

<b>Table 9: List 8</b>
Small Beautiful

**Table 10 : List other Adjective Frequency 9 and more**

<b>Table 10: List Other</b>
Alive 9
Dead 9
Long 9
Little 13
Old 11

Although DeLillo (2007) does not introduce his character before getting into the main event of the novel, such a manner of describing characters, along with inanimate objects, draw an accurate perspective on how trauma is experienced, perceived and portrayed within the story.

The novel starts with a description of the images of a catastrophic event whose identity is yet to be known. Most of the adjectives in the first few pages are related to images of the event such as: “Falling ashes and near night”, “They ran and fell, some of them, confused and ungainly”, “seismic tides of smokes”, “Things inside were distant and still” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 1). On the next page, an unknown character is introduced but still Don DeLillo continues with describing the surrounding event without describing anything related to the character and how he is feeling. Throughout the novel, we sense a focalization on the actions of Keith as a direct victim of the September 11 attack. DeLillo (2007) channels the traumatic memories of Keith into describing random episodes of his everyday life through the Freudian defence mechanism of displacement. We are frequently taken into Keith’s mind to try to understand what is happening around him. In doing so, DeLillo (2007) is creating empathy for the character to lead to an awareness of the emotional shock affecting those who escaped the towers. An example here would be the use of the emotive adjective “Sure” in “he wasn’t sure why he’d started doing it and didn’t know why he

did it" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 31), where the narrator is speaking to the inability of Keith to completely understand his own emotions. Then, for purposes of unreserved expression of the turmoil, the author makes the decision to report Keith's thoughts. Although he could do this through indirect thought, which Leech and Short (2007) establish as the norm for literature, the narrator relinquishes some control and slips to the right of the cline into free indirect thought (p. 276). In doing so, DeLillo (2007) is allowing for a "more vivid and immediate representation of the character's thoughts as they happen" (Leech & Short 2007, p. 276). The ensuing paradoxical belief accentuates the incapacity that Keith portrays with regard to his sentiments, and thus they come from inside his head.

In a similar manner, Keith's fury later infuses the narration in the description of "right third-class indiscriminate throwaway advertising matter" (DeLillo, 2007, p.31). The extreme modification of the phrase "advertising matter", which is a noun phrase, establishes an emotive effect, which is stressed by the attitudinal characteristics of the four premodifying adjectives. Keith displays a swelling frustration that is not remotely associated with junk mail.

Punctuated by a structural pause, the narrator shifts his attention to Lianne. As exposed by DeLillo's lack of use of adjectives and detailed description, Keith does not embrace his emotions. However, Lianne, who is representing the indirect victims of the attacks, faces her reactions. While Keith demonstrates the ruinous emotional effects of the 9/11 attacks to the readership of DeLillo, Lianne provides a vicarious route to recovering from the tragedy. This is illustrated by the use of psychological adjectives and interior monologues. Lianne's passage starts the arrival of "Falling Man", a performing artist, and who disturbingly imitates the position of the anonymous man who jumped from the twin towers. In depicting her emotional

responses to this, DeLillo (2007) is reflecting on the ever-present nature of the attack in day to day life.

The extract begins with direct narration of the crowd for the purpose of exploring Lianne's psyche. DeLillo (2007) writes of "others [...] seemingly still engaged by something" (p. 33). Although the adjective engaged does not have a negative connotation but with the non-factive verb of perception "seem" and the indefinite pronoun "something" creates "negative shading" (Simpson, 2004, p. 127). Following description of a man "dangling there, above the street" (DeLillo, 2007, p.33), he writes "he brought it back, of course, those stark moments in the burning towers when people were forced to jump" (DeLillo, 2007, p.33). DeLillo (2007) takes us again into Lianne's head remembering the horror of seeing men being "forced to jump". In doing so, DeLillo (2007) is depicting the vividness of 9/11 in Lianne's consciousness, thus letting readers affected by the event know that they are not alone in their suffering.

Following on from the abrupt decision to provoke her memories, DeLillo (2007) delves into Lianne's recollection of the 9/11 attacks and the significance of her feeling: DeLillo (2007) writes "there was the awful openness of it, something we'd not seen [...], body come down among us all" (p.33). The emotive adjective "awful" establishes the involvement of Lianne, and the significance of her emotions and connection to the images of the Falling Man into acting out her trauma.

Lianne attacks her Greek neighbor, Elena, which demonstrates her need to create lucid niches and elope from blurred boundaries. Elena is listening to music that Lianne cannot locate it but that she defines as Islamic: "But the music wasn't Greek. She was hearing another set of traditions, Middle Eastern, North African, Bedouin songs perhaps or Sufi dances, music located in Islamic tradition" (DeLillo, 2007, p.

67). Unable to place the music, Lianne later calls it “noise” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 68). Her election of the adjective “Islamic” also negatively impacts her mind but she fixes the music within a certain frame of reference wherein she is at liberty to reject it. Though her neighbor was Greek, Lianne, in her mind, associated anything that is not known to her Western New Yorker culture as “Middle Eastern, North African, and Islamic”. This multiple use of origin adjective gives us the sense of threat and anger that Lianne feels to things that surround her. At this moment, one of the two emotional adjectives “angry” was used as stated “and it was beginning to make her angry” (DeLillo, 2007, p. 67). Few of the adjectives extracted from the first part of the novel were linked to the emotional state of the character or their trauma and this has been observed over the whole novel. The first part contained 25 365 words but only 483 of them were adjectives, which is 1.9% of the entire quantity of words. One of the main roles of adjectives is to provide more descriptions of the people and the object found in the text. The use of more adjectives leads to a richness of the text while a lack of them will only result in a thinness and deficiency of the text regarding giving a full view of the story. Don DeLillo uses other means adapted by the Trauma theory to tell the tragic story of the individual trauma experienced in 9/11. He constructed many layers into the story served by a fragmented structure, shifting point of views and distortion of time. The structure used fulfills and reinforces the emotional confusion caused by trauma.

### **3. Conclusion:**

In his creation of Keith’s character, DeLillo ascribes a face to the tragedy, a personage directly impacted as a victim of 9/11. His mannerism of the event’s description and presentation gives the semblance of an irreparable damage being existent. He presents the trauma of 9/11 as a unique and representative event; an

“enduring condition for which there is no remedy” (Versluys, 2009, p. 47) and as Rothberg (2009) points out in his work, this would be a precarious position to assume, as it negates the validity of other traumas. By virtue of its overwhelming colossal effect, 9/11 is widely regarded as a collective tragedy, which undoubtedly implies that the event’s ramifications had countless impacts that spread across the divide of social, economic and cultural contexts. However, DeLillo’s narrative construct only tackles the measures of the terror’s consequences and the extents of its effect on individuals whose lives were directly traumatized. The theme represented in this genre of narrative poses a compelling issue that defines the effects of trauma as an insurmountable and irremediable event. This model of traumatic behavior as illustrated by DeLillo and its expansion to “include the whole human condition” (Versluys, 2009, p. 47) is somewhat problematic. As an influential writer, DeLillo’s readers might perceive his representation of trauma as the only valid one and allow their reactions to be influenced by it. Comprehensively, the construction of this model becomes essentially critical as individuals tend to respond differently to situations. People exhibit different degrees of resilience that allows them to deal with and experience an event in completely distinct ways.

DeLillo (2007) paints a very bleak picture of his characters’ development that it lacks any measure of hope, as they are narrated stuck in a timeless circle with little room for working through and seeking control. His focus on individual trauma, which employs the use of gaps, breaks in linear time, and the occasional appearance of unconnected images produced by a traumatic memory in building his narrative, all give voice to the horrific events of the tragedy, turning readers into witnesses of the traumatic process. By tethering his characters in their “future denying traumas”,

DeLillo not only counters the “basic narrative schemata” but also the “basic human need to work through grief” (Versluys, 2009, p. 47).

In a summarizing end to *Falling Man*'s plot, Lianne's character appears to hold just as important a role as Keith's. Lianne stands as the character representation of individuals traditionally traumatized by witnessing the events of 9/11. DeLillo's inclusion of Lianne's character and his detailed description of her struggles with PTSD could be remarked as a deliberate attempt to give complex translations to the audience's idea of trauma and victim. Her fear of losing her husband and witnessing the falling bodies caused enough damage to her psyche and made her another trauma victim.

DeLillo relied on fragmented structure, distorted timeline and unspeakability of language rather than relying on detailed description of emotions through a limited usage of adjectives.

**Chapter Three:**

**Trauma Experience and its Narrative in the African Novel *Minaret* by Leila**

**Aboulela**

**Chapter Three: Trauma Experience and its Narrative in the African Novel**

**Minaret by Leila Aboulela**

1. Introduction.....	141
2. An Overview of Najwa through the Story .....	143
3. Trauma Experience and its Narrative in Leila Aboulela's Minaret.....	147
3.1 Leila Aboulela's Minaret as a trauma fiction.....	147
3.2 Structural Representation of Trauma .....	150
3.3 Characters Trauma analysis .....	152
3.3.1 Overcoming trauma.....	159
3.3.1.1 Character's acting out.....	159
3.3.1.1.1 Najwa's Acting out.....	159
3.3.1.1.1.1 Migrant Trauma Victim.....	159
3.3.1.1.1.2 Space, Time and Identity.....	163
3.3.1.1.1.3 Traumatic Recollection of Memory.....	168
3.3.1.1.1.4 Men's Role In Najwa's Life.....	169
3.3.1.1.1.5 Making Up For The Loss: Filling The "Empty Space Called Freedom".....	176
3.3.1.1.1.6 Negotiating Identities for Loss of Family Bound.....	181
3.3.1.2 Character's Working Through.....	185
3.3.1.2.1 Religion as Refuge to Pain.....	185
3.3.1.2.2 Longing for Companionship.....	187
3.4 Stylistic study of the use of Adjective in Minaret .....	182
4. Conclusion.....	189

## 1. Introduction

Across the surging numbers of literary endeavors that largely contribute to the prominence of trauma fiction, Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) stands out as a notable undertaking of the genre that sufficiently addresses personal, individual trauma. Her fictional works are mostly premised on the diverse forms of ethical dilemma encountered by Muslims and the daunting impact of the world around them. This theme is fully demonstrated in a trio of her published fictions; *Translator* (1999), *Minaret* (2005) and *Lyrical Ally* (2011). She employs the composite breed of three languages in the portrayal of her fictional narrative - brilliantly weaving together Arabic integrated words with English, Scottish vernacular and a distinct colonial discourse. This writing technique paints her monologue with a profoundly rich linguistic texture.

However, Aboulela's prowess is not limited to the merging of lexicons; it is also seen in her seamless interplay of varied texts with a range of references from the Qur'an, Tayib Saleb (Sudanese writer), western romance fiction and Arab poets; she perfectly mixes this hybrid of rhetoric to form a compelling narrative and in the process, also define herself as a masterful contextual writer. Aboulela adroitly educes three very varied locations in her prose: gracefully sketching picturesque scenes of the snowy, remote cities of Scotland (Particularly Aberdeen), before vicariously laying bare the teeming multiculturalism of London in contrast with Khartoum's humid and vivacious climate.

Acclaimed to be a modestly renowned writer, Aboulela's literature has gained a reserved scale of critical attention and commendation within select circles of critics, literary prize boards and research students. She often writes about the realities of her immediate environment, drawing inspiration from her social and religious identity;

being herself an Arab, Muslim, African and vastly migrant woman. This paper's main focus is one of Aboulela's celebrated novels; *Minaret*, written almost two decades ago. The book sifts through the intriguing sequence of events building to the fall from grace of Najwa, the daughter of a wealthy Sudanese minister and her frantic attempts at survival. This fictional work illustrates a unique perspective of the various effects misery could impact on an individual's mind – our author's narrative differs from other fictional prints about the ripple effects of cultural and social norms being the major factors of cultural trauma. Most importantly, this dissertation will aim to establish more emphasis on the specific roles played by space and time in the reformation of a traumatized individual and their identity.

As defined by Cathy Caruth (1996), “psychic trauma is a wound inflicted upon the mind that breaks the victim's experience of time, self and the world and that causes great emotional anguish in the individual” (p. 3-4). Survivors of personal traumatic experiences may suffer from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which is a delayed response that takes the form of repeated hallucinations, nightmares, flashbacks, somatic reactions, behaviors - stemming from the event - and general numbing (van der Kolk and van der Hart, 1995). This thesis targets the objective of adequately analyzing the novel *Minaret* as trauma fiction by employing the established study of trauma theory to explore its Anglophone-African narrative. This phase of the dissertation will also carry out an incisive deconstruction of characters, particularly that of the protagonist Najwa and the processes she endured to cope with her trauma. This research will discuss the different literary techniques as well as modes of representation, which allow the writer to offer a viewpoint that only genres such as that of this trauma novel can provide.

## 2. An Overview of Najwa through the Story

*Minaret* narrates the account of a young Sudanese girl who experiences a harsh transition in her life. Fortunate enough to be the daughter of a high government official in the capital city, *Najwa* finds herself, at last, working as a servant for rich Sudanese in London. The narrator depicts how this degradation in position is parallel to *Najwa's* moral transformation, as she becomes more attached to Islamic practices, which grant her peace and consolation. The novel starts with a preamble entitled “Bism Allahi, Ar- rahman, Ar- Raheem,” which is a pure Islamic opening, attributing all what is to be done to the name of Allah, the Almighty. The first part of the story takes place in Khartoum – the capital city of Sudan – between the years 1984-5. It captures the life of *Najwa* before the coup of 1985 that will undoubtedly transform her life and the life of her family as well. Before the main event reshaping the family's life, *Najwa*, her twin brother Omar, - who later on becomes a drug addict and jailed for murder in a drug business affair - and her parents maintain a westernized mode of life characterized by the usual holidays in the UK's capital, in addition to meetings and parties with the youth at the American club in Khartoum. So far, religion appears as a powerful social phenomenon to which *Najwa* and her family's involvement is quite limited. Despite their charitable work and fasting in Ramadan, they neither pray regularly nor wear hijab. Through her flashbacks, *Najwa* the narrator offers the readers insights into her past life. The surroundings and the various experiences she had been through show how anxious she was about her position and status as a secular leader. Meanwhile, the practice of Islam was clearly noticeable in other students' dresses and religious habits. The vicissitudes of *Najwa's* consciousness manifest the level of annoyance she had felt for inhabiting this identity position. Moreover, the fact that she was the daughter of a westernized government

official was not helpful in making her feel at home. The feeling of alienation from religion and society grew higher every day. While she and the girls around her wore skirts, Najwa did not feel at ease wearing them. “The misspent past” are the words chosen by her to refer to that part of her life. She regularly mentions how bothered she feels when seeing the servants of the house praying in the morning, while she and her family were not even praying. Suddenly, the change occurring in Najwa’s life is mainly due to the 1985 military coup. Her father is soon sent to jail for embezzling the government’s money whereas the rest of the family members take the plane and fly to London where they live for a significant moment experiencing exile.

The second part of the story details the collapse Najwa describes in the opening of the novel. She finds herself in London with no home and shelter; thus, working as housemaid is the only option she has. The change in Najwa’s life can be clearly noticed by the reader throughout her 2003 journey in London. It becomes more apparent in the character of her employer, Lamia, a PhD student and a mother to a young daughter. The lifestyle Lamia has greatly resembles the one Najwa held previously in Khartoum. However, the turning point occurs when a reciprocal love interest develops between Lamia’s young brother, Tamer, and Najwa. Their mutual devotion to Islam seems to have a role attracting both parts to each other. On the one hand, Tamer seems to like Najwa’s modesty and the perspectives from which she sees life. On the other hand, Najwa is clearly attracted by Tamer’s youth and his loyalty to Islam. The latter is seen to be the area of life in which he has succeeded better than her. Islamic education has a major influence in this relationship, not only because of being the main area of interest attracting them to each other, but also the ground upon which they separate. Tamer obeys his parents who refuse to approve their marriage since rejecting their decision is sinful in Islam. The parents believe that Najwa is

quite older than him; consequently, such a match wouldn't guarantee any economic or social balance.

The third part of the story takes the reader back to 1989, the period where Najwa and Anwar lived in London doing what couldn't be done in Khartoum. After the death of her mother, Najwa stays alone without any moral support. Anwar sends a letter to present his condolences and seizes advantage from the situation to ask Najwa for a meeting. The offer meets her immediate acceptance, a thing that enhances the reestablishment of the relationship. At this point, the extent to which Najwa is attached to Anwar is clearly noticeable. She sticks with him while he breaks her heart so often by continuously accusing her father. The reader at this stage can easily deduce the differences between the two. As the relationship becomes more intimate, Najwa starts to view things differently from Anwar. After their first sexual intercourse, the guilt feeling dominates her thoughts and feelings. She imagines how things should have been done in a better place. For example in "a room in the best hotel in Khartoum, [with] wedding dress hanging in the cupboard, the sheets white and crisp" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 173) and not the room he shares with Aymen and Ameen. These words show how she has always imagined her first time having sex as a married woman. In addition, her wish being in the best hotel in Khartoum reveals the level of nostalgia she has for the previous bourgeoisie life. Apparently, Anwar has never thought about such things. Soon he starts lecturing her about how hypocrite the Arab society is. He harshly tells Najwa that she does not need to feel guilty because he considers that "Like every other Arab girl, you [Najwa] have been brainwashed about the importance of virginity" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 175). The anti-bourgeoisie thoughts he holds on sexuality prevent him from understanding the imagination of Najwa and her hopes for better life circumstances. Anwar's emergence as an alien

from the principles she has been educated upon emphasize the differences between them. The two characters explain Aboulela's comments on the ways that identities can be nuanced and fluid. Although both Najwa and Anwar are originally from Sudan and holding a university degree, identity markers like gender and class play an important role in shaping their personality and principles. Najwa who has been brought up upon the western standards holds conservative values; Anwar continues his struggle to reject all the controlling powers around him. Part four, which takes the readers to the year 2003-4, opens with the Eid party in the mosque. Najwa's self-confidence is seen in the Muslim identity she has faked. Her talks with Tamer develop in terms of length and intimacy. The more they lose the notion of reality, the more they believe they will not be spiritually lost since "the minaret of the mosque and head home towards it" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 208) can be seen. The reader can trace similarities between Prophet Muhammad's life and this happy dream which comes to an end as Najwa quits her job and her boyfriend after being caught by Lamia kissing her brother Tamer.

The fifth part hints as well to the mismatched relationship between Najwa and Tamer and other important events taking place around the world such as the Gulf war. Yet, the most important event transforming Najwa's life takes place as she realizes suddenly how abusive her relationship with Anwar had been and notices it was the month of Ramadan. This epiphany brings interest to her life as the guilt feeling increases inside. Thus, she attempts an escape from a world totally dominated by men. The destination is then the Regents park mosque in which she is introduced to various religious practices such as daily prayers and daily readings of the Quran. These activities, however, help the protagonist's recovery from the "misspent past" in Khartoum, which at the same time creates a good feeling of belonging that she has

been looking for since she stepped in London as an immigrant.

The last part takes the readers to the year 2004. Najwa is portrayed as a pious Muslim, more caring about her faith and relationship with Allah. She goes through a hard task that measures her faith. By the end of the novel, Najwa puts a stop to her relationship with Tamer and accepts the money offered by Doctora Zeineb – Tamer's mother - as a recompense for the break up. The novel closes depicting Najwa in a terrible state of fever, suffering from the damage caused by the break up and hoping everything will be fine as the sleepless eyes of Allah are protecting her. The money she has received will serve her in going to hajj.

### **3. Trauma Experience and its Narrative in Leila Aboulela's Minaret**

#### **3.1 Leila Aboulela's Minaret as a Trauma Fiction**

As in all cases of trauma, verbal expression and proper analysis of traumatic memories, even internal suffering is paramount to the treatment of individual traumatic experiences. The victims must fight to translate these psychological disorders into a narrative for them to adequately deal and eventually rid the trauma, processing their ordeals in words. As our book *Minaret* projects in its portrayal of Najwa, the main character who suffers trauma, the author records her efforts to interpret her traumatic experiences into narrative memory, although she remained conflicted between the urge to know the cause of her trauma and her instinct to deny - as she also struggles with the crucial need for social acceptance and status. The book continued to show, however, that other characters labored to grasp the inconsistencies of our protagonist's traumatic memory, as it is fragmented between the past and her subsequent realities. Aboulela's book is duly established as trauma fiction owing to

several irrefutable factors, as it extends through the focal points of formal radicalism, consciousness, post-colonialism, internalized sensibilities, period and memory gap combined with the resistance of language and representation of traumatic experiences.

In the late 1980's, trauma fiction emerged as a genre with the clinical appearance of PTSD. According to Luckhurst (2008), the literature category opened with Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and continued to thrive with the works of renowned authors like Margaret Atwood, Pat Barker, Anne Michaels, Benjamin Wilkomirski and W.G Sebald, amongst others . Though it can be debated that earlier writing can be considered trauma narrative. However, it is with the emergence of PTSD that the light was put on literary trauma.

Whitehead (2004) in her book "Trauma Fiction" explains more on the paradox that "traumatic experience resist language representation." (p. 3). This later leads to the rejection of any representation of traumatic events in a linear manner within the scheme of trauma fiction, but it employs the use of unsettling temporal structures and different referential modes, figuration and indirection. Obviously, none of these aesthetic techniques are new since "trauma fiction arises out of and is inextricable from three interrelated backgrounds or contexts: postmodernism, post-colonialism and a postwar legacy or consciousness" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 81).

The literary techniques that are represented within trauma writing mirror the effects of the suffering on a formal platform, including the interplay of texts, repetition and fragmentation. According to Vickroy (2002), who researched trauma fiction extensively, these narratives showcase trauma by only hinting at "the rhythms, processes and uncertainties of such experiences within their underlying sensibilities and structures" (p. 3). The confusion of trauma is represented through a timeless plot, shifts in memory, textual gaps, repetitions, visual images and shifting viewpoints.

This context allows the reader to grasp the disorienting states of characters suffering traumatic experiences.

In order to obtain a comprehensive knowledge of the book's interpretation, there has to be a simplification of its abstract theme. *Minaret* revolves mainly around psychic and domestic trauma as a consequence of tragedy. It also projects a political and cultural undertone but for the sake of concise emphasis on our subject matter, the influence of both factors will only be mildly regarded. There are myriad examples in literature that focuses on psychic trauma and a few of those examples would include: Beigbeder's *Windows on the Wall* (2004), Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), Schwartz's *the Writing on the Wall* (2004), Messud's *the Emperor's Children* (2006), Glass's *the Whole World Over* (2006), McInerney's *the Good Life* (2006), Schulman's *A Day on the Beach* (2007) and others.

Psychic or personal psychological trauma is anti-narrative, since victims are unable to aptly describe the internal suffering they experience. This precise phenomenon is mirrored in Aboulela's *Minaret* as it accurately portrays a narrative of personal trauma stemming from two separate causes; migration and family tragedy. Although migration might seem an unpopular cause for trauma, it bears a potent component of the subject, and that can be explained through the overwhelming circumstances of traumatic encounters suffered by migrants and their struggles to contend with the truth of their realities (McLeod, 2005; Tew, 2007; Zadie, 2010).

Basically, migration in context is an optic that touches the fundamental sense of loss, alienation and displaced origin - these factors are scopes inherent with the concerns of living in a local space (Robertson, 1995, p. 40). The fact that "[g]locality suggests that our lives are irrevocably enmeshed in a Cosmo-political web of cause and effect" guarantees nothing about opportunities in alien or foreign places, as this

new space in itself has its own responsibilities (Schoene, 2009, p. 61). Therefore, rather than thriving, migration often presents a profoundly disorientating scenario (Sassen, 1998/2007). All of the discourses above can be found in the unfolding ordeals of Najwa our protagonist in *Minaret*, which perfectly justify it as the ideal book for this thesis, because it painstakingly makes note of the unavoidable painful constants in the sojourn of an immigrant, with the author striking chords of the proverbial “compulsion to repeat” (Freud, 2001, p. 75; Meinig, 2004, p. 256) throughout her narrative.

### **3.2 Structural Representation of Trauma**

Minaret is narrated in the first person by Najwa, who is the book’s main character and protagonist. The author portrays her to be the narrative’s original voice and mind, through which all sensations are expressed and felt. The fiction constitutes six main parts, each named after a defining period of Najwa’s life. In each of these parts, we found an overlapping of Najwa’s thoughts, ideas, feelings and actions in the days, months and years spanning between the pre- and post-coup d’état periods. The first segment takes place in Khartoum, just before the coup d’état (1984-1985), while the second part begins in present London 2003, where Najwa finds herself in a job as a maid, struggling to piece together the fragments of her life that seemed to have abruptly crumbled in the cruel fate of one night. The third part reverts back to the events of (1989-1990) and it reports of Najwa’s desolation in the wake of her father’s execution, and her mother’s death after an embattled illness, and the incarceration of her brother, Omar. The fourth part resumes to the unfolding narrative in its present plot, here, her emotions for Tamer begin to take hold (2003-2004). The fifth part systemically travels back in time to 1991, casting a spotlight on her affair with Anwar

- an attempt by the author to convey a symbolic memory of her growth in the context of the periodic intervals. The sixth part, which is also the last, finally settles on the present, ongoing and evolving plot (2004) where Najwa loses her job, which also spelt the end of her affiliations with Tamer, compelling circumstances that merged to throw her life back into the deepest shallows of squalor and despair, with no refuge or succor in a parent or sibling, with no means of subsistence – she falls again into desolation. These fragmented vignettes produce constant chronological disruptions, and is not linear. These narrative disruptions become the equivalent of Najwa's state of mind, which is described in the novel in these terms: "I become fragmented and deflated in discussions; I never know which point of view I support...I find myself agreeing with whoever is speaking or with the one I like best" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 79). The author uses the main character's traumatized mind to influence the fragmented narrative and its pace.

Aboulela (2005) deviates from a classical representation of a trauma narrative and follows in the same steps of Don DeLillo's "Falling man" when trying to illustrate how a psychic trauma novel should be. In fact, *Minaret* is more a novel of 'acting out' than 'working through'. Historian Dominick LaCapra adopted two concepts from the studies of Freud and psychoanalysis and developed it within the scene of trauma and historical studies:

Acting out is the tendency to relive the past through flashbacks, nightmares, compulsively repeated words and images. It is a compulsive repetition or re-enactment of trauma. Working through is the process by which the person tries to gain critical distance from the trauma, becomes able to distinguish between past, present and future and assume responsibility. (LaCapra, 2001, p. 141-53)

Najwa is incapable of working through her trauma. In the subsequent segments of this

discourse, both methods of acting out and working through will be explained in relation to Najwa's mindset.

### **3.3 Characters Trauma Analysis**

Minaret presents us with a cast of several characters holding different intervening roles in the story, although most of them are there either to explain Najwa's - the protagonist - trauma or to help her cope with it. The cogent theme of the narrative begins when Najwa's father, a wealthy Sudanese minister is executed in the opening chapters of the story, following a coup d'etat. The eventual consequence of that event leads to the bereaved family fleeing to London. And there, Najwa's once privileged and affluent life took a devastating twist of tragic fate.

Najwa's mother dies from cancer, her brother is jailed after he gets arrested for drugs and stabs the police officer, and she is left with little money after she spent most of her father's trust. She also starts dating Anwar, who was a student that she met while at the University in Sudan and who supported her father's arrest. He holds a stout allegiance to the communist party, and has little modicum of regard for religion or opulence, just as his objection to Najwa's luxurious lifestyle made apparent. Anwar would later resurface in the despairs of Najwa's lowest state as another coup exiles him to London and they reconnect. She starts a relationship with Anwar and experiences her maiden and only sexual affair. Later, she eventually realizes that Anwar's intentions for her are farther from the concept of marriage. She finds the strength to run away from this relationship after she meets a group of Muslim women from the Regent's Park mosque, and as she gets away from Anwar, she gets closer to her religion.

In the evolving scenes, Najwa's life would begin in its shift toward normalcy. She edges out the odds to find a job as a maid and nanny in the house of a wealthy PhD student, Lamya. Whatever extent of progress she makes in her bid to stay afloat would never equal the life she once had in Sudan. She knew that. But this was a start, eking out her living. The narrative goes on to introduce Tamer, Lamya's younger brother (Aboulela, 2005). His character is described to staunchly adhere to the pious tenets of Islam, a stark contrast of his sister's – Najwa's employer – personality. In the events that follow, Tamer's influence on Najwa would become rehabilitating, helping her in the working through and acting out of her trauma. He achieves this in being a witness to her story. The narrative chronicles in subsequent pages that Najwa eventually falls in love with Tamer.

Being a committed Muslim, Tamer is disturbed by the fact that his family held no strong convictions of Islamic doctrines and also by the fact that he is refused the choice of discipline in Islamic studies but rather compelled by his parents to study business. Najwa and Tamer's emotional pact was genuine and requited; their affections were uninhibited and pure, as both would often daydream about marriage, although this dream would later be tragically stifled by the ambitions that Tamer's parents held for him – a reality with which both lovers had to contend.

The characters in *Minaret* were all short lived in the scope of the narrative, save for Najwa. The plot centered on the trauma she experienced through loss, love and migration. Therefore, the following segment of this discourse will primarily analyze the prominent character and protagonist of the book, in the person of Najwa. Furthermore, the protagonist develops varied coping stratagems especially in the face of the emotionally and psychologically strenuous experiences that involve negotiating warring allegiances in a global context. We shall proceed to investigate by what

means, and to what effect, the character tries to turn her fragmented traumatized experience into a coherent narrative.

### **3.3.1 Overcoming Trauma**

#### **3.3.1.1 Characters' Acting Out**

##### **3.3.1.1.1 Najwa's Acting Out**

###### **3.3.1.1.1.1 Migrant Trauma Victim**

The presentation of trauma begins with the execution of Najwa's father who is a wealthy Sudanese minister and her family escaping to London. In London, the trauma continues, Najwa's mother passes away from cancer, her brother becomes a drug addict and gets sentenced to jail after stabbing a police officer during arrest, and her trust funds diminish.

While still a student at university in Sudan, Najwa had started a relationship with Anwar. The latter is a communist who persistently denigrates religion and the opulent lifestyle led by Najwa. Anwar was also in favor of her father's arrest. Najwa meets him again in London when she is at her lowest ebb and eventually starts a relationship with him, which marks her maiden and only sexual experience, but soon after realizing Anwar had no plan of marrying her, she finds the courage to make an end to their affair. She befriends her fellow women at Regent's Park mosque, and as her frustration with Anwar grows, so does her newfound faith.

Her life continues to change tremendously as she becomes a maid for several Arab households. In the present time, she becomes a maid and nanny for Lamya, a single mother and a PhD student who lives a luxurious life that once Najwa lived. Tamer, Lamya's religious younger brother, plays a crucial role in Najwa's life. He was the instrument of Najwa's acting out and working through her trauma. Tamer's

devotion to Islam attracts Najwa and eventually she falls in love with him. Their love story was innocent and a means for Najwa to recall her unconscious young self.

Unlike stereotypical “Western” emancipatory tales, in Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret*, Islam is the prominent feature in the female protagonist’s self-identity. From the beginning of the novel, we sense a tone of resignation “I’ve come down in the world. I’ve slid into a place where the ceiling is low and there isn’t much room to move. Most of the time I’m used to it. Most of the time I’m good” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 1). Cariello (2009) suggests that this extract showcase a “traumatic interruption of time” (p. 340), and follows up on representing Najwa’s migrant experience’s trauma narrative as a result of “physical and spatial dislocation” (p. 340). On the surface, it seems that Najwa is talking about her new job as a maid in Lamya’s house but it signals more a loss of identity. She became confused and indecisive about how to identify herself, “How many times have I lied and said I am Eritrean or Somali?” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 71). She continues on stating: “I become fragmented and deflated in discussions; I never know which point of view I support. I find myself agreeing with whoever is speaking or with the one I like best” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 79). In other words, she sees everyone else as “unperturbed and grounded, never displaced, never confused” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 174).

With the widespread literary trauma and cultural studies, the immigration experience started to be read along the lines of trauma experiences (Kaplan, 2005, p. 24-41; Luckhurst, 2008, p. 19-76). In this sense, migration could be seen as an experience that is “understood to be elusive and impossible to grasp,” and that “eludes sense making and the assignment of meaning; ergo that cannot be integrated into memory, but neither can ... be forgotten” (Radstone, 2003, p. 117). In her writing, Caruth (1995c) focuses on the “unspeakability” and “unrepresentability” of trauma.

Thus trauma fiction tries to “narrate the unnarratable”, what Ann whitehead would picture as resistance to language representation (Whitehead, 2004, p. 3). This implies that trauma become a threat to identity construction, “undoes the self by breaking the ongoing narrative, severing the connections among remembered past, lived present, and anticipated future” (Brison, 1999, p. 41).

Therefore, if the traumatic experience disables one from creating narrative rendition of the trauma, it can be understood that trauma triggers one’s ability to identify and render the experience to be meaningful. Traumatic absence of coherent narrative is brought about by religion, which acts as an antidote to the identity crisis. *Minaret* evolves by focusing on the protagonists’ struggles with trauma and presents several issues: it deals with several forms of narrative, its fragmented global realities, and its possession by a foreign culture, and the attempt to rebuild itself through religious beliefs.

Memories uncovered while working through trauma cannot be integrated into the narrative language. Laub (1995) claims:

Victims need to tell their stories in order to survive. The testimony is, therefore, the process by which the narrator (the survivor) reclaims his position as a witness or a listener inside himself . . . repossessing one’s life story, though giving testimony is itself a form of action, of change, which one has to actually pass through, in order to continue and complete the process of survival after liberation. (p. 70)

Throughout the novel, the protagonist is unable to share her story because she is ashamed. Tamer was the only one that Najwa shared with the fragment of her story. None of her other acquaintances were aware of her experiences.

Imagery is another important part of representing the trauma process, and it is used throughout the novel. Luckhurst (2008) even claims that it is probably in the image that “the psychic registration of trauma truly resides” (p. 147). In a traumatized mind, intrusive images in the form of recurrent dreams and nightmares replace narrative memory. Addition of visual images makes the narration more effective and powerful. For Najwa, the most significant recurring image in the novel is the night her father left. Another haunting image that repeatedly appears in Najwa’s mind is her parents room: “I doze and in my dream I am small and back to Khartoum, ill and fretful, wanting clean, crisp sheets, a quiet room to rest in, wanting my parents’ room” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 75) and by the end of the novel she states again “I am not well. I have a fever and I need my parents’ room” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 276). Going to Hajj is the only image that stays with Najwa by the end of the novel. In fact, by the end of the novel “Najwa plans to go on Hajj” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 272, 274]. The images bring a new smell, sound and effect to the trauma.

### 3.3.1.1.1.2 Space, Time and Identity

*Minaret* by Leila Aboulela is organized along the discontinuities of place and time brought about by the protagonist’s exile from her fatherland. She sought refuge in London; a place with absolute disparate attributes to her native Sudan. The book opens with a eulogy to Allah, and the next lines of the novel were again quick to highlight Najwa’s spatial awareness. “*I’ve come down in the world. I’ve slid to a place where the ceiling is low and there isn’t much room to move*” (Aboulela, 2005, p.1). It is thus inferred explicitly from the excerpt that there exist a distinctive tone along the line of self-loss, mourning and a fragmented identity. This is further illustrated over the course of several inquisitions when Najwa denied her origins: “How many times have I lied and said I am Eritrean or Somali?” (Aboulela, 2005, p.

71) and “I become fragmented and deflated in discussions; I never know which point of view I support...I find myself agreeing with whoever is speaking or with the one I like best” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 79). This apparent state of confusion and trauma impeded Najwa’s ability to clearly distinguish between past and present as she constantly looped between different periodic intervals of her life, which in turn conveys an adequate sense of her trauma to the reader

The prescribed norms of Islam, however served as the ultimate refuge, aiding our narrator locate a sense of self in the dimensions of her reality and giving a subtle footnote on the remedying effects of religion as a precursor for self -identity. The prologue introduces Najwa’s current story, set in London, 2004. Although, the first principal part of the book happens in Khartoum in the lead up to the 1985 coup - one that will forever change the plot of her family’s history. Before the coup, Najwa with her twin brother, Omar and their parents lived within the spheres of Western influence, catered to by a retinue of servants, a life replete with extravagance and bliss and punctuated by regular holidays abroad. “*In the summer, we went for holidays in Alexandria, Geneva and London. There was nothing that I didn’t have, couldn’t have*” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 15). She narrates and “*We ate from china and silver: We wiped out our mouths with napkins that were washed and ironed every day*” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 16).

The plot continues on in its savory note as our narrator meets Anwar, a student activist at the university, who also belongs in the party that would later stage the coup. He never hid his hatred against the government nor his remonstrations of the role Najwa’s father played within the system, yet her attraction to him was kindled. She was as well fond of the conservative female students that donned traditional robes, the ones who wrap the secular portions of their lives around the calls for prayer and

would later represent that glimmer of spiritual longing that eventually emerges as Najwa's plot takes a twist (Aboulela, 2005). She says:

Two girls from my class were leaving the library and we smiled at each other. I was not sure of their names. They both wore white robes and one of them was very cute with deep dimples and sparkling eyes. They were provincial girls and I was a girl from the capital and that was the reason we were not friends. With them I felt, for the first time in my life, self-conscious of my clothes; my too short skirts and my too tight blouses. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 14)

She highlights here what would be keen to note as the first spark of self-scrutiny.

Arriving at their Lancaster Gate flat, Najwa and Omar find that the 'first weeks in London were OK. We didn't even notice that we were falling. Once we got over the shock of suddenly having to fly out the day after Baba was arrested, Omar and I could not help but enjoy London' (Aboulela, 2005, p. 56). But after the execution of their father and the freezing of his assets, the twins come to the realization that they are now refugees, and immediately forego their sense of what seemed to be a safe base in London since the family's fall from grace starts.

London 2003 becomes the setting for the second phase of the novel. Here, we find that Najwa has embraced Islam and the visible evidence of a completely overturned reality was sordidly apparent. Unable to finish her education, she sought for a job and shortly after begins work as a house keeper for a woman she had met at Regent's Park mosque. Her employer, Lamya, who is a PhD student and single mother, embodies the old life of luxury Najwa once knew. However, there was disparity in the beliefs of our minor characters, Lamya and Tamer, her younger brother, who also lives with her. Lamya's upheld Western precepts starkly contrasted her brother's religious doctrines but Najwa was rather drawn to him for his staunch dedication to Islam. The preceding

chapters would roam back to fill in the intervening years from 1989 through to 1991, intersecting with and illustrating the unfolding realities of Najwa's present life and laying bare the emphatic measure of Najwa's ungraceful fall to squalor. The spate of the above mentioned years chart the conflicted relationship that Najwa has with Anwar – who is now himself also a refugee in London, after another military coup in Sudan; that and her increasing conformity to Islamic ways defined the years within the subject period.

In certain respects, Aboulela's narrative is identical to the works of some of her peers about migration to London, with the likes of Hanan Al-Shaykh and Monica Ali showing the difficulties that accompany heart wrenching relocations, whether prompted by political exile or the desire for better opportunities in their fictional texts. The protagonist characters in their respective books are, in similar context as ours, often caught between alien spaces with disoriented identities. Yet, owing to their particularly secularist convictions, these sets of protagonists seek to find their sense of self in the liberal climate of London's secular space – its work establishments, leisure provisions and its unhallowed streets. In these narratives, a major part to the female protagonists' full assimilation into an occidental civilization hinges on them reclaiming their sexuality, uninfluenced.

In the present story, however, Najwa's sexual experiences are not voluntary. Her relationship and interactions with Anwar- sexual and other forms- are thoroughly demeaning, even more so because she does nothing to stop his steamrolling of her will. After the death of her parents and incarceration of her brother, Anwar stands as representation of the only connection she has to home- he remains a nostalgic image to the innocence of her youth before the coup. Their reconnection bore an all too ominous omen from the onset, beginning with their choice venue of tryst at the Hyde

Park Corner's McDonalds, which is the quintessential symbol of the global reach of Western neo-imperialism, even to the non-halal meat, all of which gave us an inkling that this is going to be an ill-fated relationship. It became even clearer when his apathy for religiously conservative women came to the surface, frowning at the sight of veiled Arab women in black, compared to the glimmering smile that lit his face in keen admiration of Najwa as she tries on Western clothing in Selfridges' fitting rooms (Aboulela, 2005).

After a certain period of time in what would be known as an exploitative relationship with Anwar, she suddenly jolts in horror to realize that she had not acknowledged or observed the months of Ramadan, completely as a result of her commitment to him. She opines to seek refuge, not in secular Western feminism but through a different medium. She felt inclined to find solace within a sacred partition of Regent Park's Mosque, coined out for Ladies. Here, she remained in solitude, within a pious space that allows her the chance to fill the gaps in her reality and thus, piece together the dispersed fragments of her world.

I close my eyes. I can smell the smells of the mosque, tired incense, carpet and coats. I doze and in my dream I am back in Khartoum, ill and fretful, wanting clean, crisp sheets, a quiet room to rest in, wanting my parents' room. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 74-75).

Najwa is no longer guided by London's space and time but rather Islam, which had become her compass. Religious matters eventually remodel her life. This transformation in self-identity birthed a chaste friendship between Najwa and her employer's sibling, Tamer. Her relationship with Tamer, who is the only virtuous male in the book, remains essentially innocent. The concluding pages of the book

gives light to a pact struck by Najwa to Tamer, a pact that not only gives the latter what he desires but also empowers our narrator begin her life in London, anew.

### **3.3.1.1.3 Traumatic Recollection of Memory**

To get the result of working through trauma, one should try to switch his traumatic memories into narrative memories. Memories uncovered while working through trauma cannot be integrated into the narrative language. Laub (1995) claims:

Victims need to tell their stories in order to survive. The testimony is, therefore, the process by which the narrator (the survivor) reclaims his position as a witness or a listener inside himself . . . repossessing one's life story, though giving testimony is itself a form of action, of change, which one has to actually pass through, in order to continue and complete the process of survival after liberation. (p. 70)

Throughout the novel, the protagonist is unable to share her story because she is ashamed. Tamer was the only one that Najwa shared with fragments of her story. None of her other acquaintances were aware of her experiences.

Imagery is another important part of representing the trauma process, and it is used throughout the novel. Luckhurst (1999) even claims that it is probably in the image that "the psychic registration of trauma truly resides" (p. 147). In a traumatized mind, intrusive images in the form of recurrent dreams and nightmares replace narrative memory. The addition of visual images makes the narration more effective and powerful. For Najwa, the most significant recurring image in the novel is the night her father left. Another haunting image that repeatedly appears in Najwa's mind is her parents room: "I doze and in my dream I am small and back to Khartoum, ill and fretful, wanting clean, crisp sheets, a quiet room to rest in, wanting my parents' room" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 75) and by the end of the novel she states again "I am not

well. I have a fever and I need my parents' room" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 276). Going to Hajj is the only image that stays with Najwa by the end of the novel. In fact, by the end of the novel " Najwa plans to go on Hajj" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 272, 274]. The images bring a new smell, sound and effect to the trauma.

By the end Najwa is only left with her faith and image of her wishing to go to Hajj. According to van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995), "traumatic memory is not fixed on a linguistic level but on a somatosensory, iconic level. It becomes non-verbal, context-free, non-narrative memory" (p. 160-63). This is the kind of memory which trauma novels attempt to reconnect via fragmented episodes and images. In the novel, Najwa seems unable to turn her traumatic memory into coherent narrative memory as images from the past come again to her mind. It is impossible to assimilate the traumatic happenstance into a coherently organized narrative of the past.

#### **3.3.1.1.4 Men's Role in Najwa's Life**

The image of a perfect man Najwa holds is primarily built on the consistency she imagines sharing with her twin brother Omar. The latter takes an immediate notice of her sadness at Anwar's accusations of her father. He wonders: "How did he know? Once long ago we were asleep inside Mama's stomach together, facing each other, twisting and kicking. I would like to go back to that time" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 38). According to Jarret, twins manifest a desire to re-establish twinness with other objects and people (Aboulela, 2005, p. 196). Each time she feels weak and helpless, Najwa craves for a simple life in which she feels protected. It becomes clearer in the latter parts of the novel that she has been looking for the protection she always needed in her relationship with men around her. Disappointed with Anwar, Najwa sees Tamer as a different man as the following passage reveals:

There was a time when I craved pity, needed it but never got it. And there are nights when I want nothing else but someone to stroke my hair and feel sorry for me. Looking at him now, his nose swollen with flu, I think he could pity me, one day, at the right time, in the right place, he could give me the pity I've always wanted. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 117-8)

Minaret as a realist narrative deals with God in a particular way that helps the achievement of the writer's objective of minimizing the religious notion to a restricted entity organizing the chaotic surrounding that a traumatized soul finds difficult to live with. Aboulela doesn't pose ideological questions related to the existence of God. Instead, she basically comments on the characters' relationship with God in everyday life, in which Allah provides Najwa with the protection needed in her struggles. For instance, when Lamia loses her necklace; she directly accuses Najwa of stealing it. Few minutes later, Lamia's daughter, Mai, is found playing with it. Najwa soon starts making suppositions about what could have happened had the daughter not appeared with the necklace in question. She says: "What if Mai hadn't appeared with the necklace? My stomach heaves. I can lose this job easily. Rely on Allah, I tell myself. He is looking after you in this job or in another job" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 114). Najwa's seeking of protection from Allah to face the fabricated accusations is a clear example of the use of religion as being the origin of comfort in the struggles of individuals. This side of religion is what Najwa yearns, as an exiled female.

Wail (2008) believes that the narrative logic of Aboulela's fiction expresses "religious worldview that does not normally inform modern literature" (p. 310). Based on this, the author employs various techniques of narration engaged in the agenda of writing a novel that creates an Islamic platform in which "fictional worlds

where cause and effect are governed by Muslim rather than non-Muslim rationale” (Ameri, 2012, p. 103). This rationale asserts God’s supreme power in determining all aspects of life, nay it interferes when necessary to change and direct the course of events. This can be manifested in Najwa’s thinking that the current misfortunes could be avoided if the family had not deviated from religion. In her visit to her brother Omar in prison, she suggests that he should be reading the Quran more frequently, and admits her regret for not being that religious in Khartoum:

Our house was a house where only the servants prayed. Where a night-watchman would open the gate for our car arriving late after a night out, then sit reciting the Qur’an until it was time for the dawn prayer. I remember him sitting cross-legged in the garden, dark as a tree.

If Baba and Mama had prayed,’ I say, ‘if you and I had prayed, all of this wouldn’t have happened to us. We would have stayed a normal family

That’s naïve...

Allah would have protected us, if we had wanted Him to, if we had asked Him to but we didn’t. So we were punished. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 95)

Despite these thoughts, Najwa expresses her wish Omar was punished according to the Sharia law when first caught with drugs. If such a thing was done, he would have stopped dealing with drugs. Such punishment is, according to her, more efficient as a precaution. Further evidence for this rationalization is the fact that Najwa considers the money offered by Tamer’s mother for breaking up with him as a compensation for what she had lost to Anwar years ago. She says about this coincidence:

I walk across the park towards Baker Street. In the bank I deposit the cheque

Doctora Zeinab had written out for me. As I fill in the payment slip, I realize that the amount is exactly the same as the sum I lent Anwar, years ago, to do his PhD. He had never paid me back, not even part of it. Over time I had accepted this loss as a penalty, the fine I had to pay to extract myself. Now, in this strange way, I am getting my money back. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 268)

Najwa narrates this strange event in a calm manner that it makes it appear as a natural thing. Her depiction of Allah as a miraculous creator leads her to expect his interference at certain moments to save the characters. As a matter of fact, such miracles do happen; however, to the modern reader, they just appear naïve and far beyond reality to be believed. Wail (2008) underlines “in Aboulela’s episteme of faith, there is neither room nor use for irony” (p. 311), so the reader is expected to accept everything as a twist of faith, which makes Najwa comfortable because Allah is looking after her in strange way (Aboulela, 2005, p. 114).

Abbas (2013) claims that Aboulela’s novels “are not just about religious people, not just in touch with older, religious forms of narrative; they also convert specifically novelistic narrative modes to religious ends” (p. 442). Her fiction makes the seculars presented in other contemporary novels subjected to Muslim conversion (p. 443) Abbas further argues. For example: she gives a “vision that takes traditions of domestic multicultural romance and filters them through contemporary right-wing Islamism,” (Abbas, 2013, p. 445) She praises the young people devoted to Islam while the other leftist liberals are portrayed as useless and inutile.

In *Minaret*, Anwar is the main character through which the liberal thought is criticized, along with Omar, Randa and uncle Smar. The character of Anwar, however, embodies the main features of the leftist ideology. Being her love subject

matter, Najwa captures Anwar in the first part's flashbacks when narrating the time at Khartoum University between 1984-5, as an activist who contributed to one of the students' newspapers. From his statements, Anwar appears as an atheist, Marxist who has no deal with religion. He emerges as an anti-bourgeoisie who keeps attacking the policy of her father even if the two are dating. Najwa breaks up with him after she heard him attacking her surname openly. But then, the couple reunites in London where their relationship becomes sexually intimate. At the same time, their disagreement becomes more obvious as well. Anwar maintains his political views and argues with her, while she spends her days working as a help for Aunty Eva and hoping Anwar could change his attitudes. Full with disappointments at his unexpected reaction to the mentioning of a possible match between him and his cousin, Najwa desperately waits for comfort instead of usual political opinions or hegemony of women in the east: "I folded the letter. Now, if he could come over and put his arms around me, say 'You mustn't feel insecure, you mustn't worry.' But he wouldn't do that, as if there was a law: Anwar must not feel sorry for Najwa" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 228). At the time, his views make her depressed, yet Anwar is merely focused on the article he has been writing, and he further asks her to read it, as her English is better than his. In this unequal relationship where Najwa feels annoyed by his continuous political attitudes he tries to assert on her, the situation becomes unbearable for her particularly with his saying "when are you going to learn?" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 231) in the midst of these calamities. Later, Najwa meets Lithe husband of Wafaa, a blonde English man who has converted to Islam. She can't prevent herself from comparing him with Anwar. She concludes that men like Anwar, who she thinks view religion as the main source of evil in Sudan, would denounce men like Ali. However, Najwa becomes jealous of the way Ali treats his wife Wafaa. He's protective and tender. The

perfect man that any woman in the world would crave for. She longs for his tenderness and protection (Aboulela, 2005, p. 242). Once Najwa tells her lover Anwar that she has been a victim of sexual harassment, she wants to see how he would react to this. “You’re sophisticated enough to deal with this, Najwa. Don’t make a big thing out of it. Be flexible with him, the poor guy has lots of hang ups” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 242). Such bad treatments that suggest a lack of interest in her make Najwa’s disappointments greater. Although he says he is for gender equality and believes in freedom, he thinks that Najwa can’t be seen as a Westernized woman only after she has sex with him: “I know you’re Westernized, I know you’re modern’... that’s what I like about you- your independence” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 176). These words are the only praise she has heard from him yet this was after their first time together. Anwar’s lectures her on how hypocritical the Arab society is, using the men’s right to visit the whorehouses as example. However, indirectly, he admits he had been into brothels where women are being forced to prostitution. Even though Najwa had her first time with him, Anwar is the opposite. This is not what she has desired in a lover so she says the following lines:

I knew Anwar well enough to guess what his reaction would be to what I was hearing and seeing around me. His views on religion were definite and he hated fundamentalists [...] Look at what happened in Sudan, look at human rights, look at freedom of speech and look at terrorism. But that was exactly where I got lost. I did not want to look at these big things because they overwhelmed me [...] It wasn’t fundamentalists who killed my father, it wasn’t fundamentalists who gave my brother drugs. But I could never stand up to Anwar. I did not have the words, the education or the courage. I had given in to him but he had been wrong, the guilt never ever went away. Now I wanted

a wash, a purge, a restoration of innocence. I yearned to go back to being safe with God. I yearned to see my parents again, be with them again like in my dreams. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 241-2)

The current relationship with Anwar destroys Najwa's self-confidence. She is acting as a fool to Anwar when he continuously assures her of his superiority. Unlike Wafia's husband, Anwar is a Westernized man who fails to make Najwa feel what she has been longing for. His words are no longer a comfort to her and thus pushing her to complain that "[h]e knew facts and history but nothing he said gave me comfort or hope. The more he talked, the more confused I felt, groping for something simple, but he said nothing was simple, everything was complicated, everything was connected to history and economics" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 165). This relationship is a total failure of liberalism. Najwa had thought that London could bring them happiness away from Sudan (Aboulela, 2005, p. 168). But it seems that the original country can't be left behind as its politics, economy and history burst into the present.

On the other hand, Tamer is way different to Anwar. He becomes worried about Najwa and follows her as she leaves when his sister Lamia accuses her of stealing the necklace. He clearly disapproves of his sister: "I don't approve of her. She hardly prays. She doesn't wear the hijab. It's wrong. She has such bad friends. They go and see rude films together. They smoke and drink wine- it's disgusting [...]. It's all to do with pride, the way she talked to you just now. She shouldn't..." (Aboulela, 2005, p. 115). Convinced of doing the right thing, he disagrees with his sister in such a way that he shows his support for Najwa. Despite the fact that he is younger than her, he likes her faith, the way she pays attention to details such as going to a halal butcher and the support he finds in her encouragements to abandon

his studies in Economy and study Islamic history instead. Tamer confesses his love and admiration whenever the opportunity is found. He sometimes asks her for advice, and when she says she isn't qualified to do so, he answers that she is being harsh on herself " 'It annoys me when you put yourself down like this. You're better than a lot of people; you've just had bad luck. I bet so many men wanted to marry you!'" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 201). Aboulela reinterprets the meaning of a romantic hero through contrasting Anwar and Tamer. The first being brave and ideal seems to be the perfect hero, but he loses the battle to the young Tamer who is characterized as a perfect Muslim, tender and protective.

To sum up, *Minaret* contributes to showing how the British Muslim identities are portrayed. However, reading it may be challenging. Thus, readers should be cautious of its flaws and approach Najwa and the narrator from a critical perspective. Rachel Dusk describes Aboulela as a fresh young voice. She can be a good example of the modern female voices, but she can't be the only female voice. Obviously, she lacks prudence and multiplicity in conveying the feelings and experiences of women negotiating identity positions.

#### **3.3.1.1.1.5 Making up for the Loss: Filling the 'Empty Space Called Freedom'**

Najwa claims straight from the first page that the story is about a woman who experiences a transformation in status and position. Thus, the novel *Minaret* is all about the notion of loss. " I've come down in the world. I've slid to a place where the ceiling is low and there isn't much room to move. Most of the time, I am used to it. Most of the time I'm good. I accept my sentence and not brood or look back. But sometimes a shift makes me remember" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 1). Najwa mourns the loss of her past, but she is not exactly a melancholic character because she does not

blame herself. As Freud (1959b/1917) outlines in “Mourning and Melancholia,” “mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which had taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on” (p. 243).

The psychological depression of Najwa is merely mourning for her losses and misfortunes than melancholia as Freud (1959/1917) distinguishes when he says “in mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself” (p. 246). Despite being highly depressed, Najwa blames the world around her and the “empty space called freedom” for her miseries rather than herself (Aboulela, 2005, p. 174-5). Santesso reminds us that Najwa starts linking evil to power (Aboulela, 2005) as a result of her previous interpretations of the past events in her mourning. Najwa no longer desires power, fearing it might drag her into evil. Most of her problems appear when she is in London. In contrast, the flashbacks clearly show the identity problems she had in Sudan before the 1985 coup. She finds the negotiation between the Westernized folks like her father and the common people of Sudan quite impossible. They are two worlds apart. Because of having access to both worlds, Najwa finds herself dealing with hyphenated identities and thus “inhabiting liminal psychic spaces” as Tindongnan suggests. Later, Najwa will reveal that she didn’t have individuality and openness her friends had. Referring to her life in the Sudanese capital, she says about the university time: “I was in university to kill time until I got married and had children. I thought that was why all the girls were there too but they surprised me by caring about their education, forging ahead with jobs and careers. I surprised myself by never getting married” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 102). Najwa had never hoped for strength or a successful career before the death of her father. She never takes any responsibility in deciding her life, thinking it has been

already planned in the best way possible. As a result of this, she doesn't have personal ideas of her own and cannot carry any debate. In Khartoum, she finds herself rejected and alienated from her own community because of the Western education she has received and the planned life she has been living there. Her problems and struggles become more evident when she travels to London after the death of her father. She finds herself unable to deal with the problems she faces. Moreover, she has to negotiate the two worlds again. The only difference now is that this time she is fully responsible for her own life. Although she doesn't seem to worry about the religious side in London since it isn't a social dominant reality. However, the loss of her family members one after the other puts her in an empty space as she says in the following passage:

Who would care if I became pregnant, who would be scandalized? Aunty Eva, Anwar's flat mates. Omar would never know unless I wrote to him. Uncle Saleh was across the world. A few years back, getting pregnant would have shocked Khartoum society, given my father a heart attack, dealt a blow to my mother's marriage, and mild, modern Omar, instead of beating me, would have called me a slut. And now nothing, no one. This empty space was called freedom. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 174-5)

A reader of *Minaret* may notice that the novel treats the concept of freedom in a particular way that makes it lose its glamour. It is neither exalted nor given much importance. Moreover; in the case of Najwa, freedom is more a punishment than an achievement that needs to be gained as she bears the load of having lost the family, society and religion. Further evidence is found in the fact that in her love relationships, freedom has never been what Najwa wanted. She has always looked for

a situation in which she is the poor, weak woman that needs to be saved by a hero. For example, this is evident in her declaration to Shahinaz in which Najwa states how grateful and happy she would feel for being the wife of Tamer. She also makes a complaint about the bitter reality that she has to settle for freedom in these modern times (Aboulela, 2005, p. 215). Upon this ground, Najwa always refers to freedom with the sense of alienation and loss, viewing it as a modern disease. The writer herself refers to this view on freedom so often. Interestingly; Najwa's religious sense is not regarded as going back to the roots, but as Aboulela mentioned in an interview, choosing the way of living is in fact choosing one of the possible "routes" (hall 4) among many. Once asked by Anita Sethi if she thought there was more freedom for British women to be religious, Aboulela answers: "Oh, definitely. But then you have to decide what you are going to do with all this freedom. You can do what you like, so being religious is one of the things I chose" (Sethi, 2005). This declaration supports the author's understanding of the concept of freedom that the characterization of Najwa incorporates. Saying freedom could be used for the sake of religion brings to the spotlight the widespread discourse that categorizes religion, Islam particularly, as oppressive. Here, Aboulela (2005) presents the modern tendency in discourse, which presents the relationship between Islam and women as if it existed as a sealed deal; the concept however is fixed and entrapped within these two edges. Through this declaration, Aboulela (2005) hints to the supposition that Muslims are subjects of oppression in non-Western areas of the world. She further indicates how certain people are expected to behave in a particular way due to social stereotypes and structures. This is presented as a case in which the periphery is defined by the centre, freezing the meaning and eliminating any chance for negotiations. Aboulela (2005) states that many people hold the idea of her being an

oppressed woman because she wears the hijab. Whereas in fact, unlike her protagonist Najwa, Leila had the same privilege in having a secular education that made it difficult for her to wear the hijab among her secular acquaintances in Khartoum where the Muslim domination is obviously noticeable. On the contrary, she adopted the hijab while living in the UK where the Muslim community is minor compared to the one in Sudan. The personal experience of the author is prominently shown throughout the character of Najwa. She presents a vision from a different perspective in which the meaning of freedom and oppression are shifted since hijab -seen by the Western discourse as a symbol of oppression- is desired by an intellectual, secular female. This new vision sums up the fact that British Muslims' community includes devotees, seculars and many others in their ranks. Thus, wearing hijab and commitment to the Islamic practices was the "route" chosen by Aboulela and her protagonist Najwa in dealing with the trauma of migration and filling the empty space called freedom.

Thus, Najwa becomes destroyed by the loss of her family, and since this is theorized by Murray Bowen as a social and emotional unit, individuals cannot be understood without it. Further instruction by Williams (1976) states that "family theory suggests that individuals gain a sense of self in symbiotic relation with a wide assortment of people and places: the source of identity is not the individual or a single event, but rather a reciprocal matrix consisting of family, home, and events" (p. 13). The story of Najwa exemplifies how the absence of the family and the community can be compensated by Islam in providing a sense of belonging, love and support. At the same time, recognizing the irrelevance of the western standards of liberation.

#### **3.3.1.1.1.6 Negotiating Identities for Loss of Family Bond**

Najwa found herself dealing with both religious and national identities. It

begins as she migrates to Britain and continues the entire time she spends there. The most traumatic part is when the cultural shock an immigrant experiences while encountering the new society for the first time takes hold. In *Minaret*, however, such cultural shock found in many migrant narratives isn't a subject of experience by Najwa. Her previous status as the daughter of a rich family granted her frequent visits to London, where she considered it to be a second home to her. Thereafter, her trauma is more due to feeling alienated and lonely after experiencing exile than being culturally shocked. Also, she refers to herself as an exiled person since she and her family had to fly to London and can no longer return to Sudan. However, for the reasons previously mentioned, the exile makes her traumatized after a certain stage.

There are other emotional and psychological factors that play an important role along with the trauma caused by her isolation. During her time in London, she is at first hopeful of reuniting with the family and going back to Sudan. Then she spends much of her time nursing her sick mother, whose death contributed to the reestablishment of Najwa's relationship with Anwar. She seems happy in this relationship. However, she starts questioning her life after she loses dear things one after the other, and realizes there is no possibility of going back to Sudan. After years, she refers back to those days when she arrived to London and says: "Our first weeks in London were OK. We didn't even notice that we were falling. Once we got over the shock of suddenly having to fly out the day after Baba was arrested, Omar and I could not help but enjoy London" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 56) They also find amusements in doing things such as "grocery shopping, pushing the Hoover around, cooking frozen food" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 56), tasks that were previously done by a large group of servants in the house. She becomes conscious when her twin brother Omar and her cousin Samir want to go to the disco. She finds no harm in enjoying the city,

and eating pizza hut, but going to the disco to dance while her father's life is on trial, seems to be too much since her main concern was what people may say (Aboulela, 2005, p. 60). She admits and says to her brother how impossible such a thing could be if they were still in Khartoum. As a matter of fact, she does not reject the offer because of her spoiled mood, but mainly because of the fear of being caught by a familiar figure from Khartoum who would tell how much the children are spoiled and corrupt, to the extent that they go dancing while their father is jailed. This way of thinking points to the importance that Najwa gives to the notion of the family. She defines herself in reference to the family systems. Being the daughter of an important man, she is expected to behave appropriately. In their first weeks in London, Najwa chooses Baba's daughter as an identity which seems to bring a certain level of comfort. After the death of the father, she and her brother Omar become aware of the bitter reality.

Najwa describes this reality in the following words:

There are all kinds of pain, degrees of falling. In our first weeks in London we sensed the ground tremble beneath us. When Baba was found guilty we broke down, the flat filling with people, Mama crying, Omar banging the door, staying out all night. When Baba was hanged, the earth we were standing split open and we tumbled down and that tumbling had no end, it seemed to have no end, as if we would fall and fall for eternity without ever landing. As if this was our punishment, a bottomless pit, the roar of each other's screams. We became unfamiliar to each other simply because we had not seen each other fall before. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 61)

The identity she has chosen for herself by being Baba's daughter is clearly faded by Baba's death. The significance of this loss can be noticed in her suffering from hollowness. Baba's departure doesn't only mean the loss of a beloved person, but also the position and wealth acquired by being the daughter of a government official. Moreover, this loss impacts directly the tenet she has built her identity and personality upon.

Most people, willingly or forcefully, use national identifications as identity markers for themselves. However; "nation itself is an imagined community" as Anderson (2006, p. 6) states. Herein; identifying oneself with a given nation is possible as far as it is maintained. The sense of belonging established with the nation is erupted by the possible cultural shock brought about by the experience of migration. Consequently, most immigrants find themselves dividing loyalties between the mother country and the host one. In *Minaret*, such moments of complete uneasiness take place after the change occurring in Najwa's life. While thinking about her sexual experience with Anwar, she finds herself unable to locate it in various contexts. First, when recalling the sexual experience she had with Anwar, she expresses her discontent with how sexuality is treated in both British and Sudanese cultures. This event may cause a shock in Sudan and lead her parents to heart attack, whereas in Britain nobody seems to care. Second, the fact of being alone in London stresses the reality that she has nobody to care about what happens in her life. No family to trust and rely on. That day, while walking in the streets of London and thinking about that relationship with Anwar, Najwa reckons : "I walked down Gloucester Road and thought that whatever happened to me, whatever happens in the World, London remained the same, constant; continuous underground trains, the newsagents selling Cadbury's chocolates, the hurried footsteps of people leaving

work. That was why we were here: governments fell and coups were staged and that was why we were here” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 174). This was the first time when she feels aware of the “shitty-colored skin” she has. She feels jealous at the English who do not seem to trouble themselves with such feelings; they are “unperturbed and grounded, never displaced, never confused” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 174). She further believes that the unstable situations in Africa – the continent where she comes from – are reflected in the misfortunes she goes through. She wishes the Western imperial center would bring to her life the stability and protection she has been seeking. Even though she gradually loses the willingness to be identified as a British national, she asks herself: “What was wrong with us Africans? [...] In Queensway, in High Street Kensington, we [Anwar and Najwa] would watch the English, the Gulf Arabs, the Spanish, Japanese, Malaysians, Americans and wonder how it would feel to have, like them, a stable country” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 165). After a while, she realizes her relationship with Anwar is abusive enough and brings more harm than it benefits her. Consequently, she attempts to fill the absence of a lover, a family and a nation. The only alternative that may efficiently substitute these losses is Islam. Its solid identity can be taken with her everywhere. Thus, she becomes more attracted to it. This new attachment seems to disturb people like Anwar. This is why she finds herself in different situations defending her religious identity against those who associate it with fundamentalism. As a matter of fact, she never believed fundamentalism was related to the calamities and the misfortunes the family faced. Although she doesn’t openly voice it, Najwa holds the idea that her father’s execution and the imprisonment of her twin Omar are more due to the complete neglecting of religion, since she holds a strong belief that the past events could have been avoided if the family paid more attention to religion.

The new identity Najwa holds leads her to the mosque to take part in female group reading of the Quran. The feelings of security and belonging grow inside her. Religion seems to be offering the peace and stability always requested by Najwa. Although London is stable and secure enough, Najwa cannot associate her imagination with the imagined community. As a result, she finds herself forced to adopt Islam as an identity in which she feels home. When Anwar comes to apologize to her, Najwa tells him that she is going to the mosque, emphasizing that she feels just as if she is in Khartoum. Anwar's reply denies this and says that there is more to Sudan than Islam. He makes a valid point to which Najwa faces with ignorance. Deep inside, she associates Sudan and Islam in way that makes the nation lose its significance. Najwa's nostalgia for Khartoum is mainly a longing for its culture rather than its community. A culture that provided her with the protection and the feeling of belonging she has lost in exile. Now, she no longer identifies herself as a Sudanese since she says her only identification is linked to Islam. This new identification meets the deduction of Tancke (2013) on how "Najwa's new-found faith enables her to cope with the painful extent to which her life has been uprooted and her sense of self jeopardized" (p. 8).

### **3.3.1.2 Characters Working Through**

#### **3.3.1.2.1 Religion as Refuge to Pain**

Religion plays an important role in Najwa's daily life as the story advances. She starts to rely heavily on Islam and puts her destiny in the name of Allah. She speaks about religious programs and states:

The religious programmes make me feel solid as if they are telling me, Don't worry. Allah is looking after you, He will never leave you, He knows you love

Him, He knows you are trying and all of this, all of this will be meaningful and worth it in the end. ... This kind of learning makes sense to me. (Aboulela, 2005, p. 98)

Thus, religion or being a Muslims becomes an important part of her and she starts defining herself as such: "I guess being a Muslim is my identity. ... I just think of myself as a Muslim" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 110). She no longer sees herself as fragmented or isolated from her native home. Religion completes, in terms of culture, the country and family belonging: "a country that [is] a familiar, reassuring background, a static landscape on which to paint dreams. A country we could leave at any time, return to at any time and it would be there for us, solid, waiting" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 165). She starts wearing the hijab and that not only protects her from the male dominance but from her shattered self "Without it, my nature is exposed" (p. 186). Faith brings solace and meaning to Najwa and by embracing, it she embraces a coherent narrative. Furthermore, she states: "Not well today. Not well today means that tomorrow I will be better. It is a realistic prediction, a reassuring one. I just have to wait" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 273). One might argue that this is just a strategy that she took to cope with her trauma and that there is still a sense of helplessness.

On a more positive note, it can also be considered as pragmatism and a realistic mindset that Najwa tries to adapt. She states: "you have to be realistic about certain things" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 268). For this purpose, it cannot be said that there is a resolution in the narrative because it is not simple to overcome the pain. Najwa chooses to compromise and to take fate as it is. By the end of the novel, when she loses her job and her lover, she still takes the path to rely on her faith and decides finally to go for a Hajj: "Najwa plans to go on Hajj" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 272, 274).

She gives meaning to her own narrative in her own manners.

The novel's ending shows the disadvantages of this method. She seems unable to escape from her pain and trauma. She regresses again and goes back to haunted images from her past: "I circle back, I regress; the past doesn't let go. It might as well be a malfunction, a scene repeating itself, a scratched vinyl record, a stutter" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 216). The above shows a failure of the narrative. Again "Minaret" resembles "Falling Man" in that it is a novel of acting out rather than working through. Both characters seem stuck in their path and unable to move on.

### **3.3.3.1.1 Longing for Companionship**

Another strategy that Najwa undertakes is her desire for human connection. Some of it still has a motive for spiritual relationship. She is attracted to Tamer due to his devotion to Islam. As already mentioned, Tamer is her employer's younger brother who is a university student, and is known within the diaspora community in London as someone who is "committed to the Islamic movement" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 106). He is also described as an average teenager, which attracts Najwa and reminds her of her young self. She states, while talking to her friend, that: "I can tell her about the way he leaves his bed unmade, the pyjamas he steps out of and leaves as a heap on the ground. But these are secrets" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 106). She goes on and states: "He flickers between soulful depth and immaturity. This flickering is attractive; it absorbs my attention" (Aboulela, 2005, p. 197).

Both Najwa and Tamer live in fantasy and take the religious way of life as an escape to their unachieved dreams. Tamer states: "I don't want to think of the future—all the stupid studying I have to do. I don't even want to do my re-sits. ... The two of us would go back in time. A time of horses and tents; swords and raids"

(Aboulela, 2005, p. 255). His rebellious nature reminds her of herself during her formative years: “This rebellion is half-formed, half- baked; it lacks a focus and a goal” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 220). She continues by saying: “he is like someone else, a common rebellious teenager” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 254). At the end of the novel, she observes: “He is all grown up now. And that quality I had adored, that glow and scent of Paradise, is gone. Soon, he will be like the rest of us” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 256). They fell in love with a fantasy of each other. However, both were seeking to overcome the hurdles of life and to construct themselves.

Najwa’s refusal of marriage could also be taken as a refusal to resolution of the narrative. At the end, she painfully said: “I sit, twisted by cruelty. An hour passes but time means nothing. I can still hear his voice, smell him. I can still see the confusion in his eyes, the way he looked at me as if I were a criminal” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 268).

### **3.4 Stylistic Study of the use of Adjective in Minaret**

Before starting our analysis, it is important to shed light on the novel that we are about to study. *Minaret* is a novel that was written in a thoughtful tone containing an even amount of dialogue and description. Further, it was written in a fierce and a direct manner giving insights into Islam and a character struggling with her changing life.

Now speaking about the main subject of this section, we will undertake the analysis of the narrative as far as the use of adjectives is concerned. Adjectives will be examined according to their frequency in the novel and few examples will be given to illustrate their type, that is, adjectives of color, physical adjectives, personal adjectives, emotional adjectives, adjectives of nationality...etc.

The following table illustrates the different adjectives used, and their frequency within the first part of *Minaret* by Leila Aboulela DeLillo. The work is divided into different tables named as followed :

- Adjective list 1 that group all the adjectives that appear once
- Adjective list 2 groups all the adjectives that appear twice
- Adjective list 3 groups all the adjectives that appear three times
- Adjective list 4 groups all the adjectives that appear four times
- Adjective list 5 groups all the adjectives that appear five times
- Adjective list 6 groups all the adjectives that appear six times
- Adjective list Other groups all the adjective that appear more than 7 times

**Table 1 : List 1 Adjective Frequency 1**

Table 1: List 1			
Ruffled	Edgy	best	Scruffy
hopeful	thrilling	unnecessary	clean
confused	dignified	busy	childish
tall	solid	latest	uncomfortable
quick	seedy	posh	awful
gangly	long	careless	terrible
curly	homely	older	flattering
sudanese	tilted	old-fashioned	plain
brown	unfocused	mature	gentle
sensitive	slow	halter-neck	foolish
quick	desperate	respectable	unbecoming
sharp	sweaty	eccentric	stupid
egyptian	favourite	heartbroken	rowdy
best	dense	identical	dishevelled
bad	reliable	retarded	amazing
vague	soft	guilt	longish
humble	lovely	smarter	smelly
wealthy	wavy	fat	nice

**Table 2 : List 1 Adjective Frequency 1**

<b>Table2 : List 1</b>			
subdued	short	tired	delicious
fragile	quicker	pleased	darkness
neglected	ill	handwritten	Indian
conscious	lucky	flowing	straight
sleepy	soft	cynical	high
sophisticated	gentle	sacred	unglamorous
vulnerable	colder	suitable	carefree
funny	familiar	glamorous	sensible
smooth	longish	tidy	cute
shy	sharpest	clever	sparkling
uncomfortable	proud	spearmint	intelligent
short-sleeved	smooth	animated	awkward
thick	poor	sober	modest
best	tight	preoccupied	pure
Immune	unusual	Alert	plain
Inevitable	perfect	addictive	bold
Patient	embarrassing	precious	effortless
Harsh	intimidating	irritated	buoyant
Political	stingy	identical	formal
American	separate	tired	blameless
Sudanese	frightened	wide	sharper
Lumpy	blind	important	smug
Faded	expensive	Frozen	bloody
Wrong	smoky	normal	shapeless
Special	dignified	abandoned	enough
Respectful	large	stronger	glamorous
Absurd	frightening	cautious	open
Latest	fast	bearable	generous
Unfamiliar	confused	poorest	poor
Full	shady	amused	patriotic
Lively	green	approving	high
Smaller	tall	unsupportive	dazzling
Guarded	serious	progressive	drab
Stiff	infectious	deaf	lovely
Fairer	distracted	seedy	developed
Kind	sickly slow	floppy	brave
Busy	seedy	Freezing	pretty
Sure	mysterious	high	hollow
Bored	frantic	Populist	familiar
Unfulfilled	slippery	Feudal	bottomless
distant	neat	Democratic	

**Table 3 : List 2 Adjective Frequency 2**

<b>Table 3: List 2</b>
Short
Cautious
Alone
Natural
Longsleeved
Sticky
Grilled
Mad
Anxious
Thin
Yellow
Cold
Obsessed
Calm
Falling
Silly
Low
Great
Faster
Qualified
Sweet
Loud
Emancipated
Afraid
Disappointed
Elegant
Strange
Big
Hard
Smooth

**Table 4 : List 3 Adjective Frequency 3**

<b>Table 4: List 3</b>
Beige
Spoilt
Conscious
Small
Warm
Cool
Dark
Large
Deep
Sharp
Clean
Fresh
Beautiful
Young
Angry
Rich

**Table 5 : List 4 Adjective Frequency 4**

<b>Table 5: List 4</b>
Quiet
Pink
Private
Bright
Hot
Happy
Favorite
Dirty

**Table 6: List 5 Adjective Frequency 5**

<b>Table 6: List 5</b>
Little
Red

**Table 7 : List 6 Adjective Frequency 6**

Table 7: List 6
Empty Blue Black Old Guilty

**Table 8 : List Other Adjective Frequency 7 and more**

Table 17: List Other
New 8 Nice 9 White 14 Good 16

This particular section will extend to probe the use of adjectives as employed in the narrative construct of the book *Minaret* by Leila Aboulela. The aim of this analysis serves to distinctively quantify and give a description to the use of adjectives as commanded by the author. It further explores the writer’s maneuvering of adjectives to adequately convey intended depictions of main events and various literary themes, particularly the methods employed to essentially stimulate the readers’ attraction and create palpable suspense.

Evidently, the apt usage of adjectives is crucial to the clear and efficient description of narratives. They stand pivotal to the conveyance of the book’s core linguistic and literary themes, and in its detailing of events. Another purpose prompting the choice to analyze adjectives stems from a relevant need to prove that the usage or the non-usage of adjectives could as well be a stylistic measure to portray

plots and themes of the novel; as it also extensively conveys pertinent details of the characters and their traumas.

Basically, adjectives are words that describe nouns (person or thing) in a phrase, and examples of such words include: tall, nice, happy, etc. In the functions of grammar, an adjective refers to a word whose main syntactic role serves to modify a noun or pronoun – it gives concise information about the noun or pronoun’s referent. Collectively, adjectives belong to the traditional eight parts of speech of the English language. Over the decades, arguments have ensued on whether some words should remain acknowledged as adjectives along with other words of the category, although modern linguists sternly distinguish between these words known as determiners from other adjectives, ruling the former to be inadequate terms. However, the principal objective of this essay remains to be the thorough investigation of adjectives and their function in prose language as a stylistic marker, where it plays a major role in delivering the desired purposes of narratives. As aforementioned, this piece will serve to explore the quantity of adjectives as used throughout *Minaret* and tend to give few examples of the attribute they might incline to. This study adopts its model of analysis from Leech and Short (1981), which also suffices as reference in the course of the research.

From the beginning of the novel, there is a sense of melancholia and nostalgia to the past “I’ve come down in the world. I’ve slid to a place where the ceiling is low and there isn’t much room to move: Most of the time I’m used to it. Most of the time I’m good. I accept my sentence and do not brood or look back. But sometimes a shift makes me remember. Routine is ruffled and a new start make me suddenly conscious of what I have become” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 1). Though Najwa uses the emotive adjective “Good” to state her mindset and feeling of the moment, there is clearly a

negative meaning to it related to a changing social status and memories to a traumatic past. Even if this is a “New” start for Najwa, it just takes her back to what she lost. She states, in describing what around her, that: “This is a beautiful building, dignified and solid. Old, cautious money polished by generation after generation with love and care. Not like my father’s money, sequestered by a government, squandered by Omar. I was silly too with my share” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 2). The psychological adjectives “beautiful, dignified, solid” though seem positive and describe a building, they also put the focus on this to illustrate what Najwa lost and how fragile and unconfident she had become. For the first two pages, Aboulela (2005) continues to describe the moment before Najwa goes to meet her new employer Lamya. The Aboulela (2005) narrative moves from London and its dignified buildings to Khartoum in part one, which starts from 1984 to 1985. Aboulela (2005) also makes a couple references to adjectives related to space. Space in general could denote a larger geographical area such as a region, a city or a specific district, or suburb; whereas place tends to be located not necessarily on a smaller yet on a more personal scale signifying a specific moment or point of intersections within greater spatial relations such as a specific neighborhood, street corner, building, or a bench in a park— as it is personally meaningful to individuals. Moreover, since the main trauma depicted here is migrant trauma, which is linked to a certain place, Najwa, within the narrative, makes several illustrations of places within Khartoum and London. To use only a few examples: “favorite Cafeteria” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 11), where Najwa goes back in memory to her time in the University of Khartoum where she could “overlook the blue Nile” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 11), and so charity with her mother in “Cheshire home was cool and shady, in a nice part of town with bungalows and old green garden” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 19), to a discussion with Anwar about his trip to Europe and him

stating “our country Is beautiful” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 36). Most of the illustrations done within these parts are flashbacks to when Najwa was 19 and living a luxurious life with her family in Sudan. This occurred till the day when she “looked out at the Dark empty street, at Baba’s abandoned car” (Aboulela, 2005, p. 55), when her dad was arrested in the middle of the night and they had to flee to London. Aboulela (2005) gives different notions of what happened to Najwa with the use of 464 adjectives from the count of 200073, which translates to 2.3%. This indicates that there is a lack of adjectives in the narrative and the writer is not relying on much of the functioning of the adjectives in her writing. The latter point indicates that the narrative lacks specificity, description and details which mean that the theme lacks consistency and explanation. The novel needs more description and clarity of themes. This aligns with language resist trauma, and its objective is definitely to achieve the literary purposes of the novel and the incapacity of trauma language in describing the trauma experience.

#### **4. Conclusion**

*Minaret* is a novel portraying a female protagonist who starts her story by a signal of resignation and ends it by circling back to her past. Her journey to trauma has been long lived and intertwines several elements from an executed father, an incarcerated brother, a dead mother, a lost home, a diminished lifestyle and a lost love. She could only find solace in embracing Islam again. Aboulela (2005) successfully used elements of trauma narrative to picture Najwa’s pain and trauma through repetition, timeless plot, visual imagery and fragmented identity.

Therefore, being a Muslim becomes Najwa’s core identity: *“I feel that I am Sudanese but things changed for me when I left Khartoum. Then even while living*

*here in London, I've changed. And now, like you, I just think of myself as a Muslim”*

(Aboulela, 2005, p. 110). Islam reshapes Najwa's life and relocates her in time and space to overcome her trauma and take control over her life. The book in its constantly transforming scenes sufficiently illustrates two worlds – one of opulence immersed in secularism and another of hardship and tragedy salvaged by religion. It could be seen that the author's insinuation through her characters is profoundly woven around the pursuit of self-discovery and identity, particularly in the abrupt circumstance of a tragic occurrence. Also, it hints at the struggles of communal acceptance. As a trauma fiction, the book meanders through the tormenting ordeals of family tragedy and the desolation Najwa encountered. These unresolved issues gave rise to vulnerability as a response to the traumatic experiences she bore. It was only in her readiness to admit these anomalies that the consciousness to seek refuge rose and finding it, she claimed a new identity in her dedication to Islam.

Moreover, the stylistic choice used by Aboulela enhances the trauma narrative. Adjectives as used in prose language play an important role in identifying the stylistic strength of the theme and the topic in hand. The insufficient use of adjectives has significant role in strengthening the case of Leila Aboulela in her depiction of trauma and failure of language in describing the horrific events.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

Analysis of trauma fiction and its language in American and African writing is too wide and too recent of a research topic to fully fulfill the satisfactory analysis undertaken by this research. In other words, the task was of substantial responsibility that this research tries to provide answers to in three chapters. The finding of this research leads us to answer some of the following enabling conclusions found after a literary trauma analysis of *Falling Man* Don DeLillo and *Minaret* Leila Aboulela.

The two novelists took the path of using their art as an utmost efficient platform amongst a few that provides for the unhindered expression of traumatic experiences. In both fictions, the characters “Keith, Lianne and Najwa” embody the symptomology of trauma through the manifestation of ceaseless and repetitive imageries haunting their minds, but which are aptly verbalized through figurative language. Eventually, the trapped unfathomable memories of the characters will attempt to break free and therefore assume the representation of repetitive, compulsive habits to that effect, even as the victims battle within their psychological constraints, compelled to endlessly relive the traumas in silence. While Keith denied his traumatic memory and blocked it, Najwa consistently goes back to the images of the night where her father was taken and her life changed drastically. Lianne, on the other hand, experienced another kind of trauma, that of an outsider to the 9/11 attacks, but nevertheless for her, it seems as real as the trauma experienced by Keith who was in the tower. While DeLillo gave insights to different kinds of trauma including direct ones and indirect ones, Aboulela focuses on only one character and her trauma. Thus, one might question if the multiplicity of trauma types is adequate in all settings and contexts.

In all trauma fictions, death of the victim becomes an unavoidable element of trauma as Schwab (2006) quips, indicating that “trauma kills the pulsing of desire, the embodied self. Trauma attacks and sometimes kills language” (p. 96). “Even more imperatively,” he continues, “Trauma theory gives no untimely response to the astounding inquisitions but furnishes the ‘quality of time’” (Schwab, 2006, p. 96) required to substantiate a profound reflection upon the encumbrances of language and mind. Trauma theory creates room for all to “read the wound” using literature as its tool. Nothing of this insinuates that trauma theory gives in to an incorrigible, comprehensive structural construct for the translation of all heinous devastations, regardless of grandeur, individual or history. This evokes Schwab (2006)’s accurate phrasing of the phenomenon; “How then do we write what resists representation?” (p. 96). Both DeLillo and Aboulela seem to agree to the extent of structuring their novels on a disruption of time and a nonlinear narrative since *Falling Man* was narrated in a circular structure with a third person narrator and shifting points of views between characters and chronology. On the other hand, *Minaret* is narrated in the first person and one point of view, which is that of the protagonist Najwa between six periods of her life intertwined between the past and present.

Another element familiar to trauma theory and to the two narratives at hand is that of overcoming trauma through the steps of telling and witnessing of the event. Therefore, it would hence suffice to theorize that trauma theory involves the analysis of certain necessities required for a subject to subdue PTSD and subsequently find succor in language, in order to vocalize, question, and phrase (disjointed patterns count) the horrible tragedy they experienced. While Keith and Najwa both were unable to tell their stories, Lianne relied heavily on hearing and talking about what happened through Keith’s experience and her Alzheimer group. Another method to

grasp the inability thereof of modes would be to mirror the yawning vacuum of knowledge or memory brought about by the traumatic experience in a fashion similar to the dearth of narrative sketches that are fractured and fragmented. Keith tried to recollect his memory through bearing witness to Florence who was also in the tower while Najwa tried to give a fragmented account of her story to Tamer.

Within a reasonable explanation, this also refers to the contradictory pertinence appointed by the artistic protégé to endeavor a phrasing of the inexplicable event, then too, it goes to the critic, being the narrator of the obscure and erased. It rests on the choices of both in their fight for a chance to ascribe trauma with a sensible reason. Every perspective enumerated furnishes the individual with further ordeals that go beyond just reliving the trauma, irrespective of viewpoint either as a subject or firsthand witness of the trauma, physically and psychologically, the burden of translating the complex notions of disjointed representations (that of the fiction writer) rests in their suggestions of precept- based opinions of approach to the events.

Hence, as it appears that trauma is in no means a voluntary experience by the victims and that it substantially disintegrates the notion of individuality, there seems to exist a profound probability for overcoming trauma in the decisions, worked through its narratives. Our characters used different methods of working through their trauma; Keith found some peace in the games of chance and numbers, Lianne in art and religious rituals and Najwa in rekindling her faith. Religion has been an element in both novels to different degrees. One might argue that religion is an escape strategy to overcoming trauma but there could be a possible weakness of the Trauma theory as described by Cathy Caruth when it does not reconsider the role of such an important aspect of life. While the West might see it as just religion, Aboulela renders it the core

of her traumatic narration that surpasses national identity and consequently, Islam became a life style.

This is in relation to the intermediary stage towards rehabilitation, which often follows the subsequent description: Initially, there is the ascertainment of well-being; remembrance follows suit and mourning – which trails the path to re-establishment of normalcy. Since the inability to question the past through a narrative means brings about trauma, alongside memory stranded outside the event completely and is in the most, depicted as drama, contrary to the merged and customized, it is narrated by the victim who deftly understands the memories. The narrative looks to be the means to survival or recovery, even more so importantly are the elements of remembering and mourning. This allows a liberating feat of depicting the initial origin of an event.

The daunting debacle could be used to bring the remembrance and mourning processes a step further. While DeLillo speaks of trauma related to 9/11 at an individual level, Aboulela narrates about trauma related to exile and loss of family members due to a coup d'état. Regardless of if either the spotlight is on the 9/11 event or exile, which could be greatly distinguished in context, they are still concerned with individual trauma and how the character combatively tries to heal their wounds. The struggle to attain healing and the reenactment of an event is undoubtedly a hazardous endeavor as shown in the analysis of both novels. The apparitions of unresolved past recur severally in random fashions throughout flashbacks and images and both writers focused on these techniques of trauma narratives through their structures and language used. This induced norm however begs the question: what is the appropriate requirement for the interpretation of trauma? In most cases, one finds that it involves reading through the cryptographic facets of stories, which applies to an instance of a

deliberately obscured secret, which would necessitate reading with almost hallowed reverence.

Although the stance taken by the larger number of critics sways in the direction of innovative and essential insights found in Cathy Caruth's or Dominick LaCapra's studies on trauma, many emphasize on issues that trauma theory has proved inept in tackling. An example of these issues include the incapacity of language to fully comprehend the trauma experience, which was to an extent proven within this research by the analysis of adjectives that seem lacking in both novels. The objective of this research limited itself only to the frequency or a quantitative study of adjectives in the first parts of both novels since the objective was not to explain the use of each adjective but rather to enforce the notion of trauma through language shortcomings in expressing it. Disparities experienced by the characters made them incapable of describing emotions and giving details to their internal and external selves. Less than 2.3% of adjectives used in both novels are found in their first parts that constituted the core of the happenings of traumas. This only enforces the notion of trauma and the incapacity of the characters to speak the unspeakable. Other techniques were used to shed light on such claims as that of fragmented structure, timeless plot and dislocated spaciality.

Trauma is known to suffocate its characters and disable their capacity to express their experiences. Conclusively, the function of literature is obvious in its ability to vocalize trauma. In our modern research of trauma: How can we find a way out? How can trauma be expressed? What are the different routes that one could take to move beyond the unspeakability of trauma? In this sense, literature plays a significant role to bringing life to trauma and its experiences, as Geoffrey Hartman

points out:

In literature, as much as in life, the simplest event can resonate mysteriously, be invested with aura, and tend toward the symbolic. The symbolic, in this sense, is not a denial of literal or referential but its uncanny intensification [...] In short we get a clearer view of the relation of literature to mental functioning in several key areas, including reference, subjectivity, and narration. (Caruth, 1996b, p. 645)

Though many contemporary scholars responded critically to the traditional method of trauma analysis that was started by Cathy Caruth and the Freudian and Lacanian followers, using this method has been enlightening in understanding the individual trauma even if it was used in two different contexts. In spite of the challenges regarding the lack of resources and knowledge when it comes to trauma in a non-Western context and the literary trauma theory as described by Cathy Caruth, the thesis was able to illustrate the trauma experience in an Anglophone-African writing in manner similar to that of the American writing. The later does not ignore the fact that there is a need of more research to be done. All what has been done might not be sufficient to explain the complexity of such subject though the desire of this research was to further the understanding of the subject and lead to more enabling questions.

Thus, I am confident that trauma research in literature is just at the start of its evolution and I am hoping that future research will bridge the gap between different cultural contexts in the representation of trauma and a more important inclination toward a less Eurocentric approach in such studies.

## Bibliography

- Abbas, S. (2011). Leila Aboulela, Religion, and The Challenge Of The Novel. *Contemporary Literature. Humanities International Complete*, 52 (3), 430-461.
- Aboulela, L. (2005). *Minaret*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Abrams, M. H. (1981). *A Glossary of Literature Terms* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Alexander, J. (1992). *Longman english grammar*. London: Longman.
- Ameri, F. (2012). *Veiled Experiences: Re-writing Women's Identities and Experiences in Contemporary Muslim Fiction in English*. Diss. Murdoch University.
- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities*. Fairfield: Verson.
- Atwood, M. (1998/1993). *The Robber Bride*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
- Atwood, M. (2004/1988). *Cat's Eye*. London, UK: Virago.
- Brison, S. J. (1999). Trauma narratives and the remaking of the self. In Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer (Eds.), *Acts of memory: cultural recall in the present* (pp. 39-54.). Hanover and London: UP of New England.
- Cariello, M. (2009). Searching for Room to Move: Producing and Negotiating Space. In Leila Aboulela's *Minaret*. In Layla Al Maleh (Eds.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

- Caruth, C. (1995a). *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, C. (1995b). Introduction: The Insistence of Reference. In Cathy Caruth and Deborah Esch (eds), *Critical Encounters: Reference and Responsibility in Deconstructive Writing* (pp. 1-8). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Caruth, C. (1995c). An interview with Robert Jay Lifton. In Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (pp. 128-147). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, C. (2001). "An interview with Jean LaPlanche." [Web document] *Postmodern Culture* (PMC), 11(2), 1-20. Retrieved from <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/text-only/issue.101/11.2caruth.txt>.
- Caruth, Cathy (1996a). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, Cathy (1996b). An interview with Geoffrey Hartman. *Studies in Romanticism*, 35(4), 631-652.
- Collado-Rodríguez, F. (2011). Experimental fiction and trauma studies: the case of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. In Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué (eds), *Between the urge to know and the need to deny: trauma and ethics in contemporary British and American literature* (pp.129-44). Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.
- Conte, J. M. (2011). Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and the Age of Terror. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 57(3), 559-83.

- Cox, M. (1893). *Cinderella*. London: Publications of the Folk-Lore Society.
- Crews, F. (1995). The memory wars: Freud's legacy in dispute. New York, NY: New York Review of Books.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* . Oxford: Blackwell.
- Culbertson, R. (1995). Embodied memory, transcendence, and telling: recounting trauma, re-establishing the self. *New Literary History*, 26, 169- 195.
- Daly, B. (1998). *Authoring a life: a woman's survival in and through literary studies*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- DeLillo, D. (2007). *Falling Man*. New York, NY: Scribner.
- DeLillo, D. (1997). *Underworld*. New York, NY: Scribner. Retrieved from <http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/general-ction/story/0,,623732,00.html>
- Di Prete, L. (2006). *"Foreign bodies": trauma, corporeality, and textuality in contemporary American culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Douglass, A. & Thomas, A.V. (2003). Introduction. In Ana Douglass and Thomas A. Vogler (Eds.), *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma* (pp. 1-53). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Erikson, K. (1995). Notes on trauma and community. In Caruth, Cathy (Eds.), *Trauma: Explorations in memory* (pp. 183-199). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Felman, S. & Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: crises of witnessing in literature*,

*psychoanalysis, and history*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Freud, S. & Breuer, J. (2001/1895). *Studies on hysteria*. *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (James Strachey Trans.). London: Vintage, 24 (2), 1893- 1895.

Freud, S. & Oppenheim, E. (1978/1911). Dreams in folklore. *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (James Strachey Trans.). London: The Hogarth Press, 24 (2), 175-203.

Freud, S. (1959b/1917). Mourning and melancholia. In Ernest Jones. Trans. Joan Riviere (Ed.), *Collected papers* (pp. 152-170). New York, NY: Basic Books.

Freud, S. (1967/1939). *Moses and monotheism*. (Katherine Jones Trans.). New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Freud, S. (1978/1913). The occurrence in dreams of material from fairy tales: *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (James Strachey Trans.). London, UK: The Hogarth Press, 24, 279-287.

Freud, S. (1981/1895). Project for a Scientific Psychology: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (James Strachey Trans.). London: Hogarth Press, 24, 283-397.

Freud, S. (1984/1896). The Aetiology of Hysteria. (James Strachey Trans.). In Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (ed.), *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* (pp. 251-282).. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Freud, S. (1997/1909). First lecture on psychoanalysis at Clark university: Breuer and

- the treatment of hysteria. In Ludy T. Benjamin, Jr. (ed.), *A History of Psychology: Original Sources and Contemporary Research* (493-498). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Freud, S. (1998/1918). *Totem and Taboo*. (A. A. Brill Trans.). Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.
- Freud, S. (2001/1918). *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis: The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (James Strachey Trans.). London: Vintage. 24, 7-122. (Original work published in 1917/1919)
- Freud, S. (2003a/1914). Remembering, repeating, and working through. In Adam Phillips (Ed.), *Beyond the pleasure principle and other writings* (pp. 31-42). (John Reddick Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (2003b/1920). Beyond the pleasure principle. In Adam Phillips (ed.), *Beyond the pleasure principle and other writings* (43-102). (John Reddick Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (2003c/1919). The uncanny. In Adam Phillips (ed.), *The uncanny* (pp. 121-162). (David McLintock Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (2003d/1899). Screen memories. In Adam Phillips (ed.), *The uncanny* (1-22). . London: Penguin Books.
- Freud, Sigmund (1959a/1913). The theme of the three caskets. In Ernest Jones (Ed.), *Collected papers* (pp. 245-256). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Ganzel, B. (2007). The aftermath of 9/11: effect of intensity and recency of trauma on

- outcome. *Emotion* 7 (2), 227-238, 227.
- Granofsky, R. (1995). *The trauma novel: contemporary symbolic depictions of collective disaster*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Greenberg, J. (2003). Wounded New York. In Judith Greenberg (Eds.), *Trauma at Home: After 9/11* (21-35). Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press.
- Griffin, S. (1978). *Woman and nature: The roaring inside her*. New York, NY: Harper.
- Guterl, F. (2003). "What Freud Got Right." *Newsweek*. November 11, 50-52.
- Gwin, M. C. (2002). *The woman in the red dress: Gender, space, and reading*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Haaken, J. (1998). *Pillar of salt: Gender, memory, and the perils of looking back*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press.
- Hartman, G. H. (1987). *The unremarkable wordsworth*. London: Methuen.
- Hartman, G.H. (1977/1964). *Wordsworth's poetry 1787-1814*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Hartman, G.H. (1995). On traumatic knowledge and literary studies. *New Literary History*, 26 (3), 537-563.
- Hartman, G.H. (2003). Trauma within the limits of literature. *European Journal of English Studies*, 7 (3), 257-274.
- Hartman, G.H. (2004a). Words and wounds. In Geoffrey Hartman and Daniel T. O'Hara (eds.), *The Geoffrey Hartman reader* (pp.273-290). Edinburgh:

Edinburgh University Press.

Hartman, G.H. (2004b). Passion and literary engagement. In Geoffrey Hartman and Daniel T. O'Hara (Eds.), *The Geoffrey Hartman reader* (pp. 453-459).

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hartman, G.H. (2004c). Autobiographical introduction: Life and learning. In Geoffrey Hartman and Daniel T. O'Hara (Eds.), *The Geoffrey Hartman reader* (pp. 11-

26). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hatch, R.B. (2000). Margaret Atwood, the land, and ecology. In Reingard M. Nischik (Ed.), *Margaret Atwood: Works and impact* (pp. 180-201). Rochester, NY:

Camden House.

Henke, S. A. (1998). *Shattered subjects: Trauma and testimony in women's life-writing*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Herman, J.L., & Hirschman, L. (1981, 2000). *Father-daughter incest with a new afterword*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Herman, J.L. (1994/1992). *Trauma and recovery from domestic abuse to political terror*. London: HarperCollins.

Herman, J.L. (2000). Afterword: *Father-Daughter Incest* by Judith Lewis Herman with Lisa Hirschman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 219- 249.

Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Janet, P. (1989). *l'automatisme psychologique: eEssay de psychologie experimentale*

- sur les formes inferieures de l'activite humaine*. Paris, Felix Alcan. Reprint: Societe Pierre Janet/Payot, Paris, 1973.
- Kacandes, I. (2003). 9/11/01=1/27/01: The changed posttraumatic self. In Judith Greenberg (Eds.), *Trauma at home: After 9/11* (pp.168-183). Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press.
- Kaplan, E.A. (2005). *Trauma culture: the politics of terror and loss in media and literature*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Kaplan, E.A. (2005). *Trauma culture: the politics of terror and loss in media and literature*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP.
- Kilby, J. (2007). *Violence and the cultural politics of trauma*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Lacan, J. (2006/1953). The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis. (Bruce Fink Trans.). New York, NY: Norton.
- LaCapra, D. (2001). *Writing history, writing trauma*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Laub, D. (1995). Truth and testimony: the process and the struggle. In ed. Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (pp. 61-75). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Leech, G. and Short, M. (1981). *Style in Fiction*. London : Longman
- Leys, R. (2000). *Trauma: A genealogy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lieberman, J.C. (2008). *Traumatic Images*. Photographies 1.1, 88, 87-102, 88.

- Lieberman, M. R. (1972). Someday my prince will come: female acculturation through the fairy tale. *College English*, 34, 383-395.
- Lloyd, D. (2008). *Irish times, temporalities of modernity, field day files 4*. Dublin : University of Notre Dame/ Field Day.
- Luckhurst, R. (1999). Memory recovered/recovered memory. In Roger Luckhurst and Peter Marks (Eds.), *Literature and the Contemporary: Fictions and Theories of the Present* (pp. 80-93) . Harlow: Longman.
- Luckhurst, R. (2008). *The trauma question*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Marie-Louise, K. (2005). *Sexuality in extremity: trauma literature, violence, and counter-erotics*. Retrieved from <http://www.interdisciplinary.net/ci/sexuality/s2/Kohlke%20paper.pdf>. 1-13.
- Masson, J.M. (1984). *The assault on truth: Freud's suppression of the seduction theory*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Masson, J.M. (Eds). (1985). *The complete letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904* (Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- McLeod, J. (2005). Revisiting postcolonial London. *The European English Messenger*, 14, 39-46.
- Meinig, S. (2004). Running at a standstill: The paradoxes of time and trauma in zadie smith's white teeth. In Stefan Glomb and Stefan Horlacher (Eds), *Beyond extremes: repräsentation und reflexion von modernisierungsprozessen im*

*zeitgenössischen britischen Roman* (241-58). Tübingen: Narr.

Moulding, R. & Kyrios, M. (2007). Desire for control, sense of control and obsessive-compulsive symptoms, *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 31, 759-72.

Newman, S. (2003). Representation, violence, and the fate of culture: an interview with Geoffrey Hartman. *Journal of Modern Literature*, 26 (3/4), 103-122.

Niazi, N., & Gautam, R. (2007) *How to study literature: stylistics & pragmatics approaches*. Teheran: Rahnama Press.

Pozorski, A.L. (2006a). Trauma's Time. *Connecticut Review* 28(1), 71-76.

Pozorski, A.L. (2006b). An interview with trauma pioneer Cathy Caruth. *Connecticut Review*, 28 (1), 77-84.

Pyszczynski, T.A., Sheldon S., & Greenberg, J. (2003). *In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror*. Washington, WA: APA Press.

Radford, A., Martin, A., David, H. C. Andrew, S. (2009). *Linguistics: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 12.

Radstone, S. (2003). The war of the fathers: Trauma, fantasy, and September 11. In Judith Greenberg (Ed.), *Trauma at home: After 9/11* (pp. 117-23). Lincoln and London: U of Nebraska.

Randall, M. (2011). *9/11 and the literature of terror*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.

Redfield, M. (2009). *The rhetoric of terror: reflections on 9/11 and the war on terror*. New York, NY: Fordham UP.

- Robertson, R. (1995). *Glocalization: Time—Space and Homogeneity—Heterogeneity*. *Global Modernities*. London: Sage.
- Rothberg, M. (2008). Seeing terror, feeling art: Public and private in post-9/11 literature. In Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn (Eds.), *Literature After 9/11* (123-42). New York: Routledge.
- Rothberg, M. (2009). A failure of the imagination: diagnosing the post-9/11 novel: a response to Richard Gray. *American Literary History*, 21(1), 152-58.
- Sapir, E. (1958). The status of linguistics as a science. In D. G. Mandelbaum (Eds.), *Culture, language and personality*. Berkeley, CA : University of California Press.
- Sassen, S. (1998). *Globalization and its discontents: Essays on the new mobility of people and money*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Sassen, S. (2007). *Deciphering the global: Its scales, spaces and subjects*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Schoene, B. (2009). *The cosmopolitan novel*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.
- Schwab, G. (2006). *Writing against memory and forgetting: Literature and medicine*. : Spring, 25(1), 92-121.
- Sethi, A. (2013, December 5). Keep the faith interview.
- Short, M. (1996). *Exploring the language of poems, plays and prose*. London: Longman.

- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A resource book for students*. Abingdon: Routledge. --.
- (1993). *Language, Ideology and Point of View*. London: Routledge.
- Tal, K. (1996). *Worlds of hurt: Reading the literatures of trauma: Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Tancke, U. (2006). *Original traumas': Narrating migrant identity in british muslim women's writing*. Postcolonial Text.6.2.
- Terr, L. (1994). *Unchained memories: True stories of traumatic memories, lost and found*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Tew, P. (2007). *The Contemporary British Novel (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)*. London: Continuum.
- Uyterschout, S. (2012). Birgit Däwes, ground zero fiction: History, memory, and representation in the American 9/11 novel. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.
- van der Kolk, B. A. (1989). The compulsion to repeat the trauma: Reenactment, revictimization, and masochism. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 12 (2), 389-411. Retrieved from <http://www.cirp.org/library/psych/vanderkolk/>.
- van der Kolk, B.A. (1996). The body keeps the score: approaches to the psychobiology of posttraumatic stress disorder. In Bessel A. van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth (Eds.), *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society* (pp. 214-24). New York, NY: Guilford.

- van der Kolk, B.A., & Alexander, C.M. (1996). The black hole of trauma. In Bessel A. van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth (Eds.), *Traumatic stress: the effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society* (pp.3-23). New York, NY: Guilford.
- van der Kolk, B.A., & Rita, F. (1995). *Dissociation and the fragmentary nature of traumatic memories: overview and exploratory study*. David Baldwin's Trauma Information Pages, 1-14. Retrieved from <http://www.trauma-pages.com/a/vanderk2.php>.
- van der Kolk, B.A., & van der Hart, O. (1995). The intrusive past: The flexibility of memory and the engraving of trauma. In Cathy Caruth (Ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in memory* (pp. 158-182). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Versluys, K. (2009). *Out of the blue: September 11 and the novel*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Vickroy, L. (2002). *Trauma and survival in contemporary fiction*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.
- Vickroy, L. (2005). Seeking symbolic immortality: Visualizing trauma in *cat's eye*. *Mosaic*, 38 (2), 129-143.
- Wail, H. (2008). Leila Aboulela and the poetics of the Islamic novel Leila Aboulela. *English PEN World Atlas*. Retrived from [http://penatlas.org/online/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=16](http://penatlas.org/online/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=16)

- Whitehead, A. (2003). Geoffrey Hartman and the ethics of place: Landscape, memory, trauma. *European Journal of English Studies*, 7 (3), 275-292.
- Whitehead, A. (2004). *Trauma fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Williams, R. (1976). *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York, NY: Oxford UP.
- Wolfreys, J. (2002b). Trauma, testimony, criticism: Witnessing, memory and responsibility. In Julian Wolfreys (Eds.), *Introducing criticism at the 21st century* (pp. 126-148). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wolfreys, J. (Eds.). (2002a). *Introducing criticism at the 21st century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Zadie, S. (2010). *Houndmills*. : Palgrave Macmillan.

## Summary

The present research aims to showcase how the representation of trauma in literature is undertaken not only in American novel but also African one. Drawing on the traditional trauma theory and stylistic, this thesis reads through psychic trauma fiction and investigates any irregularities in the trauma experience and the language used between the two culturally different novels. Specifically, two novels "Minaret" (2005) by Leila Aboulela and "Falling Man" (2007) by Don DeLillo have been used as an example to explore traumatic experience at an individual level, how it can be read, expressed, acted out and perhaps worked through.

## Résumé

La présente recherche vise à montrer comment la représentation du traumatisme dans la littérature est entreprise non seulement dans le roman américain mais aussi en Afrique. S'inspirant de la théorie traditionnelle du trauma et de la stylistique, cette thèse se penche sur la fiction du trauma psychique pour étudier toutes les irrégularités dans l'expérience du traumatisme et le langage utilisé entre les deux romans culturellement différents. Plus précisément, deux romans "Minaret" (2005) de Leila Aboulela et "Falling Man" (2007) de Don DeLillo ont servi d'exemple pour explorer l'expérience traumatique à un niveau individuel, comment elle peut être lue, exprimée, interprétée et peut-être surmonter.

## ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث الى اظهار كيفية تمثيل الصدمة في الأدب و المأخوذة لاسيما من الرواية الأمريكية والإفريقية. تأثرا من النظرية التقليدية للصدمة و الأسلوبية , هذه الأطروحة تتطرق الى خيال الصدمة النفسية لدراسة كل النواقص في تجربة الصدمة و اللغة المستعملة بين كل الروائيتين المختلفتين ثقافيا على وجه التحديد الروائيتين "ميناريت" 2005 (لليلي أبو ليلي) و "فالينغ مان" 2007 (لدون دوليلو) اللذان كانا مثلا للبحث في تجربة الصدمة على المستوى الفردي و كيف يمكن قراءتها, اختبارها, تفسيرها, و ربما تجاوزها .

