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FALLING MEN IN 9/11 AMERICAN FICTION

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FALLING MEN IN 9/11 AMERICAN FICTION

by

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

"Falling Men" in 9/11 American Fiction

Gender critics such as Judith Butler and Michael Kimmel argue that post-9/11 American culture has embraced a traditional gender binary that positions men as the dominant protectors of women, children, and the nation as a whole, exemplified by the widespread veneration of heroic firefighters, soldiers, and the civilians of flight 93 in the media (Kimmel 249). This regression reinforces hegemonic masculinity in American culture, which R.W. Connell defines as "the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allow[s] men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell and Messerschmidt 832). Christine Beasley has "demassified" hegemonic masculinity by dividing it into two categories: sub-hegemonic masculinity, which refers to traditional modes of dominant masculinity that emphasize brawn and physical aggression, and supra-hegemonic masculinity, which designates the increasingly sublimated practices of dominance undertaken by business professionals. Rather than focusing on the sub-hegemonic ideals venerated after 9/11, my study will focus on a figure of supra-hegemonic masculinity that was suppressed in the United States after 9/11: the American businessman, who embodied the neoliberal values against which 9/11 was staged as a symbolic critique. I argue that this figure is focalized in several important works of 9/11 fiction, which attempt to reintroduce the centrality of this figure in the historical and geopolitical context of American capitalism in transnational markets.

"Falling Men in 9/11 American Fiction" explores how novelists such as Don DeLillo, Laila Halaby, Amy Waldman, and Teju Cole identify the absent cause of 9/11 to be aggressive masculine dominance as sublimated through American capitalism. This dominance is depicted in the figuration of domestic gender relations in a way that mirrors and critiques American geopolitical relations abroad. Thus, when Richard Gray claims that post-9/11 American novelists "vacillate […] between large rhetorical gestures acknowledging trauma and retreat into domestic detail," and further argues that "the link between the two is tenuous, reducing a turning point in *national* and *international* history to little

more than a stage in a sentimental education," he is in fact getting it backwards: rather than reducing 9/11 entirely to domestic trauma, this fiction situates itself within the domestic space from where it can dramatize the *outward* influence that interpersonal gender relations have on oppressive American foreign policies abroad, and vice versa (134). Therefore, in a synthesis of a key debate framed by Richard Gray and Michael Rothberg, I argue that this fiction is inherently dialectical: its "centripetal" orientation, rather than being simply reductive and "sentimental," establishes the domestic analogue for a greater "centrifugal" critique of hegemonic American ideology as it manifests itself abroad – underscoring that an understanding of domestic gender relations is essential to any analysis of American culture and fiction after 9/11.

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Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: "Managing Terror and Hegemonic Masculinity in Post-9/11 America"

Gender critics such as Judith Butler and Michael Kimmel argue that post-9/11 American culture is characterized by a regression to traditional American gender relations. More specifically, they claim that mainstream American culture has embraced a traditional gender binary that positions men as the dominant protectors of women, children, and the nation as a whole, exemplified by the widespread veneration of heroic firefighters, soldiers, and the civilians of Flight 93 in the media (Kimmel "Manhood" 249). This regression reinforces hegemonic masculinity in American culture, which R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt define as "the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allow[s] men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell and Messerschmidt 832). Christine Beasley, in "Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity in a Globalizing World" (2008), "demassifies" the concept of hegemonic masculinity by dividing it into two distinct categories: "sub-hegemonic masculinity," which refers to traditional modes of dominant masculinity that emphasize brawn and physical aggression, and "supra-hegemonic masculinity," which designates the increasingly sublimated practices of dominance undertaken by business professionals. Along these lines, rather than focusing on the sub-hegemonic ideals venerated after 9/11, my study will focus on a figure of supra-hegemonic masculinity that was suppressed in the United States after 9/11: the American businessman, whose sublimated dominance as an agent of transnational American capitalism was the embodiment of the neoliberal values against which 9/11 was staged as a symbolic critique. I argue that this figure is focalized in several important works of 9/11 fiction. Writers such as Claire Messud, Don DeLillo, and Laila Halaby attempt to reintroduce the centrality of this figure in the historical and geopolitical context of neoliberal American capitalism in transnational markets, the latter of which is an aggressive economic model that has resulted in the backlash of 9/11.[1] The cultural suppression of the greater implications of American business masculinity in the context of 9/11 will be framed by an analysis of Richard Drew's *The Falling Man*, a censored photograph that will be developed into a key trope of 9/11 fiction in Chapter

2: "Falling Men in 9/11 Fiction." This introductory chapter will begin with a genealogy of hegemonic masculinity in American culture in order to establish the historical context out of which the key agents of American capitalism arose. It will trace the homosocial interdependence of both sub- and supra hegemonic modes of masculinity in the rise of American capitalism, which coincided with the resource grubbing expansion of the Western frontier and continues today in the expansion of transnational markets.[2] In line with the immediate cultural focus on heroic modes of sub-hegemonic masculinity after 9/11, this study will begin by establishing the historical context from which the dyad of protective American masculinity/vulnerable American femininity arose, and will then trace the transformation of sub-hegemonic frontiersman masculinity to the supra-hegemonic ideal of the self-made businessman, the latter of which is focalized in this study.

The origins of the traditional gender binary cited above can be traced back to the American frontier experience in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as mythologized by Frederick Jackson Turner, in which frontiersmen were celebrated as the heroic protectors of American women and children against the Native Americans beyond the frontier. However, the ideological origins of this frontier-era gender configuration can be traced back further still. Puritan theologians used allegorical rhetoric to articulate their experience in the New World in a way that would empower and mobilize colonists against their fears of the unknown land and its Native American inhabitants: "[T]he manifest sacred destiny of America was to subdue and to redeem the wilderness […] this was the predestined future mapped out for those who would look to Biblical models inscribed by God" (Madsen 2). Puritans interpreted their struggles in the New World typologically, casting and "mapping" their experience as a figurative type that paralleled similar struggles in the Bible.[3] Like Moses leading his people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, the Puritans figured their trajectory as a divine mission to establish a "redeemer nation" in which they would repudiate the Old World and "civilize" the rugged American landscape and the "savage" Native Americans therein. Thus, "allegory provid[ed] the rhetorical structure for what has become a pervasive and long-lived

mythology of the New World, while the 'grand narrative' of America as a 'redeemer' nation produced a corresponding ideology of manifest destiny" (2). In this regard, allegory will be understood as a foundational mode of interpretive rhetoric that had a profound influence on the formation of early American political discourse. It idealized and legitimized an exceptionalist ideology of manifest destiny that obfuscated the violent expansionism undertaken by American men by figuring it in a way that positioned colonists as the defenders of "civilization" against the "savagery" of Native Americans. This political orientation also legitimized the domination of American women behind the frontier, who, according to such ideology, were in desperate need of masculine protection.[4] As will be established further below, such allegorical readings of historical events in service to American hegemony – especially the figuring of 9/11 as yet another attack at the frontier, in regards to which American civilization will triumph over an "evil" and "barbaric" intruder – will be deconstructed in my analysis of 9/11 fiction using Fredric Jameson's conception of "cognitive mapping" and the "play of figuration." This analysis will display how this fiction utilizes certain figures ("falling" businessmen, in various symbolic configurations/relations) to evoke and thus map the larger geopolitical context of American neoliberal capitalism that led to the backlash of 9/11, which undermines the exceptionalist allegorizing of the Bush administration.

Since the closing of the Western frontier in 1893, it can be argued that Americans have transposed the continental expansionism that was legitimized by manifest destiny to global frontiers, with a similar mode of American exceptionalism functioning as its operative ideology. Natsu Taylor Saito defines American exceptionalism as "the belief that the United States represents the apex of civilization" in the world (19). But American exceptionalism is fraught with contradiction, with the United States "consistently bas[ing] its claims to legitimacy on advocacy of the principles of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law, while simultaneously developing policies and engaging in practices, often shored up by convoluted legal 'interpretations,' to exempt itself from compliance, thereby subverting the realization of these principles both domestically and internationally" (4). Saito

argues that the American response to 9/11 – the War on Terror's campaign to fight the barbarism of Middle Eastern terrorism with American democratic freedom – is "not simply a response to a new crisis in world order but is best understood as the most recent extension of a consistent history in which international law has been both invoked and disregarded" (3). Saito reveals the underlying historical contradictions of American exceptionalism in this synopsis:

> The new republic was born in a state of exception to international law, needing to justify its otherwise illegal break with British colonial rule by claiming that it was more faithfully representing the underlying principles of "natural law." The "Founding Fathers" were clear that in order to be recognized as a legitimate state the U.S. had to comport with international law, a position confirmed by the text of the Constitution as well as by early Supreme Court opinions. Yet they were also determined to expand and consolidate a territorial and economic base as broadly and expediently as possible, often resulting in violations of international law as wars of extermination were waged against Indigenous peoples, treaties consistently broken to appropriate land and natural resources, and chattel labor imported in disregard of an international ban on the slave trade. (4)

American exceptionalism runs deep in the nation's history, and its chief agents were certain exceptional men who embodied a hegemonic mode of masculinity that was always conversant with the nation's current mode of economic development, which has maintained an "expansive" and "appropriative" character throughout the ages. So, although "hegemonic American masculinity" originated with a "martial" mode of frontiersman masculinity that was "made manifest through the process of antebellum territorial expansion," late nineteenth and twentieth century industrialization resulted in a more "restrained" mode that sublimated these martial tendencies into more subtle forms of masculine dominance, such as in the expansion of American capitalism (Greenberg 17, 275). This sublimated mode, in which "American men began to link their sense of themselves as men to their position in the volatile marketplace," has been the dominant mode of American masculinity to this

day, exemplified by the ideal of the self-made man (Kimmel "Manhood" 6). The gender configuration forged at the continental frontier was transposed to the economic frontier, with men protecting and providing for the domestic space (women and children) by "making themselves" in the "volatile marketplace," defending the family from the volatilities that threaten its preservation – hunger, home invasion, reputation – as sublimated in the marketplace.[5]

Max Weber, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), explores the secular transformation of the religiously informed practices of early capitalism. This transformation arose from the accumulated resources derived from the exploited landscape seized by frontier expansionism, which was legitimized by manifest destiny. Furthermore, the ascetic Protestant work ethic led to a discrete accumulation of capital (since ostentatious displays of conspicuous consumption would be proof of one's damnation, rather than divine election). But accumulation would soon become reified as a secular end in itself. So although the religious origins of capital underwent a secular transformation in which wealth was increasingly perceived to be self-made rather than predestined, the general inclination to accumulate was preserved. Benjamin Franklin is perhaps the ideal figure of self-made masculinity to mark this transition to a more secular (at least on the surface) capitalist ethos. Weber argues that the acquisitive spirit of capitalism viewed accumulation as "so purely an end in itself, that from the point of view of the happiness of, or utility to, the single individual, it appears entirely transcendental and absolutely irrational. Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life" (53). This "transcendental" spirit of capitalism may have distanced itself from the ostensible religiosity of its Protestant origins, but it allowed its practicing subjects to retain what will be established in this study as a death-transcending worldview – the secular, economic transformation of the exceptionalist ideology of manifest destiny.[6]

Weber attributes the expansion of nascent American capitalism to an entrepreneurial mode of masculinity that tempered the "dare-devil" tendencies of "economic adventurers" with Franklin's

ascetic virtues, embodied by "men who had grown up in the hard school of life, calculating and daring at the same time, above all temperate and reliable, shrewd and completely devoted to their business, with strictly bourgeois opinions and principles" (69). Franklin was an ideal type of early entrepreneur – a self-made man whose practices of masculine dominance were forged in the "hard school of life," but eventually hardened into the "calculating shrewd[ness]" that has come to characterize the American business ethos to this day. Michael Kimmel characterizes the self-made man as "mobile, competitive, aggressive in business, [...] temperamentally restless, chronically insecure, and desperate to achieve a solid grounding for a masculine identity" (13). The self-made man was an early ideal of hegemonic American masculinity closely associated with the expansion of American capitalism, and persists in contemporary culture as a figure who embodies a transformed entrepreneurial ethos that motivates the expansion of neoliberal American capitalism throughout the world.

This development of hegemonic masculinity in the United States came with the development of American exceptionalism, with ideal modes of exceptionalist masculinity coinciding with and putting into practice the exceptionalist ideologies that justified territorial and economic expansion. This began with the typological interpretation of the divinely redemptive force of Euro-American history and the resulting colonialism in the New World, which transformed into the ideology of manifest destiny during the frontier era of early industrial capitalism. The frontiersman and the self-made man were the hegemonic figures of masculinity during this era of early American history. The contemporary permutation of American exceptionalism is the ideology of neoliberal democracy, with the transnational American businessman as its attendant figure of exceptional masculinity. Writing in the context of 9/11, Saito suggests that the attacks instigated a reassertion of American exceptionalism, tracing the continuities between George W. Bush's and Barack Obama's upholding of the sanctity of American values after 9/11, with both emphasizing that "freedom, democracy, and human dignity are peculiarly 'American' values, and that human progress is dependent upon the

universal implementation of the 'single sustainable model' which the U.S. exemplifies" (2). Also writing in the context of 9/11, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri summarize the development of contemporary American exceptionalism:

> the United States has from its inception claimed to be *an exception from the corruption* of the European forms of sovereignty, and in this sense it has served as the beacon of republican virtue in the world. This ethical conception continues to function today, for instance, in the notion that the United States is the global leader promoting democracy, human rights, and the international rule of law. (8)

Hardt and Negri suggest that this traditional notion of exceptionalism (which is already problematic) is increasingly contradicted by an emerging exceptionalism of the 9/11 era which undermines the "democracy, human rights, and the international rule of law" ostensibly championed therein. This "relatively new meaning" of American exceptionalism characterizes the United States as an "*exception from the law*," which is evidenced by how the nation "increasingly exempts itself from international agreements (on the environment, human rights, criminal courts, and so forth) and claims its military does not have to obey the rules to which others are subject, namely, on such matters as preemptive strikes, weapons control, and illegal detention" (8). In addition to these geopolitical violations of law, post-9/11 American exceptionalism also has adverse effects on the domestic homefront. The passing of the USA Patriot Act after 9/11 legislated the infringement of American civil liberties, especially for those of Middle-Eastern descent (or even those who fit that optic), who, as a result, are increasingly subjected to ethnic and racial profiling, and sometimes forceful detention. Furthermore, though not legitimized by official legislation, 9/11 also created a state of exception in gender relations: an increased cultural latitude for masculine dominance was justified by what was construed as the exceptional circumstances of 9/11, which required masculine resolve and protection.[7] Thus, during times of crisis, such as the 9/11 era in which American neoliberal capitalism came under symbolic attack, an exceptionalism is amplified in the nation that

strengthens hegemonic masculinity, which is leveraged and reasserted on the domestic homefront in a way that mirrors and legitimizes expansionist American foreign policies.[8]

In *The Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror* (2002), terror management theorists Tom Pyszczynski, Sheldon Solomon, and Jeff Greenberg refer to such exceptionalist cultural narratives as "death-transcending worldviews." Such worldviews serve to mitigate existential terror by providing a system of beliefs and values that facilitate the figurative transcendence of death and the nihilistic worldview that often attends "mortality salience" (16-17). Such figurative transcendence creates a sense that one (or one's nation, religion, institution, and so forth) is exceptional, a position of ideological safety from the contingencies of exteriority – both material events that can cause physical harm and death, and figurative or symbolic acts of disruption, such as when alternative worldviews contradict or challenge one's own. When mortality is made salient in times of crisis, there is an increasing tendency to question the cultural narratives, beliefs and values that give life existential meaning and security. Not only did the 9/11 attacks have a crushing materialist impact in the destruction of two familiar monolithic structures in the New York skyline, and the nearly 3000 American lives within, they also disrupted the figurative significance of the towers as symbolically charged icons of American capitalism. Thus, 9/11 challenged the empowering ideology of American economic exceptionalism, a death-transcending worldview that had legitimized the nation's hegemony in world politics throughout much of the 20th century. Jean Baudrillard suggests that the "terror" elicited by these attacks was not only about the actual physical death of thousands of Americans, it was also about an implicit *ideology* of death or "spirit of terrorism" mobilized as a weapon against the United States and its exceptional, death-transcending self-regard: the terrorists exploited "the immense fragility of the [American] opponent – a sense that a system which has arrived at its quasi-perfection can, by that very token, be ignited by the slightest spark. They have succeeded in turning their own deaths into an absolute weapon against a system that operates on the basis of the exclusion of death, a system whose ideal is a system of zero deaths" (16). Thus, this

existential disruption of the American death-transcending worldview led to a national crisis in which Americans were desperate for a recuperative narrative within which to figure 9/11 as a meaningful event, and to empower and mobilize an adequate national response.[9] This came in the form of a masculinist War on Terror in which the nation would re-invoke its protective character of sub-hegemonic masculinity in order to legitimize an even more aggressive foreign policy in the Middle East.

Such moments of material and ideological destruction also have repercussions on constructions of gender identity. In her article "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir" (1986), Judith Butler examines the existential nature of one's perceived failure of performing socially accepted gender roles:

> The social constraints upon gender compliance and deviation are so great that most people feel deeply wounded if they are told that […] they have failed to execute their manhood or womanhood properly. [This] initiates a sense of radical dislocation which [...] [can] *put one's very existence into question*. In these moments [...] we confront the *burden of choice* intrinsic to living as a man or a woman or as some other gender identity, a freedom made burdensome through social constraint. (5 emphasis added)

When the destruction of 9/11 is understood as an instance of American masculinity failing to protect the homefront from attack, that American men have "failed to execute their manhood," this only exacerbates the trauma and existential crisis of 9/11, which already had the effect of disrupting the nation's exceptionalist death-transcending worldview by bringing an act of mass death to American soil. Thus 9/11 was an instance of existential disruption in which national and gender exceptionalism was exposed as illusory or culturally contingent rather than transcendent.

However, rather than recognizing the "burden of choice intrinsic to living as a man or a woman or *as some other gender identity*" (this existential responsibility revealed in the failure of nature or God to predetermine such identity), the nation succumbed to the fear and "burdensome"

weight of "social constraint." Within just two weeks of the attacks, 9/11 was co-opted and framed as yet another chance for America to prove its exceptional position in global politics, by mobilizing its "men" (firefighters, police, soldiers) to likewise prove their exceptional position in American gender relations by rigidly "defending" – albeit through a preemptive offensive War on Terror – the nation against "evil" Islamic terrorists. Masculinities studies critic Richard Howson argues that whenever a form of "traditional hegemony" is disrupted by sociopolitical crisis, "regressive" and "progressive" political forces vie for the hegemonic power in question. Regressive forces are usually state-based and work to re-establish the ideological closure that sustains traditional hegemony; however, progressive forces work to maintain and heighten awareness of ideological gaps disclosed in times of crisis (26-27). In these terms, I argue that the Bush administration and certain mainstream media sources acted as such a regressive force in post-9/11 America, mending ideological disclosure with a typological thread that figured 9/11 as yet another of the many trials and tribulations that have defined the United States as an exceptional, though oftentimes beleaguered, "redeemer nation" throughout its history.

In contrast, the 9/11 novelists explored in this study offer progressive counter-narratives that serve to destabilize this regressive recuperation of American exceptionalism, and the hegemonic power it imparts to men in gender relations at home and to the nation in international relations abroad. As established above, though a traditional, sub-hegemonic mode of heroic masculinity was celebrated and reasserted after 9/11 to draw attention away from a sense of national vulnerability, Richard Drew's *The Falling Man* – the haunting photograph of the headlong free fall of a man who jumped from one of the towers – drew attention to an image of supra-hegemonic American masculinity, an ideal figure associated with the World Trade Center: the globalized American businessman. But rather than being ensconced and grounded within the protective walls of the towers that had dominated the skyline, he is outside and plunging to his death. The American businessman is associated with notions of individual self-making and upward mobility, a figure who is usually

enclosed behind the scenes in a position of safety, protected by the faceless facade of the World Trade Center's clinical modernist architecture (tellingly known as the "international style"). From this position of safety, he conducts his sublime engagement with the outside world, generating immense capital, often exploited from faraway regions of the world at the expense of others. In this sense, the emasculating image of the falling man shifts attention away from the figures of sub-hegemonic masculinity traditionally associated with dominative violence and focuses instead on a figure of supra-hegemonic masculinity whose sublimated violence mobilizes oppressive neoliberal trade policies. Certain post-9/11 writers generate counter-narratives that focus on this momentarily disclosed figure of the falling businessman, using their fiction to further the ideological rupture caused by the symbolic resonance of the attacks and the image of the falling man. These writers explore the disruptive effects of 9/11 on the masculinist patterns of practice conducted by business professionals and the overarching hegemonic ideals they support and which give their practices credence.

The novels examined in this study problematize hegemonic masculinity on the domestic front by establishing characters – men and sometimes women – who embody the ideal practices of contemporary American business masculinity but who ultimately fail to live up to such ideals, or who demonstrate the contradictions and hypocrisies at the heart of such ideals, as a result of the culturally destabilizing effects of 9/11. These characters are undercut by a critique in these novels which destabilizes their endeavours through the interpolation of material difference – an emergent historicity focalized by 9/11. These interpolations highlight differences in gender, class, race, and ethnicity which situate these characters against each other as deconstructive foils, simultaneously identifying the hegemonic ideals to which they all aspire, while also revealing the plurality of varied and oftentimes incompatible masculinities that these ideals can generate in materialist practice. This approach to characterization ultimately challenges those residual traces of "self-made" idealism in American culture, since it highlights preexisting structural inequities that make it exceedingly more

difficult for characters, of all races and ethnicities, to adopt successfully the prescribed patterns of practice in relation to the operative ideal, demystifying neoliberal ideology that envisions the American work- and marketplace as level playing fields in which individuals share an equal opportunity to "make themselves." Finally, I argue that the protagonists in these novels are situated in dramatizations of domestic gender relations, which, as a whole, are staged against the larger geopolitical crisis of 9/11, generating structural and thematic parallels between the masculine hegemony that perpetuates the oppressive treatment of women and those differing in race, ethnicity, and gender in America, and the cultural hegemony responsible for the oppressive treatment of other nations abroad. Thus, certain post-9/11 writers work to destabilize hegemonic masculinity, and, by extension, the neoliberal ideology behind contemporary American exceptionalism, by dramatizing the ultimate failure of their characters and the nation as a whole to live up to the ideal subject positions that constitute this oppressive ideology.

Introducing Hegemonic Masculinity

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been the critical focus of masculinities studies for over twenty years. The origins of the concept can be traced to R.W. Connell's *Gender and Power* (1987), in which Connell critiques the "sex role" model of gender relations that dominated past psychosocial theories, claiming that it failed to provide an accurate account of how traditional American sex roles negotiated the unequal distribution of power inherent in the sex role system. Thus, Connell's theorization of hegemonic masculinity is concerned with "how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 592). However, gender critics such as Alan Petersen, Richard Collier, John MacInnes and Sharon R. Bird, have criticized hegemonic masculinity critics for their inability to problematize their underlying assumption of a stable and fundamental concept of masculinity, claiming that the "concept of masculinity is flawed because it essentializes

the character of men or imposes a false unity on a fluid and contradictory reality" (Connell and Messerschmidt 836). Furthermore, Connell's theory has been criticized for being predicated on a heteronormative conception of gender that maintains and "essentializes male-female difference" and, to reemphasize the point above, "ignores difference and exclusion within the gender categories" (832).

However, it is important to note that Connell's "relational" approach to gender does not establish hegemonic masculinity as the essential starting point for any critical model of gender relations but, rather, acknowledges that a prevailing, historically contingent standard of heteronormative masculinity continues to oppress "other" gender orientations by maintaining itself against not only homo- and heterosexual women, and the transgendered, but also less empowered homo- and heterosexual men. Also, Connell recognizes that not all men hold positions of dominant power, since a plurality of subordinate masculinities (based on race, gender, class and ethnicity) exist in relation to the dominant mode. Thus, Connell maintains that hegemonic masculinity is problematically normative: "It embodie[s] the currently most honored way of being a man, require[s] all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men" (832). Finally, Connell argues that men who benefit from hegemonic masculinity without actively participating in one of its dominant modes still partake in a "complicit" mode of hegemonic masculinity: "Hegemony [does] not mean violence, although it [can] be supported by force; it [means] ascendency achieved through *culture*, *institutions*, and *persuasion*" (832 emphasis added). Through the critical lens of hegemonic masculinity (which will be further interrogated, refined, and subjected to Christine Beasley's "demassification" in the next chapter), it can be argued that post-9/11 American culture has seen a regression to traditional modes of hegemonic masculinity, which was partly facilitated by the powerful *institution* of the Bush administration, through *persuasive* rhetoric that exploited post-9/11 crisis and the attendant need for a protective, recuperative, and empowering *cultural* narrative.[10] This need for a death-transcending

worldview led to the widespread consent to the hegemonic agenda of the Bush administration, which co-opted 9/11 within the time-honored allegory of triumphalist American exceptionalism at the volatile "frontiers" of American culture (geographic and/or economic). However, the 9/11 novels explored in the subsequent chapters recover and foreground the "death" of 9/11 through the trope of the falling man, an approach which subverts hegemonic masculinity in post-9/11 American culture and any redemptive, typological reading of 9/11 within the triumphalist allegory of American history.

American Hegemonic Masculinity Since the Western Frontier

A major phase in the historical development of hegemonic American masculinity can be traced back to the frontier-era, as mythologized in Frederick Jackson Turner's influential thesis in "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1894). Turner argued that the American "settlement" of the West, and in particular, the rugged experience of life on the ever-expanding frontier, was pivotal in establishing a distinctly masculine American identity. The colonialist expansion into the continent was a prolonged, arduous and character-building campaign that removed pioneers from the "civilized" urban centers of the East, and placed them at the frontiers of the wilderness. According to Turner's romantic thesis, prolonged exposure to this frontier environment created a more primitively masculine and individualistic American who learned to live by his own strength and ingenuity (Billington 1).

Eventually, as the population increased on the frontier, so did the level of "civilization." However, according to Turner, something of the independent and resourceful frontiersman spirit remained with the pioneers – an individualistic quality of character derived from frontier hardship. Nonetheless, this masculinist individualism was mitigated by a democratic imperative, since the frontier was "a land where equality of opportunity and absence of hereditary distinctions blurred traditional class lines" (Turner 2). However, this unique brand of "civilized" American democracy

forged at the frontier was ultimately ethnocentric and self-serving, since it defined itself against the "savage" practices of the Native Americans beyond the frontier, all the while legitimizing its own "savage" treatment of those "uncivilized others." Turner himself depicted the American frontiersman as the vigilant guardsman of the "meeting point between savagery and civilization" (10). Thus, the frontier rendition of American democracy posited a political order that was only applicable to those who resided within the confines of the "civilized" frontier, where frontiersmen defended the domestic front against the "savage" Native Americans who lived beyond, in an ever-shrinking territory.

Along these lines, Richard Slotkin, in *Gunfighter Nation* (1992), argues that the early American colonial period saw a rise in cultural myths that celebrated a violently "defensive" mode of American masculinity. Colonists characterized themselves as the victims of Native American intrusions at the frontier, which depicted the latter as ruthless captors and killers with no respect for civilization and democracy. This narrative structure legitimized the use of violence to "defend" the victimized frontier against such Native American attacks, while obscuring the offensive expansionist reality of the colonialist mission, and its operative ideology of manifest destiny. Slotkin argues that this narrative of "regeneration through violence" was the result of a synthesis of two genres of colonial American writing: the captivity narrative and the triumphalist Indian-war narrative.[11] The captivity narrative came to prominence with Mary Rowlandson's personal account of abduction by Native Americans published in 1682. In her narrative, Rowlandson recounts her ability to overcome the sufferings of Native American captivity by maintaining a strong faith in Christian redemption and the values of "civilization." More specifically, she viewed her suffering as a rite of passage, a spiritual trial to give her a deeper faith and appreciation for God's redemptive mercy and American "civilization." However, Slotkin argues that captivity narratives proved too "passive" for frontier colonists. Rather, they needed a narrative to mitigate this passivity with tropes that promoted a more active and empowering dynamic between American hero and Indian foe (15). Although Slotkin is

not explicit on the matter, the distinction he makes between these two colonial genres is clearly anchored in gender. Slotkin credits Benjamin Church, a contemporary of Rowlandson, with introducing the "American hero-as-Indian-fighter" character-type into American writing, later exemplified by the mythologized lives of frontiersman such as Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett and Kit Carson (15). This new, more masculine genre of writing, which would be later perfected in the frontier romances of James Fenimore Cooper, integrated the "narrative formulas and ideological themes of the captivity tale (redemption through suffering) […] with the triumphalist scenario of the Indian-war story to make a single unified Myth of the Frontier in which the triumph of civilization over savagery is symbolized by the hunter/warrior's rescue of white woman held captive by savages" (15). As I will indicate more explicitly below, this gender binary, which provided the basic narrative structure for the myth of the frontier, has been invoked in post-9/11 American culture in order to frame and contain the nation's sense of existential uncertainty within an established death-transcending narrative structure.

Tom Engelhardt, in *The End of Victory Culture* (1995), claims that this mythical death-transcending gender configuration – vigilant masculine rescuer/protector of helpless feminine captive/victim – set the "defensive" masculinist standard for the justification of American "war stories" over the past two and half centuries:

> From its origins, this war story was [...] defensive in nature, and the justness of American acts was certified not only by how many of *them* died, but by how few of *us* there were to begin with. The [...] small patrol [...] or the lone white frontiersman gained the right to destroy through a sacramental right of initiation in the wilderness [...] it was the Indians who, by the ambush, the atrocity, and the capture of white women – by, in fact, their very numbers – became the aggressors and so sealed their own fate. (15)

Gendered narratives of captivity and victimization as documented above invert the power dynamic between American colonial frontiersmen (whose numbers and firepower, after the initial settlement,

were much greater) and Native Americans, and thus served to further legitimize manifest destiny, resulting in the "defensive" slaughter of the indigenous peoples on the American continent for over 250 years.

As Amy Greenberg indicates, in *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (2005), after the acquisition of Texas in 1848 at the end of the U.S.-Mexico War – the last significant territorial acquisition of the antebellum period – white American men were already looking to the "Caribbean, the Pacific, and Central America as the 'New Frontier'" (16). By the late nineteenth century, the U.S. would extend into this New Frontier, culminating in the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the subsequent annexation of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. And though after World War II, the U.S. would relinquish their imperial control over the Philippines and other territories, they would continue to maintain military bases in nations around the globe to this day – exerting militaristic, economic, and cultural hegemony. Furthermore, Susan Jeffords argues that a "remasculinization" of American culture occurred during the Vietnam War, which saw "a regeneration of the concepts, constructions, and definitions of masculinity in American culture and a restablization of the gender system within and for which it is formulated" (*Remasculinization of America* 51). Likewise, in *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* (1994), Jefford's critiques a similar remasculinization in the 1980s, when Robert Bly, through the mythopoetic men's movement, "promoted a revival of personal and domestic manliness," while Ronald Reagan also sought to revive "U.S. 'manliness' through a hard-edged anti-Soviet philosophy backed by increased weapons production" (11). Through the lens of popular action films in the 1980s, Jeffords examines the ideological fixation on "hard bodies" during the Reagan era, suggesting that Reagan himself was represented as a hard body – "chopping wood, breaking horses, toughing out an assassination attempt, bullying Congress, and staging showdowns with the Soviet Union" – a fitting masculine presidency for a past Hollywood star, his actions invoking the Western genre and its dominant cowboy heroics or the vigilant frontiersman protecting the homefront from foreign intrusion (12).

However, despite this invocation of the frontier era gender binary established above, Jeffords analyzes the subtle transformation or softening of hard bodied Reagan era masculinity through the 1980s and into the 1990s:

> From its appearance in the early 1980s as a resuscitated body of the Vietnam War era, to its articulation in the mid-1980s as a remasculinized foreign policy heroic, to its exteriorization and critique of the hard body in the late 1980s in order to 'reveal' a more sensitive and emotional interior, to its reconfiguration in the early 1990s as a 'family' value, to its resurfacing in 1992 as an aging but still powerful foreign and domestic masculine and national model, the hard body has remained a theme that epitomizes the national imaginary that made the Reagan Revolution possible. (192)

Jeffords' tracing of the gradual softening of the hard bodied ideal of American masculinity ends in the early 1990s, coinciding with the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. This moment was theorized to usher in a *Pax Americana* in which the United States would at last stand as the world's sole economic and military superpower. This marked the historic triumph of American exceptionalism, which was lauded by Francis Fukuyama as the End of History itself. In this light, the slackening of protective hegemonic masculinity during this era makes sense – the nation lacked a definite geopolitical enemy from which to "defend" itself. Accordingly, Bill Clinton was characterized as a compassionate (or pejoratively as "soft") Democrat who "felt our pain." However, Brenton J. Malin suggests that Clinton's presidency skirted the boundaries between "backwoods clod" and "boardroom mastermind," which "draws on hypermasculine images, but with distinctly different stereotypes and connotations." (16). While Clinton's hailing from Hope, Arkansas imbued his character with a more traditional, rustic and perhaps rugged rural masculinity, his "boardroom" prowess mitigated that with a more refined, tactical mode of hegemonic masculinity conversant with contemporary ideals of the postindustrial business professional. This skill in the boardroom, where tactical moves are devised and "hard" interventionist decisions made, was often exercised by Clinton

in ways that undermine his compassionate, affable manner. Noam Chomsky, in *9-11* (2002), is merciless in his critique of American neoliberal imperialism, tracing the continuities between the violent war-mongering of Reagan and Bush Sr. and Clinton's more sublimated acts of political violence, such as his authorization of the bombing of the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan in 1998, and his dominant position in the NATO-backed bombing of Serbia in 1999, which was called a "humanitarian intervention," a euphemism that was used as "a standard description of European imperialist ventures in the nineteenth century." (14). And in terms of the Bush administration's more flagrant 'unilateralism' after 9/11, Chomsky again sees it as a continuity or "extension of standard practice" rather than a decisive historical break necessitated by the need to defend against the possibility of future terrorist attacks:

> In 1993, Clinton informed the UN that the U.S. will – as before – act 'multilaterally when possible but unilaterally when necessary,' and proceeded to do so. The position was reiterated by UN Ambassador Madeline Albright and in 1999 by Secretary of Defense William Cohen, who declared that the U.S. is committed to 'unilateral use of military power' to defend vital interests, which include 'ensuring uninhibited access to key markets, energy supplies, and strategic resources," and indeed anything that Washington might determine to be within its jurisdiction. (111)

This contextualizing of the unilateral foreign policy of the Bush administration after 9/11, besides revealing that unilateralism in service to neoliberal interests ('key markets, energy supplies, and strategic resources') was well underway before 9/11, also displays that hegemonic masculinity can be embodied by both men and women. Albright and Cohen served as representative faces of Clintonian neoliberalism, the former of whom further aligns Clinton with a more – traditionally speaking – softer, feminine Democratic compassion that would further legitimize any such forceful, unilateral action in the name of benevolent "humanitarian intervention."

The proud assertion of American exceptionalism in the 1990s after the Cold War and the fall

of the Berlin Wall led to the formulation of an official agenda or national ethos that would determine

the extent of American unilateralism in geopolitical relations. This formulation would occur behind

closed doors, in boardrooms, the tactics drawn up and debated by political professionals with

neoliberal business interests. Spearheaded by Dick Cheney, a confidential report was drafted by I.

Lewis Libby and Paul Wolfowitz called the "1992 Draft Defense Policy Guidance." This report was

eventually leaked to the press, and was considered to be the foundation of the "neoconservative post-

cold war agenda" whose objectives were to "prevent the emergence of a new rival to the US, if

necessary through force," and to permit "unilateral military action in parts of the world considered

important to US interests, specifically including preemptive action against potential threats," the

latter of which "became law through the revision of the National Security Strategy in 2002"

(Rockmore 13). Tom Rockmore elaborates on how the "1992 Draft Defense Policy Guidance"

eventually led to the formulation of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), a

Washington think tank co-founded by Cheney in 1997:

> The PNAC has clearly hegemonic intentions. It is associated with plans to create American
>
> dominance of land, space, and cyberspace, as well as to establish American dominance in
>
> world affairs. The basic plan was laid out in a document entitled 'Rebuilding America's
>
> Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources For a New Century,' which the PNAC published
>
> in 2000. Even before the presidential election, in this document the PNAC called for military
>
> dominance in the Persian Gulf, including overthrowing Saddam Hussein, with the aim of
>
> consolidating American power in the region as well as throughout the world, and even in
>
> outer space. With that in mind, it is   not difficult to infer that the policies worked out for
>
> American hegemony, even before George W. Bush was 'appointed' as president by decision
>
> of the Supreme Court, were applied as soon as the opportunity arose as a result of the massive
>
> 9/11 terrorist attack on the US. In fact, years later they were still being applied. (13)

Here Rockmore traces the continuities of the imperial ethos behind American hegemony, from Reagan and Bush Sr.'s more overt militarism, to Clinton's neoliberal 'humanitarian interventions,' to Bush Jr.'s post-9/11 global War on Terror. The Project for the New American Century had a clearly stated agenda to usher in a post-Cold War *Pax Americana*, in which all final frontiers would be expanded into (land, space and cyberspace), leaving the United States as the world's exceptional superpower.

Coinciding with such post-Cold War trends toward economic globalization (though not necessarily in complete alignment with total American hegemony), the European Management Forum was renamed the World Economic Forum, and featured a more global outlook on capitalist integration, all of which is reflected in a conference held annually in Davos, Switzerland, in which the "financial, industrial, and political oligarchies of the world go for a few days [...] to plan the destiny of capitalist globalization" (Hardt and Negri 167). The figure of the "Davos Man" – coined by Samuel Huntington – has come to designate the cosmopolitan, transnational businessman who increasingly sheds national allegiances in order to follow the transnational flow of capital. He is a globe-trotting, neoliberal entrepreneur whose allegedly self-made actions have led to massive individual success at the frontiers of the global market.This permits him to come and go as he pleases, from one exotic locale to the next, since he knows no borders, because they have all been rendered porous by and for economic frontiersmen like himself. However, Hardt and Negri are quick to destabilize this "myth" of free-market individualism in transnational capitalism:

> The most important lesson to learn from Davos is simply that such a meeting is necessary: the economic, political, and bureaucratic elites of the world need to work together in constant relation. In more general terms, it demonstrates the old lesson that *no economic market can exist without political order and regulation*. If by free market one means a market that is autonomous and spontaneous, free from political controls, then there is no such thing as a free market at all. It is simply a myth. (167)

Hardt and Negri highlight the relational nature of any economic system, even though certain dominant economic actors, such as the United States, tend to carry more influence. But of course, American unilateralism is always mitigated by the awareness that multilateral agreements are always preferable, as long as they serve hegemonic American interests. So despite the persistence of myths of exceptionalism (economic and otherwise) that continue to influence the hegemonic patterns of practice of men in interpersonal relations and the nation in geopolitical relations, such hegemony is always predicated on the tacit cooperation of the subjects who benefit from it, whether it is the homosociality of hegemonic masculinity in domestic business practice, or such international conferencing as the World Economic Forum in which economically elite and neoliberal minded nations tend to dominate discussion and subsequent global action. However, the connection between the two must be stressed: both are composed of business elites from dominant nations, with a majority from the United States. This unifying, collective tendency behind the heroic facade of individual self-making is an ideological mechanism that ensures the solidarity and hegemony of the group from outside intrusion, since "all the proponents of free markets know deep down that only political regulation and force allow for the free market" (168). Such ideologically charged, masculinist "regulation and force" (which dismantles the welfare state) serves to *protect* the self-serving "democratic neoliberalism" behind the frontier of global "free" market capitalism from those who might threaten that order, or at least demand a more equitable distribution of wealth from it. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were the iconic frontiers(wo)men of the neoliberal frontier in 1980s, heroically protecting the population from the oppressive welfare state so as to usher in and secure the freedom of free market capitalism – leaving local economic devastation in their wake, while elites reaped the benefits of exploitative outsourcing. To further articulate the increasing alignment of masculine economic interests with political institutional control in globalized capitalism, in which the latter is ideologically leveraged to secure the hegemony of the former, Hardt and Negri state the following:

The compatibility between political control and economic markets is clear, furthermore, when we look at the form and management of business firms themselves. Throughout the twentieth century, scholars have noted how the institutional structures of corporations and state offices develop to resemble each other ever more closely and how business firms become ever more solidly inserted into public institutions. It should be no surprise that the same few individuals so often pass effortlessly from the highest government offices to corporate boardrooms and back in the course of their careers. The business, bureaucratic, and political elites are certainly no strangers when they gather at the World Economic Forum. They already know each other quite well. (168)

So, such figures of hegemonic masculinity tend to embody a transcendent mode of being which stems from their self-regard as exceptional: they are able to "pass effortlessly" from micro and macro economic structures, whose selective permeability is designed to accept economic agents of their exceptional ilk while shutting out those elements deemed noxious. The transparency of the structure deceives, since for most it is just another impermeable barrier, another glass ceiling. In this regard, the 9/11 novels explored in this study suggest that the transnational mobility of contemporary business masculinity is preserved by an exclusionary homosociality, as it exists both in domestic and foreign politico-economic institutions.

Michael Kimmel diagnoses the state of hegemonic masculinity in today's increasingly globalized economy, quoting and expanding upon Connell:

Today, although they appear to be gender-neutral, the institutional arrangements of global society are equally gendered. The marketplace, multinational corporations, and transnational geopolitical institutions (World Court, United Nations, European Union), and their attendant principles (economic rationality, liberal individualism) express a gendered logic. The 'increasingly unregulated power of transnational corporations places strategic power in the hands of particular groups of men,' while the language of globalization remains

gender-neutral so that 'the 'individual' of neoliberal theory has in general the attributes and interests of a male entrepreneur.' (144)

Here, Kimmel's exposure of the contradictions of the gendered logic of globalized capitalism sets the stage for his critique of what he later identifies as the ideal figure of contemporary capitalism: the transnational businessman. This figure embodies the sublimated violence of neoliberal outsourcing and the implementation of disproportionate trade regulations which benefit a group of elite transnational businessmen (a predominantly *American* business elite, despite their ostensibly transnational affiliations) at the expense of mostly female, though also male, labor throughout the developing world.[12]

Jeffords' analyses of remasculinization in Vietnam and Reagan-era America provides a model for the historical gender analysis of "the ways in which the structure of gender is both maintained as a general frame and altered in relation to specific cultural circumstances" ("Remasculinization" 51). In this study, I argue that post-9/11 America has witnessed a similar cultural "remasculinization" in which pre-9/11 hegemonic masculinity – which, as shown above, was "maintained as a general frame" to mobilize underlying continuities of American exceptionalism – gave way to a more pronounced and aggressive post-9/11 masculinity, an "altered" mode "in relation to specific cultural circumstances." Furthermore, I argue that post-9/11 remasculinization is reactionary and regressive, precisely because 9/11 was a unique though culturally resonant moment in recent American history: it was the first attack on the contemporary American mainland (Pearl Harbour/Hawaii being an offshore territory) and thus the first major foreign intrusion on the domestic frontier since the War of 1812 (Chomsky 11). 9/11 resonated as a contextually unique though historically familiar intrusion on American territory, invoking – oftentimes with the help of political and media discourse – the myth of the American frontier and its attendant gender binary. The invocation of this domestic gender binary during times of war, and its transposition to greater political structures, allows the American nation to adopt gendered positions of passive feminine victim and/or aggressive masculine defender,

which serves to legitimize a self-serving "defensive offensive" war against its enemy. The strategic choice to adopt and transpose one gendered position or the other, or both simultaneously, ultimately depends on which gender configuration best serves to legitimize the ideological interests of the nation in whatever given historical context. However, it must be remembered that the reasons for this revivified "protective" masculinity are actually offensive: the capitalist/consumerist way of American life depends on the expansion of neoliberal markets (outsourcing of oil, food, textiles, electronics, services/human resources) in exploitable lands abroad, a project spearheaded, financed, and administrated from on high by transnational American businessmen and enforced (if need be) by sub-hegemonic forces who clear and stabilize the land on the ground for plunder.

Immediate Post-9/11 Cultural Responses

In his televised address to Congress and the nation on 20 September 2001, George W. Bush described the 9/11 attacks in gendered terms. Bush characterized the nation as "victimized" and "brutalized" by Islamic terrorists who want to "kill all Americans, and make no distinction among military and civilians, including women and children" (Dudley 10-11). Here, Bush articulates the post-9/11 American nation in gendered terms of victimization, since his use of the gender-neutral term "civilians" is subsequently altered by the closing subordinate clause in which a segment of the civilian body – "women and children" – is isolated and thus given precedence over all other "civilians" in that category. Thus, what begins as a gender-neutral articulation of how 9/11 has victimized "all Americans," is transformed into a gendered distinction between the victimized and infantilized ("women *and* children") femininity of the American "civilian" body, and by default and a long history of associations, the implied masculine counterpart in this gender binary: the "military." According to the gendered associations evoked by this rhetorical sleight of hand, it was the job of the masculinized military to protect the feminized civilian home front from "brutal" foreign terrorists, with unflinching "courage" and "resolve." (15). Thus, post-9/11 demands on the military brought

about a retrenchment of manhood in American culture which simultaneously construed the nation in both masculine *and* feminine terms: was America "man" enough to defend the feminized/victimized nation against the barbaric terrorists? [13] The transposition of the gender binary articulated above to a macrocosmic structure of national wartime identity characterized post-9/11 America as being in a state of passive feminine vulnerability, while also conveniently being able to provide the masculine "protection" that such a state necessitates. By occupying both gendered positions simultaneously – passive feminine victim *and* aggressive masculine protector – the Bush administration was able to obfuscate its political motivations and thus unilaterally legitimize a contradictory "defensive-offensive" War on Terror, which was as much in service to continuing the exceptionalist Project for the New American Century as it was a response to 9/11.

Polemics like the one above precipitated a rise in popular discourses lamenting the feminization of American masculinity. Right-wing reactionary Ann Coulter was a vociferous critic of the post-9/11 "softened" American male, stating: "If you didn't already realize how absurd it is to defang men, a surprise attack on U.S. soil is a good reminder" ("Women We'd Like to See in Burqas"). In his book *Manliness* (2006), Harvard professor Harvey C. Mansfield echoes Coulter's sentiment: "Americans were sharply reminded that it is sometimes necessary to fight, and that in the business of government, fighting comes before caring. Women were reminded that men can come in handy" (11).[14] Coulter and Mansfield champion an essentialist figuring of American men as pugilistic protectors who are "fanged" and ready to "fight," which they deem to be conducive to women's and the feminized nation's safety. Their logic denounces feminism by exalting the necessity of a traditional gender binary in times of military crisis. Thus, from the angle of official administrative policy and right-wing media positions, the 9/11 attacks can be understood as a catalyst for the regression to traditional modes of protective/defensive masculinity in post-9/11 American culture.

In contrast, the liberal response to 9/11 has been characterized by critiques of American culture, perhaps most notably in Susan Faludi's *The Terror Dream* (2007). Faludi observes a

dramatic increase in attacks on feminism in post-9/11 America, arguing that mainstream media sources such as *CNN* and *Fox News* shared the regressive view that "women's liberation had feminized our men and, in so doing, left the nation vulnerable to attack" (23). Furthermore, Faludi claims that gender discourse in American politics and media became increasingly regressive and traditional, focusing on masculine virility and prowess (heroic firefighters, soldiers, and politicians) versus feminine dependency and helplessness (victimized 9/11 widows, soldier Jessica Lynch's captivity narrative).[15] For Faludi, 9/11 precipitated another right-wing backlash against American feminism which threatened to undermine the gains made by feminist critics over the past forty years, a view that played into liberal fears that there was little space remaining for intellectual dissent within the governing ethos of the then-Bush administration.

Rather than lamenting the cooptation of American domestic and foreign policies by reactionary forces, feminist critics Susannah Radstone and Judith Butler probe the possibility of a more ethical process of post-9/11 mourning. Radstone claims that "fantasies of invulnerability […] are hardly gender neutral, since […] under patriarchy, male narcissism defends itself by projecting its vulnerability onto women" (121). Radstone then positions this critique of masculine death-transcending "fantasies of invulnerability" against the alternative discursive response to 9/11: the "popular academic script" of trauma discourse (118). In terms of the latter she states: "the subject it proposes – the victim – is too absolutely passive. One might argue [...] that trauma theory feminizes its subject" (121). In these two passages, Radstone identifies how discourses of reactionary violence and victimized trauma can be gendered, and later suggests that the key difference between the two concerns narrative agency: the former posits a masculine subject who actively (re)generates meaning through violent fantasy, and the latter, a feminine subject who helplessly struggles to find meaning in trauma.[16] Despite making this key distinction, Radstone does not offer an alternative to this gendered discursive binary. Butler, on the other hand, proposes a process of mourning which she argues can

lead to a more meaningful, ethical relation with "others," beyond divisive issues of gender, or reactionary posturing for military, economic, and political gain.

In *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004), Butler critiques the post-9/11 American subject of hegemonic masculinity, but in a way that moves beyond the gendered critical binary identified by Radstone. Butler argues that in the aftermath of 9/11, a "violent and self-centered subject has been instated at the national level […] that seeks to restore and maintain its mastery through the systematic destruction of […] its ties to the inter-national community [and] by denying its own vulnerability" while exploiting this feature "in others, thereby making [it] 'other to' itself" (41). Butler goes on to suggest – in opposition to this "violent and self-centered" national subject – that rather than denying one's own vulnerability while exploiting it in "others" (which only perpetuates exceptionalism in interpersonal relations at home and international relations abroad), the experience of national crisis, trauma, and mourning can lead to more ethical relations with "others." Slavoj Zizek, in *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (2002), also sees 9/11 as a missed opportunity for the United States to "realize what kind of a world it was *a part* of," rather than maintaining itself *apart* from it as an exceptional nation, "an island exempt from this kind of violence, witnessing it only from the safe distance of the TV screen" (47-49). Despite the initial military reaction of the United States in Afghanistan (as of 2002), Zizek still wonders whether

> America will finally risk stepping through the fantasmatic screen that separates it from the Outside World, accepting its arrival in the Real world, making the long-overdue move from 'A thing like this shouldn't happen *here*!' to 'A thing like this shouldn't happen *anywhere*!'. This is the true lesson of the attacks: the only way to ensure that it will not happen here again is to prevent it from happening anywhere else. In short, America should learn humbly to accept its own vulnerability as part of this world, enacting the punishment of those responsible as a sad duty, not as an exhilarating retaliation – what we are getting instead is the forceful reassertion of the exceptional role of the USA as a global

policeman, as if what causes resentment against the USA is not its excess of power, but its

lack of it. (49)

In line with Zizek's suggestion that the United States needs to abandon its exceptionalism and

"accept its own vulnerability as part of this world," Butler meditates on the following: "If we stay

with [a] sense of loss, are we left feeling only passive and powerless […]? Or are we […] returned to

a sense of *human vulnerability*, to our collective responsibility for the physical lives of one another?"

(30 emphasis added). Here, in gender-neutral terms, Butler offers an alternative to both the death-

transcending worldviews that "masculinize" their subject by denying human vulnerability in order to

violently "restore and maintain mastery" and those trauma discourses that, according to Radstone,

feminize and thus immobilize their subject. Butler suggests that the feeling of powerlessness in the

face of traumatic crisis can reveal a greater "human vulnerability" beyond divisive issues of gender,

race, class and ethnicity. "Corporeal vulnerability" is something all of humanity shares and crisis-

situations often make us more acutely aware of this basic existential fact of embodied human

existence.[17]

The Debate on 9/11 American Fiction

In *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel* (2009), Christian Versluys argues that the initial

spate of 9/11 novels directly address the immediate discursive response to the attacks in the media,

which signaled the event as "ineffable" or "incommensurable" as a result of its trauma. More

specifically, 9/11 was articulated as a "semiotic event, involving the total breakdown of all meaning

making systems" (2). However, Versluys is quick to critique this inherently paradoxical position: to

articulate an event as "ineffable" is to render it *effable*. Thus, while it is true that 9/11 disrupted the

semiotic closure and smooth operation of American ideology, the massive media outcry on 9/11

clearly indicated that the event did not lead to a "total breakdown" of semiosis.[18] Nonetheless, it did

reveal the contingency of that ideology, and in very "real" materialist terms: the attacks displayed

that America could literally and figuratively be reduced to smoldering rubble. In *Literature After 9/11* (2008), Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn argue that many 9/11 novels explicitly address this "tension between the symbolic suggestiveness of the WTC and the fact of its destruction" (1). More specifically, they suggest that much of 9/11 fiction explores "the space between the real and the imagined, between image and trope, and between the private realm of memory and the public realm of history […] it impels us to see those spaces even as it forces them together; it consistently uses the literal to deconstruct the symbolic and the reverse" (2). Extending this line of thought, I argue that 9/11 American fiction's engagement with the "space" between real/imagined, image/trope, private/public, also reveals the complex ways in which 9/11 has affected American gender relations on the domestic home front: how the intrusion of material "reality" has disrupted not only the symbolic resonance of American exceptionalism at the international level, but also a similar ideology of exceptionalism that confers upon American men a dominant position in interpersonal gender relations. I explore how many male protagonists in 9/11 fiction are depicted as struggling to live up to the hegemonic masculine ideals prescribed by American culture – vacillating in the interstitial space between stubborn reassertion and resigned defeat – and how this struggle to maintain a coherent gender identity is exacerbated by the disruption of greater cultural narratives as a result of 9/11.

Expanding upon the analytical foundation established by Versluys, Keniston, and Follansbee Quinn, I further contextualize my thesis within a current academic debate framed by American fiction scholars Richard Gray and Michael Rothberg, both of whom argue for a new orientation in American writing after 9/11. Gray argues for what Rothberg later identified as a "centripetal" orientation, which would see 9/11 novelists move away from the familiarity of literary form which he claims characterizes much of 9/11 fiction. Rather than dramatize the "emotional entanglements" of the dominant American culture, Gray proposes that novelists take a more radical approach that emphasizes the plurality of domestic perspectives on 9/11 and how differences in gender, race, class,

and ethnicity prompt questions on the integrity of American identity. Rothberg, on the other hand, suggests that American writers need to use the crisis of 9/11 as an opportunity to take up a "centrifugal" orientation in their writing to critique the outward movement of American power. However, I argue that 9/11 American fiction is already both centripetal and centrifugal. It is centripetal in that it dramatizes how 9/11 has affected the increasingly plural domestic relations (especially gender relations) in the United States, but also centrifugal in that these dramatizations also function analogically to critique the state of America's international relations. Thus, I will explore how American writers are already using fiction to dramatize the structural parallels between these centripetal and centrifugal orientations in order to critique the symbolic relationship between hegemonic masculinity and gender oppression at home, and oppressive American foreign policies imposed on nations abroad.

However, although this dialectical orientation uses a similar typological approach to the allegorical reading of American history critiqued above, my analysis will demonstrate how 9/11 fiction offers a critical, hermeneutical exploration of the typological play of figuration in exceptionalist discourse after 9/11. My study suggests that this fiction deconstructs the archetypal exceptionalism that figures America as John Winthrop's "city upon a hill," an exalted "redeemer nation" to which all other nations should genuflect in reverence. By displaying, in the symbolic context of 9/11, that the United States has always been a nation of contradiction in which redemptive values are celebrated while domestic and foreign oppression continues *elsewhere*, all to the economic benefit of *certain* Americans, I argue that 9/11 fiction adopts Fredric Jameson's conception of cognitive mapping and its strategies of figuration to represent the amorphous, complex reality of the international division of labor that sustains Western affluence.[19] In a recent interview, Jameson discusses the continued relevance of cognitive mapping in a "globalized" world in which the United States retains a hegemonic cultural and economic influence, which makes it difficult for Americans to "think outside" of this influence. Jameson originally theorized cognitive mapping to redress such

cultural myopia: "I wanted to underscore the way in which we not only need to know [...] where we stand individually, who we are, what our identity is, but we also have to recognize the degree to which we are located in the world system and what that does to our collective identities" (87). Jameson's dialectical conception of cognitive mapping will serve as the model for my dialectical analysis of centripetal/centrifugal orientations in 9/11 American fiction, in which the individual pursuits of affluent Americans are mapped in relation to the greater collectivity of geopolitical relations that generate globalized capital.

In *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Fredric Jameson identifies a key problem with politically responsible art in the postmodern era of late capitalism.[20] The problem stems from the current stage of production in the Western world, and the attendant changes in the postmodern subject's phenomenological horizons – in the inability to situate oneself in spatial relations that accurately reflect the international division of labor that characterizes the postmodern period. Not only is the gap between the exploited forces of industrial production and the American lifestyle of consumption increasing as a result of the outsourcing of material labor beyond American borders – which keeps the exploited conditions of that labor out of sight and out of mind – that same consumer culture attempts to fill this gap with an onslaught of reified slogans and sensational products that further hide the source of their production. The Western subject's everyday immersion in the white noise of late-capitalist consumer culture obscures the structural "truth" of that experience – that the material labor which sustains the postmodern subject's consumptive lifestyle is increasingly outsourced to poor nations abroad whose lax labor laws are exploited for Western profit and domestic comfort. Jameson understands the postmodern subject's increasing inability to spatially conceive of the international division of labor – the "reality" or "truth" of the material conditions of production behind the reified surfaces of consumer culture – as a problem of "figuration":

problems of figuration [...] may be conveyed by way of a growing contradiction between

lived experience and structure, or between a phenomenological description of the life of   an

individual and a more properly structural model of the conditions of existence of that experience. Too rapidly we can say that, while in older societies and perhaps even in the early stages of market capital, the immediate and limited experience of individuals is still able to encompass and coincide with the true economic and social form that governs that experience, in the next moment these two levels drift ever further apart and really begin to constitute themselves into that opposition the classical dialectic describes as *Wesen* and *Erscheinung*, essence and appearance, structure and lived experience. (411)

Here, Jameson gestures to the transformation of consciousness that coincides with the passing of the relatively self-contained national market economies of pre- and modern capitalist nation-states into the increasingly transnational scope of postmodern capitalism. In the latter,flows of globalized capital have perforated and made more porous the self-contained integrity of the nation-state, to the point where the "immediate and limited experience of individuals" in local/national economies of production and consumption are in fact anything but "local." Rather, the national economies of many Western nations, the United States being predominant among them, are increasingly dependent on external, often unseen transnational flows of labor and capital that form the increasingly complex structure of the "true economic and social form that governs that experience" of immediacy in local and/or national markets. The exploitative practices of American capitalism behind these transnational flows of labor and capital is the focus of chapter 4, which analyzes how Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007), and Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011) dramatize the domestic surveillance of immigrants and racial minorities after 9/11 in order to highlight the underlying cultural contradictions of American democracy and launch a centrifugal critique of imperialist American foreign policy.

Jameson's observations on the discrepancy between the phenomenological immediacy of lived experience in postmodern consumer culture and the "real" material conditions of production that produce that experience are as relevant today as they were twenty years ago, perhaps more. The

media coverage on the lax labor laws and infrastructural negligence that led to the collapse of a garment factory in Bangladesh in 2013 – resulting in over one thousand dead workers, the largest accident of its kind on record – is only one of the most recent examples of the continued dependency of Western capital on poorly funded textile operations in East to Southeast Asia. So how does one aesthetically address this growing disparity, this "drifting" of the structured levels of experience between the Western plane of existence whose reified appearances obscure the plane of lived experience of material labor that produce those commodified appearances? Jameson argues that this has been a phenomenological and representational problem since the modern period, when artistic movements employed innovative formal strategies to represent the amorphous idea of a "global colonial system." Modernism was characterized by

> new and elaborate formal strategies for overcoming this dilemma [...] forms that inscribe a new sense of the absent global colonial system on the very syntax of poetic language itself, a new play of absence and presence that at its most simplified will be haunted by the exotic and be tatooed with foreign place names, and at its most intense will involve the invention of remarkable new languages and forms. (411)

Jameson draws parallels between the difficulties of representing the abstract, systemic nature of modern colonial empires and the similar postmodern predicament he diagnoses above, suggesting a representational form that addresses precisely the *absence* of a definite representation of an inherently abstract concept that resists or exceeds direct representation. Of course this absence needs to be signified in some way to make it meaningful, and thus it receives indirect representation in relation to the syntax of poetic language itself: the seeming impossibility of representing – thus the absence of – global American economic hegemony is represented through symbolic language that dramatizes the conceptual/spatial/temporal complexity of geopolitical economic hegemony through a "play of figuration," a hermeneutical mode that transposes such cerebral, abstract concepts to more manageable and recognizable forms of dramatic representation.

Jameson's approach impels the reader to participate in a play of figuration that pushes toward another plane of meaning, the creation of new suggested/implicit/connotative meanings within/without the text that is an indirect representation of such amorphous, complex global realities. Jameson elaborates on this figurative approach:

> At this point an essentially allegorical concept must be introduced – the 'play of figuration' – in order to convey some sense that these new and enormous global realities are inaccessible to any individual subject or consciousness [...] which is to say that those fundamental realities are somehow ultimately unrepresentable or, to use the Althusserian phrase, are something like an absent cause, one that can never emerge into the presence of perception. Yet this absent cause can find figures through which to express itself in distorted and symbolic ways: indeed, one of our basic tasks as critics of literature is to track down and make conceptually available the ultimate realities and experiences designated by those figures, which the reading mind inevitably tends to reify and to read as primary contents in their own right. (412)

Jameson's approach to the representation of seemingly "unrepresentable" concepts – "enormous global realities [that] are inaccessible to any individual subject or consciousness" – such as globalized American economic hegemony, charts the potential for "figures" to be used to "express" and render intelligible the "absent cause[s]" that underlie everyday reified experience. However, Jameson is cautious of the "distorted and symbolic ways" in which such figures can be used, suggesting that they can be motivated towards ideological closure or disclosure. Figures that maintain ideological closure reify the ostensibly *self-* made and sufficient reality of Americana and co-opt the disruptive potential of figuration that would disclose otherwise, while figures that promote ideological disclosure strip the former of their reified content and seek to open up new interpretive pathways in which these figures are reinscribed, reconfigured, and in this sense, realized anew in light of their allegorical implications, their gesturing to the "enormous global realities" that are the "absent cause" behind our seemingly *self*-sufficient Western experience. So while the present study

examines an idealized type of hegemonic masculinity – the ideal figure of capital, the transnational American businessman – it does so in a way that does not reify this figure and thus perpetuate its "self-made" hegemony, but rather examines the ways in which certain writers of 9/11 fiction deconstruct it through a play of figuration. These writers achieve this by deploying a prominent "falling man" trope that depicts the struggle of traditional male business professionals (middle to upper middle class white men) to live up to the ideal patterns of practice that secure masculine hegemony after 9/11, while often featuring characters from emerging demographics who also pursue this ideal, whose differences in gender, race, ethnicity and class re-envision and transform the ideal despite the regressive sociopolitical context of 9/11. However, the overall critical vision identified in this study figures these business types as failures in the wake of 9/11, the play of figuration matching their past practices of hegemonic masculinity in their interpersonal relations with the nation's past practices of geopolitical hegemony, demonstrating that masculine "American" success (of businessmen and nation) has always been dependent on the exploited labor and social recognition of others. This analogical treatment of centripetal and centrifugal orientations – the mirroring of the interpersonal (domestic strife, separations, divorce) in the international (terrorism, the war waged against it, the loss of American civil liberties), and vice versa – suggests that such practices of oppressive hegemony are not only intimately related, but are also implicated in the backlash of 9/11. *This structural relation of oppression between interpersonal and geopolitical planes of action, established through the structural play of figuration, is the absent cause of 9/11*. Finally, the general inability of these male characters to regain a sense of death-transcending purpose (their failure to re-engage with a redemptive national allegory) is starkly juxtaposed with the reclamation of purpose experienced by the nation through the Bush administration's typological co-optation of 9/11 within the exceptionalist allegory of American history.

The writers explored in this study are not optimistic concerning the redemptive prospects for the American business professional. The figurative fall of the traditional American businessman does

not clear the way for a progression to an egalitarian stage of capitalism (of course, this "fall" itself has proven to be mostly symbolic). Rather, the underlying disparity stemming from this ideal will always remain – even after the destabilization of male hegemony – regardless of the sex, gender, race, ethnicity or class of the subject who embodies its constitutive patterns of practice. Exploitation is revealed to be systemic: it is the basis of capitalist ideology and its ideal patterns of practice, and thus remains operative behind the ever-changing, increasingly plural face of the "suit," that metonymic figure that stands in for the ideal business professional of post-industrial capitalism, in an increasingly transnational context.

In contrast to the hegemonic American businessman, that ideal figure of capital, Hardt and Negri theorize the transformation of dominant figures of labor in economic systems, suggesting that the hegemony of one figure of labor over others depends on transformations in the forces of production. They envision this hegemonic figure of labor as a potentially transformative, emancipatory ideal:

> in any economic system there are numerous different forms of labor that exist side by side, but there is always one figure of labor that exerts hegemony over others. This hegemonic figure serves as a vortex that gradually transforms other figures to adopt its central qualities. The hegemonic figure is not dominant in quantitative terms but rather in the way it exerts a power of transformation over others. Hegemony here designates a tendency. (107)

Hardt and Negri's central thesis in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004) suggests that a global "Empire" of capitalism reigns over the contemporary postmodern period, and that the only hope of combating the oppressive unity of such an imperial force is to transform political consciousness in a way that avoids this tendency towards unity. Their prescribed counter-tendency seeks to preserve mutual recognition of individual difference – the solitude of consciousness that we all paradoxically share, the irreducible interiority that is "common" between

us. Hardt and Negri trace the transformation of the emancipatory power of certain groups of hegemonic figures of labor. In the industrial era, the "working class" – a political class-based unity that actually preserved white hegemonic masculinity by excluding members differing in gender, race, ethnicity and class – was in a position of authority to create real socioeconomic change due to the centralization of their constituents: they were urban and worked in factories or work sites, places of real interface conducive to communication and the recognition of a common plight. However, since the neoliberal turn in the 1970s, the current postmodern era of technological innovation and outsourcing has forced large segments of the working class to either take up other forms of less centralized and organized menial labor, or to adapt to the growing sector of immaterial labor. Thus, those involved in immaterial labor are no longer designated as the "working class" as such, but are rather a transformation of that class-based unity, in line with larger postmodern shifts in capitalist production.

Hardt and Negri define immaterial labor as work that "produces immaterial products, such as information, knowledges, ideas, images, relationships, and affects," which can be found in occupations ranging "from sales work to financial services" (200). In this sense, a segment of the traditional "working class" has shifted from material labor and its attendant handiwork skills, to immaterial labor and its knowledge and information based skills. This shift in skill-sets – which requires further institutional education – seems to have expanded the working class beyond their traditional class designation, both in terms of the quality of the work performed, but also in terms of wages. However, any socioeconomic gains made on the homefront from this shift to immaterial labor comes at the expense of not only those domestic laborers who were unable to make the transition, but also the exploited foreign laborers who constitute the growing working class in the international division of labor. In *The Submission* (2011), Amy Waldman provides a deft literary critique of the struggle for certain working class figures of labor to make the transition, with her depiction of Sean as a "shabby handyman" who is also a "suited man on the make" (233).

But what is interesting here – and not explicitly addressed by Hardt and Negri – is that the transformed figure of labor of the postindustrial era increasingly embodies the immaterial ideals and skill-sets associated with hegemonic business masculinity, especially since the rise of the corporate "organization man" of the 1950s. So although Hardt and Negri idealize immaterial labor as most qualified to build the affective relationships necessary to transform other figures of labor, with the aim of challenging postmodern neoliberal capitalism, this study will interrogate that other, genealogically prior figure of hegemonic masculinity – the figure of *capital*, the hegemonic businessman – whose iconic cultural status has not only reproduced other figures of capital, but has also transformed that segment of the traditional working class into the figures of immaterial labor idealized by Hardt and Negri. As a result, such figures of labor now possess more sophisticated skill-sets conducive to the "immaterial" business world of postindustrial capitalism.

While Hardt and Negri would separate the hegemony of immaterial labor from the hegemony of business masculinity (the latter of which they address in their analysis of the Davos Men of the World Economic Forum, a figure akin to Kimmel's "transnational businessman"), I will take into consideration how these two figures overlap, and how both partake in the sublimated violence inherent in the ideals and patterns of practice associated with the former – the rationality, charisma, and aggression that constitute what DeLillo refers to in *Falling Man* (2007) as "calculated deceit," the acquisitive *ethos* behind one of the most culturally celebrated ways of being a successful man in postindustrial capitalism (97).

However, there are important differences between these hegemonies that need to be addressed. While the antisocial behaviour of businessmen is often celebrated as anti-heroic in American culture (Gordon Gekko's credo in *Wall Street* that "Greed is Good" is one of many pop-cultural celebrations of this style), and even encouraged in actual homosocial practices of hegemonic masculinity, the average figure of immaterial labor is expected to do precisely the opposite in reality: to please and provide service with a smile. The anti-heroic edge in pop-cultural fantasy is blunted by

the subservient reality of the service sector, highlighting the class differences that separate these hegemonies, as well as attendant differences in sex, gender, race, and ethnicity.

The immaterial labor that replaces the working class in the United States and other Western nations – though encompassing a broad occupational demographic – is based primarily on providing services, which places such figures of labor in subservient positions, from "flight attendants" and "fast food workers" to more advanced positions such as "legal assistants," "salespersons, computer engineers, teachers, and health workers" (114). And though the hegemony of immaterial labor that characterizes the transformed American working class shares similar cultural ideals and skill-sets with hegemonic business masculinity, in reality it is marked by an ideological difference that is decidedly gendered: subjects in the former are expected to perform an *ethos* of subservience, while the latter one of dominance. Many occupations of immaterial labor in developing nations, and dominant Western nations such as the United States, are subordinated by hegemonic business masculinity:

> when affective labor becomes central to many productive tasks under the hegemony of immaterial labor it is still most often performed by women in subordinate positions. Indeed, labor with a high affective component is generally feminized, given less authority, and paid less. Women employed as paralegals and nurses, for example, not only do the affective labor of constructing relationships with patients and clients and that of managing office dynamics, but they are also caregivers for their bosses, the lawyers and doctors, who are largely male. (111)

It is such "affective" immaterial labor which Hardt and Negri suggest is being exploited as surplus value in postmodern capitalism. The idea of the "product" of affective labor charts the shift from the material commodity (an object) of the industrial era to the immaterial commodity (a subjectivity) of the postindustrial era. The product of affective immaterial labor is the construction and configuration of intersubjective social relationships. This immaterial production of subjectivity, which is the

production of ideas, knowledge, and affects, [...] does not merely create means by which society is formed and maintained; such immaterial labor also directly produces social relationships. Immaterial labor is *biopolitical* in that it is oriented toward the creation of forms of social life; such labor, then, tends no longer to be limited to the economic but also becomes immediately a social, cultural, and political force. (66)

Biopolitical immaterial labor has the potential to raise political consciousness, create new subjectivities, and bring together new social relationships into "*networks* based on communication, collaboration, and affective relationships" (66). Furthermore, the "creation and reproduction of new subjectivities in society" involves the working out of "who we are" and "how we view the world," both of which influences "how we interact with each other" (66). The biopolitical power to shape such worldviews can be mobilized as a force of resistance to the anti-social individualism of hegemonic masculinity in domestic gender relations, and can also be transposed to those equally gendered macro-structures of American economic hegemony in geopolitical relations. Hardt and Negri suggest that the forces of immaterial labor must struggle against the co-optation of the product of their biopolitical labor, which is the production of subjectivity itself, which can be mobilized to create new subjectivities of resistance against what they diagnose as the "permanent, global state of war" that characterizes the post-9/11 era. Rather than modeling an emancipatory mode of subjectivity on the oppressive practices of hegemonic masculinity that created the conditions of oppression in the first place – a replacing of one repressive subjectivity with another – perhaps the hegemony of immaterial labor can create subjectivities based on an alternative paradigm that recognizes shared human frailty, an acceptance of corporeal vulnerability and the inevitability of death, rather than the exhausted, acquisitive death-transcendence offered by American capitalism.

Falling Men in 9/11 American Fiction reveals how certain American novelists counteract the mainstream media and the Bush administration's attempt to co-opt 9/11 within a typological narrative that legitimizes a retrenchment of American masculinity to more traditional roles of

"defensive" manhood. This study explores how these novelists approach this contemporary regression indirectly by identifying the absent cause of the attacks through a play of figuration. This absent cause is aggressive masculine dominance as sublimated through American capitalism, which is depicted in the figuration of domestic gender relations in a way that mirrors and critiques American geopolitical relations abroad, and vice versa. In this light, when Richard Gray claims that post-9/11 American novelists "vacillate […] between large rhetorical gestures acknowledging trauma and retreat into domestic detail," and further argues that "the link between the two is tenuous, reducing a turning point in *national* and *international* history to little more than a stage in a sentimental education," he is in fact getting it backwards: rather than reducing 9/11 entirely to domestic trauma, 9/11 American fiction situates itself within the domestic space from where it can dramatize the *outward* influence that interpersonal gender relations have on oppressive American foreign policies abroad, and vice versa (134). Therefore, I argue that this fiction is inherently dialectical: its centripetal orientation, rather than being simply reductive and "sentimental," establishes the domestic analogue for a greater centrifugal critique of hegemonic American ideology as it manifests itself abroad – underscoring that an understanding of domestic gender relations is essential to any analysis of American fiction and culture after 9/11. And while this contemporary fiction is not directly allegorical, it employs many of the literary techniques of that mode, such as analogy, allusion, and extended metaphor, while also featuring characters who embody the abstract masculine ideals that constitute the problematic ideology of American exceptionalism, a technique which partakes in Jameson's play of figuration. In this regard, it might be argued that writers of 9/11 fiction raise the specter of allegory – as a crucial rhetorical mode that has shaped American political discourse and national identity to this day – only to subvert it, in order to critique the post-9/11 tendency to interpret 9/11 within a typological narrative of triumphalist American history.

As a literary critic of 9/11 American fiction, my task, along the lines of Jameson quoted above, is "to make conceptually available" an ideal type of American masculinity interrogated

therein, whose patterns of practice generate and sustain the oppressive "ultimate realities and experiences" of global capitalism. I examine how writers such as Don DeLillo, Laila Halaby, Mohsin Hamid, and Amy Waldman, among others, employ a hermeneutical mode of writing, or what Jameson theorizes as an allegorical play of figuration, to allude to the absent cause of 9/11 that haunts post-9/11 American culture. Thus, in line with my synthesis of Gray and Rothberg, I examine how the play of allegorical figuration in this fiction draws critical parallels between the oppressive patterns of practice that sustain masculine hegemony at home, and that absent, though intimately related, "ultimate reality" of oppressive globalized American capitalism abroad that resulted in 9/11. This absent yet pervasive cause of masculinized oppression behind 9/11 is made present in this allegorical play of figuration, which aligns the two structures of oppression so that one serves as the analogue for the other, and vice versa, which allows for a recuperation of the historical continuities of American oppression that the Bush administration's typological co-optation of 9/11 tried to suppress.

Chapter 2: "Falling Men in 9/11 American Fiction"

In this chapter I explore the contemporary reverberations of "self-made" masculinity in representations of post-9/11 masculine crisis featured in three novels: Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007), Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* (2008), and Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (2006). The male protagonists in these novels are business professionals who worked in the World Trade Center before the attacks. So not only are they businessmen who share a cultural and professional heritage that celebrates the virtues of self-made manhood, they also worked within the iconic towers that symbolized the global dominance of American capitalism – the result of the cumulative patterns of practice set into motion by the governing ethos of self-made masculinity. Thus, in the context of these novels and in post-9/11 American culture as a whole, the destruction of the World Trade Center can be viewed not only as a symbolic attack on globalized American

capitalism and the neoliberal ideology that sustains it, but also on the ideal of self-made manhood that generated its institutional hegemony.

Thomas Bjerre argues that 9/11 novels written by Don DeLillo, Ken Kalfus and Mohsin Hamid provide counternarratives to the aggressive triumphalism of the Bush administration's domestic and foreign policies, which "construct[ed] 9⁄11 as a recognizable male heroic narrative" (243). Bjerre effectively analyzes how the male protagonists in these novels are represented in various states of emasculating trauma, both in response to 9/11 as a disruptive event, but also in their inability to embody the protective ideals of sub-hegemonic masculinity – firefighters, policemen, soldiers, and rescue workers – evoked in American culture after the attacks. However, while it is productive to focus on how these characters fail to measure up to such heroic cultural ideals, this chapter will argue that these characters need to be examined on their own terms, as representations of American business professionals. The male protagonists in DeLillo's *Falling Man,* Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*, and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* certainly fail to measure up to the militant machismo that characterizes sub-hegemonic masculinity in post-9/11 American culture. However, this failure is secondary to the real source of trauma that unites these characters: as a symbolic attack on globalized American capitalism, 9/11 is also an attack on those masculine subjects who put the neoliberal ideologies responsible for American economic hegemony into materialist practice. Accordingly, these novels explore the symbolic connection between the falling towers and the falling occupants who jumped to their death by focusing on a contemporary ideal of supra-hegemonic masculinity that received little attention in the media: the corporate business professional of late capitalism. Richard Drew's iconic photograph *The Falling Man* (fig. 1 below) captures a moment with symbolic resonances that the terrorists could never have orchestrated or anticipated. Rather, it was the American media that framed this image and put it into mass circulation – though soon after the media would suppress all such images of the "falling man" variety.

Fig. 1: Richard Drew's The Falling Man

Clearly, the image of *The Falling Man* is disturbing as an image of "certain death." (Engle 37). But what is it about the *The Falling Man* that caused so much controversy? What does it represent and why were many Americans so uncomfortable with it, to the point of outright censorship? At the most rudimentary analysis of the figure therein as a falling "man," the image is clearly a representation of masculinity, and since the falling man is situated against the World Trade Center, he becomes associated with the context of globalized American capitalism and big business. Thus, the falling man in this image is read as a business "man." And of course, this American businessman is falling to his death from smoking towers that would soon follow suit. In this regard, the image can be read

symbolically as representing the fall of the American businessman – that iconic image of hegemonic masculinity whose self-made actions built American capitalism and the towers that had symbolized its global hegemony. In fact, that he is captured falling headfirst at a ninety degree angle in what resembles a purposeful mid-stride, suggests the absolute inversion of the businessman ideal, symbolizing helpless, impotent, and fatal downward mobility.[21] Rather than the "self-possession" of the self-made man, a quality Derrida associates with "phallogocentric valuations of the proper," such as "possession, self-possession, proximity to Being, being recognizable and identifiable, being certain," all of which are deemed "necessary to the functioning of Western nations," *The Falling Man* is an image of inexorable dispossession in its proximity to non-Being (48). Thus, the terrorists might have originally staged 9/11 as a symbolic attack on globalized American capitalism, but one of the resulting contingencies of the attacks – that they caused men and women to jump from the towers to their deaths – led the American media to frame and read the attacks in yet another way: as a symbolic attack on an empowering ideal of American masculinity.[22]

In this chapter, I explore how the protagonists in DeLillo's *Falling Man*, O'Neill's *Netherland*, and Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*, embody modern transformations of self-made manhood, as all occupy professional positions in American finance. More specifically, I will explore the detrimental effects of the self-made ethos on their interpersonal relationships, both marital and professional. I argue that in the context of these novels, the crisis of 9/11 functions as a potential catalyst for moral awakening in these characters, drawing their attention to the hegemonic ideals that had secured their masculine dominance at home and the nation's economic dominance abroad, though each responds differently and with varying degrees of success at interpersonal reconciliation. Thus, on the centripetal plane of narrative action, I will analyze how each character attempts to alter the patterns of thought and practice that had previously secured their dominance, revealing how what was originally assumed by these men to be a process of masculine self-making, has become, in the aftermath of 9/11, a self-conscious and re-evaluative "performance" of American

masculinity. But in the end do these men come to recognize and accept their corporeal vulnerability and their dependence upon others, eschewing the self-made ideal of masculinity in the process? Or do they revert back to the familiar practices that had secured their masculine dominance in the past? Or perhaps they linger somewhere in between? Do these male characters, and by centrifugal extension, the nation, remain awakened from their insular American Dream of self-making, stuck in the geopolitical ravages of a post-9/11 American nightmare, or do they fall back into the dream? In the end, I argue that the centripetal orientation of these post-9/11 novels – in their specific focus on these "falling men" and the dramatization of their domestic strife against the geopolitical backdrop of 9/11 – establishes a critical parallel between the hegemonic patterns of practice that perpetuate masculine dominance at home (and which were essential to the rise and predominance of American capitalism) and the nation's neoliberal foreign policies that have secured geopolitical dominance abroad, both before and after 9/11. But before delving into literary analysis, this chapter will build upon the historical and philosophical groundwork established in the previous chapter by tracing the historical transformation of the self-made man into its contemporary manifestation, which R.W. Connell conceives as "transnational business masculinity."

The American Individualism of the Industrial Self-Made Man

Economic individualism has permeated American culture since the mid-nineteenth century, and was embodied in the ideal of the self-made man at that time. The self-made man evolved out of the rugged, resourceful and expansionistic individualism attributed to life at the American frontier, which was subsequently altered to meet the economic conditions of the industrial revolution that saw the expansion of American capitalism. Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were early exemplars of self-made manhood, championing a process of social "mobility" that "was a complex transaction between inborn qualities, intellectual and moral cultivation, and the needs and values of society" (Cawelti 44). However, this latter notion of civic responsibility was later abandoned by

industrial-era politicians like Henry Clay, whose conception of self-made manhood emphasized that "mobility was completely dependent on the will and action of the individual, that a man could make of himself what he would, and that the individual who failed had only himself to blame" (Cawelti 44). Clay's reformulation of the self-made man represented a major shift in American political and economic philosophy, championing the notion of America as a land where the traditional hereditary class distinctions of the Old World no longer existed. Furthermore, the boundless land, resources, and opportunities at the ever-expanding frontier gave rise to a free and democratic society in which any hard-working individual could prosper, if not at the resource-rich frontier, then on the level playing field of the urban marketplace – or so the myth goes. As established in the previous chapter, masculinities critic Michael Kimmel describes the self-made man as a "model of manhood that derives identity entirely from a man's activities in the public sphere, measured by accumulated wealth and status, by geographic and social mobility" (13). More specifically in terms of the self-made man's character, Kimmel argues that he is "uncomfortably linked to the volatile marketplace" and thus is "mobile, competitive, aggressive in business… temperamentally restless, chronically insecure, and desperate to achieve a solid grounding for a masculine identity" (13). Though Kimmel's description emphasizes the anxieties associated with the actual materialist practice of this idealized mode of masculinity, the myth of the self-made man continued to epitomize economic freedom from the industrial revolution onwards, proliferating in a genre of inspirational "self-improvement" literature directed at American men who wanted to initiate their own "rags-to-riches" narratives. But it must be emphasized that even throughout much of twentieth century, self-improvement discourse almost always articulated "self-made" upward mobility as the prerogative of white men, and thus served to secure their hegemony in the public sphere.

Despite this racial and gender bias, Micki McGee, in *Self-Help, Inc.: Makeover Culture in American Life* (2005), argues that self-improvement discourse can serve a useful social function in its ability to address underlying dissatisfaction with the status quo. People are drawn to narratives of

self-improvement because they recognize a disparity between their own personal ideals and social position and what they perceive to be the predominant cultural ideals of the nation. In times of boundless economic optimism, people tend to measure themselves against this cultural context to determine to what extent they share in the success, and how they can secure opportunities to improve their lot in the future. In this regard, it seems logical that such a discourse would be directed at society's most underprivileged, to those who would have the most to gain. However, as mentioned above, this discourse was traditionally directed to struggling working-class white men, despite the fact that many "others" were underprivileged not only in terms of class, but also by compounded discriminations of gender, race, and ethnicity. Thus, in order to promote a more egalitarian approach to self-help, self-improvement, and/or self-making that extends the pursuit of greater opportunities to others, McGee suggests a rethinking of the relation between selfhood and ideology in self-improvement discourse. She argues that this discourse should move away from a "masculinist" conception of self as "an autonomous, largely self-forming and self-governing individual, as has been the tendency under the radical individualism of Western thought," in order to move towards a more socially conscious conception of the self as "both embedded in and at least in part constitutive of others and of a social sphere – as a contributor to the making of both self and others" (23). This shift will ensure that "the pursuit of individual self-invention continues to hold radical political possibilities, particularly when one's own pursuit of self-invention confounds existing societal expectations" (23). Here, McGee emphasizes how the self is never entirely fashioned through individual agency as championed by the myth of self-made manhood, but is always dependent upon greater social relations of care and nurturance: beginning at birth, the very notion of selfhood and personal identity is contingent upon others creating a subject position for one's body within language and ideology. Furthermore, upward mobility in the workaday world is always dependent upon learning from others and establishing strong social relationships. This recognition of dependence on

others, and of one's vulnerability and malleability in this regard, tempers the notion of "self-made" masculine freedom celebrated in Western conceptions of radical individualism.

Nonetheless, a degree of self-making always remains, since one must make a personal effort to strive toward the societal ideals prescribed by any given culture. And in any such process of striving, one can only ever achieve an imperfect approximation of an ideal – the unique result of constant negotiations in the face of contingencies that arise in materialist practice. Thus, the unique striving of each individual subject implies a degree of agency, ingenuity, and free-play in relation to the operative ideal and the material exigencies that arise in pursuit, and differences in gender, race, class, and ethnicity further diffuse this process of self-making and the qualities of its resulting materialist approximation. Along these lines, Mary Paniccia Carden, in *Sons and Daughters of Self-Made Men* (2010), emphasizes the "performance" involved in the process of self-making, substituting the term "self-improvisation" in its place, since "improvisation encodes a necessary flexibility of performance and assumes context and relationship, in opposition to the radically autonomous selfhood posited by the rigid binaries of the self-made paradigm" (38).

The Rise of Neoliberalism in America

In mid-20th century America, the individualism of the self-made man gave way to a collectivist-oriented ideal of managerial business masculinity which was influenced by the interventionist Keynesian economics enacted by Roosevelt's New Deal in 1933. Largely a corrective for the *laissez-faire* economic policies that arguably led to the Great Depression, the New Deal initiated policies that managed and constrained the unbridled competition promoted by free-market capitalism. This new managerial businessman would come to be known through popular characterizations in the 1950s, perhaps most notably as the "man in the grey flannel suit" in Sloan Wilson's 1955 novel of the same name, and as the titular "organization man" from William H. Whyte's best-selling non-fiction critique released in 1956. These middle-manager businessmen no longer started companies from the ground up as enterprising individuals (or so the myth goes), but rather were valued for their

stringent and efficacious fiscal management of pre-existing corporations. Thus, the managerial businessman's identity was derived from his sense that he was a part of a corporate whole whose function was to maximize efficiency and company profits. So whereas during the American industrial revolution of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hegemonic masculinity in the business world was embodied in a few iconic *individuals* – self-made businessmen such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie – in the mid-twentieth century hegemonic masculinity became increasingly democratized and embodied in a *collective* of businessmen, since corporations had become far too large for their "self-made" owners to operate and manage on their own.[23] The rapid expansion of the corporate market alongside massive industrialization, which was facilitated by infrastructural development that would link regional markets to form a national whole, required the hiring of technically skilled managers to oversee production at regional levels. So though self-made men may have spearheaded these corporations (even though their *actual* development was largely dependent upon the working hands of others), changes in the technological development of the forces of production led to an expansion that required a collective of skilled managers to oversee production – otherwise these "self-made" men and their businesses would have been "un-made" by the rapidity of their own growth. This is not to say that the myth of the self-made man didn't persist, or that hierarchies of wealth and power dissolved into a communitarian equilibrium of managers. Competition among managers for upward mobility remained fierce and CEOs still retained great wealth and power at the top of the corporate hierarchy, though the overall intensity of competition was mitigated by governmental constraints on unbridled competition in the marketplace.

However, according to David Harvey in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005), since 1947, The Chicago School of economists, under the leadership of Frederick Von Hayek, initiated a campaign against New Deal interventionist policies in the United States. The Chicago School sought to abolish the constraints that had been put into place by the Roosevelt administration to protect markets and employees from the self-destructive tendencies inherent in the free-market ethos. Over

the next twenty years, The Chicago School made a concerted effort to disseminate a neoliberal agenda through universities, think-tanks, corporations, and media outlets. Harvey summarizes the neoliberal position in the following passage:

> The neoliberal state should favour strong *individual private property rights*, the rule of law, and the institutions of freely functioning markets and free trade. These are the institutional arrangements considered essential to guarantee individual freedoms. The legal framework is that of freely negotiated contractual obligations between juridical individuals in the market-place. The *sanctity of contracts* and *the individual right to freedom of action, expression, and choice must be protected*. The state must therefore use its monopoly of the means of violence to preserve these freedoms at all costs. By extension, *the freedom of businesses and corporations (legally regarded as individuals) to operate within this institutional framework of free markets and free trade is regarded as a fundamental good*. Private enterprise and *entrepreneurial initiative* are seen as the keys to innovation and wealth creation. (64 emphasis mine)

With these individualistic principles championing the "sanctity of contracts" which guarantee "private property," "free markets," and "entrepreneurial initiative" circulating through American culture by the 1960s, sociopolitical crises such as the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, and the stagflation crisis of 1973 served as catalysts for a sharp neoliberal turn in American politics and economics at the end of 1970s and into the 1980s. The social upheavals of the late 1960s and early 1970s, in response to what was perceived as too rigid and extensive governmental control over domestic (civil rights) and foreign (Vietnam War) affairs, signaled a desire in American culture for greater freedoms and rights to self-determination – especially for those differing in sex, gender, race and/or ethnicity – and for the state to reconfigure itself as the guarantor of these individual freedoms. In this climate, neoliberal activists and politicians were able to secure white masculine hegemony through a regressive strategy to co-opt such progressive civil rights discourse within their own

critique of governmental constraints on corporate freedom, since "businesses and corporations" were also "legally regarded as citizens," which highlights the absurd extent to which definitions of the "individual" can be manipulated in American politics. The glaring contradiction in this neoliberal strategy of co-optation is that the civil rights appeal for governmental recognition, which depends on the government as the guarantor of sociopolitical rights, is actually in direct opposition to the neoliberal agenda to diminish the power of civic-minded government. Therefore, in order to obfuscate this contradiction and thus preserve the notion that personal "freedoms" are an inseparable function of free-market capitalism, neoliberal strategists had to couch these civil rights discourses within a populist discourse that promoted freedom through consumer choice in free-markets. Thus, "by capturing ideals of individual freedom and turning them against the interventionist and regulatory practices of the state, capitalist class interests could hope to protect and even restore their position" in the midst of economic crisis (Harvey 42). Though initially such a regressive, capitalistic co-optation would have set off countercultural alarms, the stagflation crisis of 1973, in alignment with a growing mass-cultural co-optation of civil rights discourse and the counterculture in general, helped to expedite an increasingly widespread acceptance of this syncretized rendition of neoliberal rights and freedoms.

Finally, and most relevant in terms of contextualizing this study of 9/11 American fiction, the majority of which is set in New York City, Harvey argues that the fiscal crisis of that city in the mid-1970s, which was largely an extension of the stagflation at the national level, served as a microcosmic ground-experiment for the implementation of macrocosmic neoliberal economics at home and abroad:

> The management of the New York fiscal crisis pioneered the way for neoliberal practices both domestically under Reagan and internationally through the IMF in the 1980s. It established the principle that in the event of a conflict between the integrity of financial institutions and bondholders' returns, on the one hand, and the well-being of the citizens on

the other, the former was to be privileged. It emphasized that the role of government was to

create a good business climate rather than look to the needs and well-being of the population

at large. (48)

Thus, political decisions were made in city council to retrench public spending while increasing

privatization of existing publicly funded programs to create a "good business climate." [24] More

specifically, "this meant using public resources to build appropriate infrastructures for business

(particularly in telecommunications) coupled with subsidies and tax incentives for capitalist

enterprises" (Harvey 47). The goal was to market New York City as a cosmopolitan tourist attraction

that emphasized the "narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, and identity," which "became the

leitmotif of bourgeois urban culture," while "artistic freedom and artistic licence, promoted by the

city's powerful cultural institutions, led, in effect, to the neoliberalization of culture" (Harvey 47).

More importantly, this neoliberalization of New York City also extended into the restructuring of the

city's financial and political sectors. According to Harvey, "city government was more and more

construed as an *entrepreneurial* rather than a social democratic or even managerial entity. Interurban

competition for investment capital transformed government into urban governance through public-

private partnerships. City business was increasingly conducted behind closed doors, and the

democratic and representational content of local governance diminished" (47 emphasis mine). Thus,

this contextualization of New York City (the setting in most of the novels in this study) within the

development of neoliberalism in the U.S. amplifies the symbolic resonance of 9/11 as not only a

critique of global American economic hegemony as embodied in the World Trade Center, but also of

New York City as a whole, since it was the domestic testing-ground for neoliberal ideology, the

success of which would later be exported to national and international economic contexts and would

be one of al-Qaeda's targets of critique.[25] But the question remains: who is this "entrepreneurial"

subject and agent of American neoliberal ideology in an increasingly globalized world?

The Entrepreneurial Subject of American Neoliberalism: The Transnational Businessman

Though neoliberal ideology traces its philosophical origins to classical and neoclassical liberalism in which personal rights and freedoms are "rationally" agreed upon and settled in social contracts, the presumed subject of the social contract was almost always assumed to be male.[26] Furthermore, this notion of "freedom" was conceived in economistic terms, especially in the American political-economic tradition, which was heavily influenced by the individualistic free-market principles established in the political theories of John Locke and Adam Smith, particularly in the latter's *The Wealth of Nations*. The economic freedom of American classical liberalism – which stressed freedom in the context of free-markets – coincided with the gendered and racialized divisions of labor instituted during the development of industrial capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this context, which advocated the doctrine of separate spheres, men were the active subjects in the public sphere of industry and the marketplace, and participated in the freedoms derived from and attributed to this sphere, while women predominated in the domestic sphere where such public "economic freedoms" ostensibly had little to no relevance to the work performed therein. And although – since the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements of the late nineteenth century onwards – women and racial/ethnic minorities have been given equal legislative rights, in institutional practice the professional marketplace is still influenced by masculine hegemony. In the contemporary scene, the transnational corporation is the predominant institutional form of capitalism in the United States, and the business associates at the top echelons of these corporations (who are still predominately male) hold the greatest socioeconomic and political power in the nation, and arguably, since the United States remains the global economic hegemon, the world.[27] Thus, it is important to trace the genealogy of a recent debate on R.W. Connell's thesis that "transnational business masculinity" is currently the most powerful mode of hegemonic masculinity in the world today.

In "Masculinities and Globalization" (1998), R.W. Connell posits that recent trends in globalization have led to a "world gender order" in which the transnational businessman predominates. Connell suggests that the ideal subject and agent of neoliberal ideology, who is largely responsible for this globalized gender order, is implicitly male:

> The neoliberal agenda has little to say, explicitly, about gender: it speaks a gender-neutral language of "markets," "individuals," and "choice." But the world in which neoliberalism is ascendant is still a gendered world, and neoliberalism has an implicit gender politics. The "individual" of neoliberal theory has in general the attributes and interests of a *male entrepreneur*, the attack on the welfare state generally weakens the position of women, while the increasingly unregulated power of transnational corporations places strategic power in the hands of particular groups of men. (15 emphasis mine)

Thus, the ideal "individual" subject of contemporary neoliberal ideology is the "male entrepreneur" who occupies the top positions of transnational corporations, which are institutions that ostensibly espouse meritocratic ideals all the while exploiting and undermining the very civil rights discourses that would bring these ideals into existence – all in order to protect masculine hegemony from outside competition.[28] In terms of Harvey's commentary cited further above on the co-optive transposition of human rights discourse to corporations, it can be argued that, in a way, the transnational corporation itself has become the ideal "individual" subject of neoliberalism. Conceived as such an "individual," the faceless entity of the corporation is refracted into the many faces of the businessmen who constitute its individuated "lonely crowd" – a homosocial group of men who work collectively to secure the masculine hegemony of their corporation while also operating in line with the residual, atomizing influence of self-made masculinity. In this way, the corporation is diffused but animated through the agency of its businessmen, each of whom views himself – mistakenly, paradoxically – as being a *self-* made and sufficient agent of the corporate culture of which he is a part, while actually serving, in an almost cybernetic way, another kind of

corporate "individuality" in which their separate subjectivities are effaced. This corporate "individual" is the reification of its constitutive subjectivities into the collective entity of the corporation, the name and logo of which stands as the synecdochic "face" of the collectivity of businessmen who operate in transnational markets. Nonetheless, the entrepreneurial subjects such corporations comprise are throwbacks to the self-made man of the industrial era, those individualistic men who were exalted as the heroic agents of their own success and the success of their companies, indicating that hegemonic masculinity transforms over time as historical accumulations of discursive mythmaking and tropes are applied and combined with contemporary business practices on the world stage. The entrepreneurial spirit of the self-made man, which generated industrial capitalism and expanded the frontiers of the market on the American domestic front, has given way to the post-industrial entrepreneur of transnational capitalism who has expanded these frontiers beyond American borders into foreign territory, securing American hegemony in globalized markets. Although neoliberal discourse invokes the mythic ideal of the self-made man to mobilize a similar entrepreneurial drive in the current bearers of hegemonic masculinity on the world stage, transnational businessmen are increasingly distanced from the actual forces of production and the exploitative outsourced labor that sustain American economic dominance. The transnational businessman exists in an increasingly rarefied realm above the material forces and practices where things are actually "made".[29] Connell and Wood's ethnographic research on transnational businessmen suggests that managerial work is becoming increasingly collective despite prevailing neoliberal myths that celebrate the individual or self: "Although market ideology imagines the capitalist as an individual entrepreneur inventing a widget and selling it, the reality for most senior managers is an extremely indirect relation to the production of goods. The relation is mediated either through complex bureaucracies (large manufacturing, transport, retail firms) or through the ever-greater complexities of financial markets" (354).[30] So it seems the transnational businessman is actually more and more removed from the "self-made" ideal that he nostalgically invokes, and in

both senses of that hyphenated term: he is increasingly dependent on a collective of others rather than being "self"-sufficient, while also being increasingly removed from the forces of production where commodities are actually "made" by others. In this sense, the homosocial collectivities of transnational corporations are making inroads into global capitalism rather than individual self-made men.

Thus, though neoliberalism poses itself as a meritocratic philosophy that champions a level playing field, free markets and individual rational choice on the world stage – all conditions conducive to entrepreneurial "self-making" – it actually perpetuates, through collective homosocial practice, the economic status quo in which the "hegemonic form of masculinity in the current world gender order is the masculinity associated with those who control its dominant institutions: the business executives who operate in global markets, and the political executives who interact (and in many contexts, merge) with them." (Connell 16). In this regard, transnational "business executives" – in collusion with "political executives" – operate according to a contradictory neoliberal ideology that champions a fiercely *competitive individualism* in the marketplace that resonates with the self-made ethos of a bygone era, all the while institutionalizing this individualistic ideal and putting it into *collective* homosocial practice to protect masculine hegemony from outside *competition* – one of the founding virtues of neoliberalism. So rather than being an ideal that *makes* or transforms the world around him, the transnational businessman enacts an increasingly conservative mode of hegemonic masculinity that functions to *preserve* a gendered status quo and erase individuality. The contradiction inherent in the "collective individualism" identified above secures an ideal of hegemonic masculinity against competition in the marketplace (both locally and globally) from others differing in gender, race, ethnicity and class.

This ideological contradiction indicates an ongoing crisis in the American gender order in post-industrial capitalism. This conservative tendency in transnational corporate culture is symptomatic of growing concerns that masculine hegemony is being challenged by those who have

been historically denied the economic freedoms therein. Furthermore, as indicated in the previous chapter, 9/11 exacerbated these conservative tendencies and was co-opted to further legitimize masculine dominance by invoking ideals of protective masculinity to defend the nation from future harm. But the post-9/11 veneration of such heroic ideals unintentionally reveals how far removed average American men are from embodying them.[31] The transnational businessman – be-suited and manicured, briefcase in hand – is not the rugged frontiersman in buckskins with musket in hand, or the resourceful self-made man who by the sweat of his brow has hewn a distinguished life and business from the anonymity of the crowd. He is increasingly removed from economic materiality and necessity, and thus defenseless when this reality irrupts into his rarefied existence. But the transnational businessman has great wealth and power at his disposal: he has socioeconomic power, which in a post-industrial world is *real* power, since reified superstructural ideals and those who embody them are increasingly able to influence relations at the base (which is now largely international with the continual increase of outsourced labor). And in a world where real power is increasingly concentrated, legitimated and exercised within and through political ideology and the forms of social consciousness produced therein, it becomes more important to effect change from within the discursive realm, with the goal of generating liberating practices. This new mode of *globalized* capitalistic hegemonic masculinity, which Connell has dubbed "transnational business masculinity," is critically foregrounded in my analysis of "falling men" in 9/11 American fiction. However, transnational business masculinity is at the center of a debate that needs to be addressed before moving on to literary analysis.

A Critique of Transnational Business Masculinity

Christine Beasley is at the forefront of a critique of transnational business masculinity. In "Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity in a Globalizing World" (2008), Beasley begins with a critique of the more general concept of hegemonic masculinity in which she identifies a tripartite "slippage"

in the term's definition, from "its meaning as a *political mechanism* tied to the word *hegemony*— referring to cultural/moral leadership to ensure popular or mass consent to particular forms of rule— to its meaning as a descriptive word referring to *dominant* (most powerful and/or most widespread) versions of manhood, and finally to its meaning as an empirical reference specifically to *actual groups of men*" (88). Here, Beasley's main concern is with Connell's "slipping" away from a purely discursive use of the term "hegemonic masculinity" toward a more materialist conception that construes masculine hegemony as an empirical fact, which dangerously accords the concept an incontestable status. The term slips from its denotative meaning as a conceptual/discursive concept that designates an enabling political mechanism, to a more general naming of a dominant cultural ideal(s) that is still primarily discursive but subject to reification, before finally sliding entirely to a materialist descriptor of actual men and their embodiment of specific hegemonic traits – both as individuals and groups. Beasley is concerned that the term does not do justice to the plurality of meanings it elicits, including microcosmic variations in masculine practice based on differences in context and the particularities of experience. But it must be emphasized that Connell has always explicitly foregrounded the relational and contingent nature of the concept: "'Hegemonic masculinity' is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same" but rather is "the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always *contestable*." ("Masculinities" 76 emphasis mine). The "always contestable" nature of hegemonic masculinity establishes masculine rule as subject to historical change.

While Beasley's critique of Connell's definitional slippage is important for recognizing the potential in his theory to reify the very hegemony it seeks to destabilize, her insistence upon the conceptual/terminological "demassification" of hegemonic masculinity establishes a false dichotomy in Connell's theory between materialist and discursive tendencies. It must be stressed that hegemonic masculinity, and in fact Gramsci's original conception of hegemony itself, was formulated according to a *dialectical* mode of logic that allows for a more integrative conceptual approach to the historical

analysis of class and gender relations, one that construes the material and discursive not as entirely separate categories, but rather as inextricably integrated in dialogue. Gramsci himself, in his critique of the potential for economic determinism in orthodox Marxism, ultimately warned of the dangers of slipping into either determinism: "economism" which reduces social antagonism to underlying economic/material factors, or "ideologism" which reduces the same to ideological/discursive forms of social consciousness (202). And while Beasley criticizes Connell for betraying a Marxist economic determinism in his implicit usage of principles derived from historical materialism (which today would fall within the sociobiological school of social thought), it can be argued that Beasley should likewise be criticized for privileging the dichotomous opposite of economic determinism: an ideological essentialism that, in the end, reduces hegemony to ideological explanations (a social constructionist approach).

Instead of falling into either essentialism, Gramsci promoted a dialectical approach to historical materialism. Gramsci departed from the economism of orthodox Marxism by emphasizing the central importance of initiating change from within the superstructure by raising ideological/historical consciousness in the underprivileged, and then putting that consciousness into materialist practice towards greater sociopolitical freedom. Whereas in the more mechanical and teleological historical materialism of Marx, in which economic changes at the base inevitably lead to revolutionary action that results in changes in the superstructure, Gramsci posited a more dynamic process in which superstructural changes in ideology/discourse, brought about through effective leadership, also have the potential to influence social relations at the economic base. Thus, Gramsci's conception of hegemony as a form of sociopolitical rule that is secured through ideological consent generated by effective leadership is more open to change, as it conceives of political rule as necessarily in tension with awareness and materialist practice, and foregrounds the agency of the mediating subjects who, by putting ideology into the structural practices that secure hegemonic rule, ultimately give consent to that rule. Hegemony is as much about securing ideological consent to

forms of rule as it is about the use of more coercive means of domination. Thus, rather than hegemony being a strictly top-down process of domination with little chance for contestation, Gramsci emphasizes the importance of ideology and political leadership in securing and maintaining hegemony – contingencies whose need for constant maintenance suggest the existence of fissures in the ideological closure of hegemony. These fissures become more apparent during times of crisis, when materialist destruction often serves as a catalyst for the fissuring of ideology – 9/11 being a perfect example of this. The resultant fissures in ideology are access points and sites for contestation, between – in Richard Howson's terms – the "regressive forces" of the "traditional hegemony" that attempt to restore ideological closure (the Bush administration, certain media) and the "progressive forces" (various subversives, including the writers in this study) that seek to disclose and revolutionize the traditional hegemony by putting forward a project of "aspirational" hegemony into antagonistic materialist practice.

In direct response to Beasley, Richard Howson redirects critical attention to Gramsci's original conception of hegemony to determine that these "slippages" in Connell's concept "are in fact dialectically 'sutured' within hegemony," and furthermore, that "hegemonic masculinity is simultaneously a hegemonic *mechanism* and *ideal*. As a mechanism we see it operating in training for war, sports, and also business and as an *ideal* through its incorporation and expression of "hegemonic principles" (111). In this study, I have been using hegemonic masculinity in precisely this way: as a *dialectical* concept that critically addresses and challenges how certain ideologically conditioned practices undertaken by actual men in specific historical circumstances generate a predominant masculine ideal and an attendant set of "hegemonic principles" that subsequently serve to legitimize and sustain the very practices that generated the ideal in the first place. And this is not a simple case of circular logic, since it acknowledges an agent who, despite being always already subject to various cultural ideals, actively mediates between the ideal and the material to generate new possibilities. In this sense, it is not possible to conceptualize a "slippage" between completely

separate terms – from *political mechanism* to *dominant versions / ideals of manhood* to *actual groups of men* – because the latter two are so inextricable in their dialecticism that the integrated structure of the dialectic in and of itself becomes/*is* the political mechanism through which hegemony is achieved and sustained and/or disrupted. There can be no "slippage" from one to the other because the one is always presupposed by the other: hegemonic materialist practice, conditioned by certain cultural and institutional values, is always presupposed and thus conditioned by hegemonic ideals, but likewise these ideals are always presupposed by the materialist practices needed to generate the specific actions that constitute the ideal and its hegemonic principles. Thus, the dialectic between the ideal principles of masculinity and how they are embodied in the materialist practice of actual men can be seen in the context of hegemonic masculinity as an integrated political mechanism that both generates and sustains masculine dominance (though not always in the same way). The key is to recognize the potential within this dialectical conception of historical materialism to generate both regressive and progressive forces.

The mode of social practice that generates and sustains hegemony is what Karel Kosik theorized as "onto-formativity." Richard Howson traces the evolution of this concept, quoting Kosik's basic definition of onto-formativity which articulates human existence "as a being that forms the (socio-human) reality and therefore, also grasps and interprets it (that is, reality both human and extra-human, reality in its totality)" (39). Kosik's definition, with its emphasis on active human agency in the construction of "socio-human reality," is similar to Gramsci's conception of praxis as "concrete human activity operating through an awareness of history." (39). Kosik's active "grasping and interpreting" of the socio-human reality that onto-formative being constructs is the working towards an "awareness of history" stressed by Gramsci – which leads to further "concrete human activity" and the further unfolding of history, and so on. This dialectical process also includes acts of disruption such as 9/11, the result of "concrete human activity operating through an awareness of history" – here, the history of Euro-American imperialism. Finally, Connell's theory of "practice" –

which was influenced by Kosik's onto-formativity – emphasizes the changing of reality through "body-reflexive practices" that are always both material and ideological:

> Through body-reflexive practices, bodies are addressed by social process and drawn into history, without ceasing to be bodies. They do not turn into symbols, signs or positions in discourse. Their materiality […] is not erased, it continues to matter […] Body-reflexive practices form – and are formed by – structures which have historical weight and solidity […] Practice never occurs in a vacuum. It always responds to a situation, and situations are structured in ways that admit certain possibilities and not others. Practice does not proceed into a vacuum either. Practice makes a world. In acting, we convert initial situations into new situations. (*Masculinities* 65)

Here, Connell attempts to reassert the importance of material/embodied human existence as it operates within the ideological structures of particular socio-historical situations, which promotes certain configurations of practice over others. And while he stresses the need to acknowledge and critically engage hegemonic masculinity on the plane of concrete body-reflexive practice, he likewise does not suggest that this practice, because of its concrete embodiment, is somehow an essential mode of masculinity. Rather, the dialectical nature of the concept does not permit that it be conceived as occurring within a vacuum (biological determinism) or as proceeding into a vacuum (ideological determinism). Thus, men who can be said to embody a particular ideal of hegemonic masculinity *are actual people* and they may embody a particular ideal in different ways. These men may decide to embody the ideal in traditional ways that sustain masculine hegemony, or they may engage in more subversive/progressive practices with the aim of converting "initial situations into new situations." (Connell, *Masculinites* 65). And times of crisis, whether initiated by natural disaster or the intended material practice of the hijackers on 9/11, can serve as catalysts for change in masculine behavior – or at least disrupt the reified surface of masculine hegemony and heighten consciousness to the reality often obscured by masculinist ideology – mainly that corporeal

vulnerability and death come to us all, men included. Thus, Howson concludes in his reading of Connell that "in recognizing the onto-formativity of social reality there must also be a realisation that practice is a *trans-formative* and *determining* process, which involves the appropriation of the natural (or at least elements of it) for re-configuration in the social sphere." (39). Here, the traditional understanding of social change in historical materialism is inverted, or at least made more dynamic by introducing a dialectical understanding of relations between the materialist economic base and the ideological superstructure. Traditional conceptions of historical materialism tend to offer a linear model of historical change that privileges the material development of the forces of production at the economic base: innovations in productive technology and working conditions determine changes in the configurations of social practice that structure society. However, the concept of onto-formativity suggests that transformative action can also occur at the level of the superstructure: effective leadership can raise ideological/historical consciousness and thus set into motion practices that affect socio-historical change.

Finally, to address the charges of gendered economic determinism laid by Beasley, the philosophical foundations of historical materialism need to be delineated and critiqued. Though the dialectical circuit addressed above does not privilege either the material or discursive tendencies therein, it is possible, when understanding historical materialism as a historically contingent concept used to describe a process specific to capitalism, to posit a materialist point of entry. M.C. Howard and J. E. King, in *The Rise of Neoliberalism in Advanced Capitalist Economies* (2008), defend historical materialism as the critical paradigm best suited to address advanced capitalism in its current globalized form. They suggest that

> Historical materialism proposes a causal primacy for the productive forces because it
> envisages that they determine the prevailing type of economic system in a *functional* manner.
> The economic system is as it is in virtue of its capacity to best develop the productive forces
> in their current form. A similar *functional* causation is claimed [...] to characterise the

relation of the economic system to the political system. The polity has the character it has

because it best consolidates the economic system when it has this character. (16)

That historical materialism takes as axiomatic the "causal primacy" of the productive forces in *determining* economic and political systems/structures, seems to clearly support the charges of economic determinism above. However, it must be emphasized that Howard and King admit their usage of historical materialism is most effective when applied to capitalist societies, which makes it historically contingent. Their rendition acknowledges that capitalism itself is contingent upon certain material circumstances, cultural beliefs, and configurations of practice. So within the context of capitalism, historical materialism suggests that capitalist societies are ultimately structured to maximize economic matters of production and profit. Here, the notion of "functional causation" suggests that the "character" of the economic base is transposed to the economic system, and then to the political system – both of which are structured to consolidate and maximize the productive forces. But what is the quality of this "character"? Since the productive forces have causal primacy in this schema, it would seem that the fundamental quality or character that permeates the entire sociopolitical structure is "productivity," and in the context of capitalism, a productivity that generates a surplus of commodities and profits. It is at this hypothetical moment – when accumulation for self-preservation/self-sufficiency gives way to accumulation for profit – that material practice enters into a historical materialist dialectic with capitalist ideology. Thus, this originary moment of capital accumulation sets into motion the productive mode of materialist practice that motivates and sustains the ideology of capitalism, and vice versa. And according to the specific stage of development of the productive forces, this "productive" character, which also permeates the political and economic institutions of the superstructure, also characterizes the ideal forms of social consciousness of the subjects therein.

As surveyed above, the history of American capitalism has seen different cultural ideals of productive masculinity rise to predominance in each stage of the development of the productive

forces. During the industrial revolution of the early nineteenth through to the early twentieth centuries, the self-made man was celebrated for his resourcefulness, ingenuity, and ability to generate successful business enterprise. In the early to mid-twentieth century, with domestic markets fully expanded throughout the nation, the self-made man gave way to a mode of managerial business masculinity that exalted organizational skills and the efficacious management of pre-existing corporations. And finally, as American capitalism has expanded into globalized markets, the transnational businessman is now the ideal subject of hegemonic masculinity at the forefront of advanced American capitalism. With this genealogy of the historical materialist development of hegemonic masculinity in American capitalism in place, this chapter will proceed to an analysis of 9/11 novels written by men who critically engage with the "crisis" or "fall" of the transnational businessman precipitated by 9/11.

Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*

Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* is a fragmented novel of psychological realism that depicts post-9/11 trauma primarily through Keith Neudecker, a lawyer who was in the World Trade Center on 9/11 but managed to escape. Of the 9/11 novels examined in this study, *Falling Man* foregrounds the titular trope most explicitly. Joseph M. Conte identifies three falling men in the novel: in a fleeting reference to a man falling from one of the towers on 9/11; in Janiak, a performance artist who reenacts the trope of the falling man that had become so iconic and yet suppressed in post-9/11 America; and finally in Keith himself whose married life was in a figurative free-fall even before 9/11, which only exacerbates his situation (576-78). This analysis of DeLillo's novel will focus primarily on the latter of these falling men. Before 9/11 Keith had been separated from his wife, but he attempts to reconcile after the attacks, trying to recuperate the domestic routines with his wife and son that he had previously abandoned. In a taciturn conversation with his wife upon first returning, she asks him, "Is it possible that you and I are done with conflict? ...The everyday friction. The

every-word every-breath schedule we were on before we split," to which Keith simply responds: "We're ready to sink into our little lives" (75). In this way, Martin Randall suggests that *Falling Man* is "essentially concerned with […] the deterioration of a marriage and uses 9/11 as a catalyst for the couple to re-evaluate their relationship," and more specifically, that "DeLillo interprets the attacks as emasculating Keith and by extension, America as a whole" (121). While Randall suggests the importance of gender, and more specifically masculinity, in DeLillo's critical engagement with 9/11, he does not take up this critical orientation in his analysis. However, Magali Cornier Michael suggests that DeLillo's novel partakes in a movement of literary "counter-narratives" against the heroic masculinity celebrated in post-9/11 American culture, suggesting that the novel "experiments with genre," particularly the "domestic novel – a narrative form not usually associated with masculinity […] or with the telling of history and […] that of large scale horrific historical events" (74). Furthermore, in a passage that gestures towards the synthesis of centripetal and centrifugal orientations that I foreground in this study (contra Richard Gray's dismissal of the centripetal/domestic), Michael suggests that the "domestic space functions less as a space within which to escape the post-9/11 world and the traumatic effects of the terrorist attacks than as space within which to engage that world and those traumas on a human scale, particularly given that personal and cultural trauma are so intertwined post-9/11" (76). Along these lines, I will proceed with an analysis of hegemonic masculinity in the post-9/11 domestic space depicted by DeLillo and examine how this centripetal orientation dramatizes and enacts a centrifugal critique of American capitalist hegemony. Despite his many attempts to reconnect throughout the novel, Keith is only able to *perform* the patterns of practice that had once defined him as a husband, father, and business lawyer. In his traumatized state, Keith can only go through the motions of his past life as a lawyer in the context of transnational American capitalism. In the end, he chooses to ensconce himself in the regressive world of professional poker – the cold abstraction of the business practice that had characterized his daily existence before 9/11.

At the beginning of the novel, Keith is depicted as a fallen and wounded man in the wake of the attacks, wandering aimlessly through the ruins of the World Trade Center. And from the outset, Keith's figurative fall is aligned with the fall of the surrounding architecture and landscape of capitalism, both of which are characterized in violent terms that establish an underlying critique of American capitalism. Michael notes DeLillo's

> biting depiction of the 'office paper flashing past, standard sheets with cutting edges' and of Keith, who incongruously "wore a suit and carried a briefcase," the standard costume of the public man within corporate America, at the same time as 'there was glass in his hair and face, marbled bolls of blood and light' – the 'cutting edges' and blood highlighting the power and potentially lethal aspects of corporate America, this time turned back upon its own participant (76).

Here, Michael reveals how DeLillo uses such symbolic imagery to articulate 9/11 as a geopolitical reaction against the sublimated violence of American capitalism, which is legitimized through the "cutting edges" of bureaucracy and put into practice by corporate business figures like Keith – suggesting that 9/11 sees "the lethal aspects of corporate America [...] turned back upon its own participant." The upwardly mobile jet set suit is reduced to falling man. I will expand upon this premise and examine how DeLillo aligns his critique of Keith as an agent of transnational capitalism with his oppressive domestic gender practices, often revealing how hegemonic business masculinity comes to characterize not only the centrifugal relations of American capitalism (which leads to 9/11) but also the centripetal relations of American gender politics (which results in marital discord).

While the reason for their separation is never directly addressed, DeLillo offers a glimpse into the seething animosity between Keith and Lianne in one of the former's fragmented recollections of one "those nights" before the separation:

> he seemed on the verge of saying something, a sentence fragment, that was all, and it would end everything between them, all discourse, every form of stated arrangement,

whatever drifts of love still lingered. He carried that glassy look in his eyes and a moist smile across his mouth, a dare to himself, boyish and horrible. But he did not put into words whatever it was that lay there, something so surely and reckless cruel that it scared her, spoken or not. The look scared her, the body slant. He walked through the apartment, bent slightly to one side, a twisted guilt in his smile, ready to break up a table and burn it so he could take out his dick and piss on the flames. (103-04)

There is something terroristic in Keith's behavior, his wily demeanor itself threatening a shrapnel explosion of fatal "sentence fragments" that would end his relationship with his wife, and all "discourse" and "love" between them. Furthermore, his terrorism is depicted in terms of tormenting masculine aggression: his "glassy look" and "moist smile" are "boyish and horrible," and he takes pleasure in her resulting fear. His exercising of masculine hegemony in their interpersonal relations is a power that is understood and consented to as an unwritten and unspoken rule between them, anchored in an underlying threat of masculine violence. His final fantasized act of aggression features three acts of violence: the breaking and burning of a table, and then the symbolic sexualized violence of taking out his "dick" and "pissing" on the flames. Keith's dominative behavior suggests that he had exerted masculine power and control over the situation of their failed marriage: he can threaten to be the source of fiery destruction, but also the dick-slinging hero to combat the flames. Like the seedy entrepreneur explored in O'Neill's *Netherland* below, Keith displays how the masculine business ethos of "owning the impetus of a situation" can have negative effects on gender relations (O'Neill 71). Keith embodies the often contradictory impulses of American masculinity: men are venerated as aggressive and violent breadwinners in the workplace, but also the heroic suppressors of violence. Here, Keith's fantasy is a 9/11 in microcosm: Keith's imagined breaking and burning of their table is a centripetal, domestic stand-in for the nation's capitalistic violence enacted on the geopolitical stage, while his sexualized parody of firefighting suggests that the same dominative masculinity is invoked to put out the flames of backlash. Such an imagined display

figuratively secures masculine hegemony by suggesting that Keith, as a man, can be the potential source of both violence (threat) and protection (salvation) on/of the domestic home front. Aggressive masculinity is both problem and solution, a circuit which perpetuates more problems that need such masculinist solutions.

But what is the source of Keith's resentment? There are only faint traces of memory scattered throughout the novel that suggest an underlying malaise, and one that is decidedly masculine. In a haphazard narrative fragment in the middle of the novel Keith ruminates on how he "used to want more of the world than there was time and means to acquire. He didn't want this anymore, whatever it was he'd wanted, in real terms, real things, because he'd never truly known" (128). There is a vague reference here to a past youthful state of acquisition, of an amorphous desire to have "real things" but not knowing what "things" in particular. Keith's materialistic urge was driven by a desire to acquire "more of the world" than his perceived lack of "time and means" could allow. But this demystified desire is more than just a realization of the void behind commodity fetishism, since it has a rapacious quality to it that never really had a fixed object to begin with. Rather, Keith's past desire to expand into and acquire parts of the world, was the same impetus that motivated the entrepreneurial self-made man: the desire to exercise economic freedom in the public sphere with such dexterity that one is able to accumulate great wealth and power, not so much for acquisition itself but as a way of asserting masculine subjectivity. Since 9/11 Keith's drive has become less focused, almost residual and diffuse. Furthermore, in this passage there is the impression that Keith's reach – conditioned by the sense of masculine desire and entitlement fostered by the self-made paradigm – seems to exceed his grasp. Thus, Keith's resentment can be attributed to his own frustrated desire to exercise the powers of masculine acquisition deemed proper to his demographic as a white, middle/upper-middle class American man. Keith is disillusioned with the inflated ideals of American hegemonic masculinity and his struggle to approximate them.

But these are ruminations on his life before 9/11. The last quoted passage continues with a consideration of the narrative's post-9/11 present: "Now he wondered whether he was born to be old, meant to be old and alone, content in lonely old age, and whether all the rest of it, all the glares and rants he had bounced off these walls, were simply meant to get him to that point" (128). Here, it seems that a combination of middle-aged wisdom and 9/11 as a catalyst has resulted in Keith's decidedly more stoic masculinity, free of the "glares and rants" that were symptomatic of his own conflicted denial of interdependence and vulnerability, as conditioned by the self-made ethos that he had previously embodied. But is Keith able to improvise a new mode of masculinity conducive to resuming a productive family life? While Keith gives an earnest attempt to perform the role of husband and father, he finds himself slipping back into sublimated forms of the American Dream and the acquisitive practices that sustain it, most notably in his escapist obsession with poker after the attacks.

Before 9/11 Keith played poker regularly with several friends involved in big-business outside of the game. The patrons included a business writer, an adman, a mortgage broker, a bond trader, and a lawyer. This is DeLillo's description of the poker strategizing of these business professionals:

> All the action was somewhere behind the eyes, in naïve expectation and calculated deceit. Each man tried to entrap the others and fix limits to his own false dreams, the bond trader, the lawyer, the other lawyer, and these games were the funneled essence, the clear and intimate extract of daytime initiatives […] they used intuition and cold-war risk analysis. They used cunning and blind luck […] They tossed in the chips and watched the eyes across the table […] There were elements of healthy challenge and outright mockery. There were elements of one's intent to shred the other's gauzy manhood. (97)

Clearly poker is represented here as a sublimated form of the American business world, "the funneled essence, the clear and intimate extract of" their "daytime initiatives," which for these men

would be the ideal patterns of practice that sustain American capitalism. In this sense, the game of poker serves as a playing-field for these men to hone their most fundamental workaday skills of "calculated deceit." John McDonald, in *Strategy in Poker, Business and War* (1950), describes the quintessential American gambling game in the following terms: "Shrewdness, cunning, deception, conscious strategies, suspicious appraisals of worth and character, and bold aggressions, all the repressed values of a competitive society are let loose and placed first in the order of proprieties" (44). Thus, poker pits one man against all, is fiercely individualistic, and is based exclusively on self-interest – all in the service of "one's intent to shred the other's gauzy manhood." Responsibility for one's failure or success lies solely in the individual and his ability to outsmart and outperform his opponents. In his analysis of the rise in the popularity of poker over the past ten years, Raymond I. Schuck suggests that the "sport" taps into an American myth of "masculinity" and "individualism," both of which relate to the larger "myth of the American Dream, complete with the potential for a rags-to-riches story" (1619).[32] Furthermore, Schuck argues that contemporary representations of the sport, especially in advertising campaigns on *ESPN*, suggest that "poker itself and the success of a poker player derive from the skill and resourcefulness of an individual against other individuals" which reinforces the myth of individualism through "characterizations of competition and strategy" (1619). Thus, poker is fundamentally a game of masculine one-upmanship, which pits one man against all, while simultaneously, as fraternal practice, serving the greater homosocial function of sustaining their collective masculine hegemony in the professional economy.

After 9/11, Keith's weekly ritual of poker playing becomes an escapist obsession. Though he initially tries to resume his family life by improvising and performing his past role as husband and father, he eventually abandons his family to pursue a professional poker career. Thus, he slips back into the familiarity and safety of his past governing ethos, at least insomuch as it manifests itself in the sublimated actions of poker. Thereafter, he leads an itinerant existence, traveling from city to city and sending a portion of his winnings back to his family.[33] And though this abandonment does not

come without guilt and regret, Keith is simply unable to perform the steadfast masculinity that characterized his past self, and which his wife so fervently craves after 9/11: "What she needed in him was his seeming calm, even if she didn't understand it. He knew she was grateful for this, the fact that he was able to read the levels of her distress. He was the still figure, watching, ever attentive, saying little. This is what she wanted to cling to" (158). Lianne desires Keith's paternalistic "seeming calm," the stability of his stolid demeanor, and his seemingly omniscient ability to gauge her mental state. But this "seeming" masculine calm is only a façade, a performance in line with the Bush doctrine's veneration of protective masculinity and cowering femininity, which actually masks Keith's emasculated state of internal trauma – both in her eyes and his own. Here, DeLillo suggests, in this dramatization of the domestic allegory in post-9/11 American gender relations, that the appearance of masculine calm can in fact be a misinterpretation of trauma, which obfuscates masculine vulnerability in order to support the regressive gender politics and foreign policies of the Bush administration. Instead of accepting and working through his trauma, Keith evades his feelings of loss, vulnerability, and mortality – in line with the Bush doctrine. But these feelings continue to haunt him, even in the safe and ritualized structure of poker that has become his life:

> The game mattered, the touch of felt beneath the hands, the way the dealer burnt one card, dealt the next. He wasn't playing for the money. He was playing for the chips. The value of each chip had only hazy meaning. It was the disk itself that mattered, the color itself. There was the laughing man at the far end of the room. There was the fact that they would all be dead one day. He wanted to rake in chips and stack them. The game mattered, the stacking of chips, the eye count, the play and dance of hand and eye. He was identical to these things. (228)

Keith engages in the game of poker on a purely materialist level – the game itself has been semiotically hallowed of its meaningful content, primarily its profit-motive, and has become reduced to pure materiality, a series of sensory impressions and mechanical movements: the "touch of felt,"

the color of the disks, "the stacking of chips." Keith is merely moving through the motions dictated by the game's fundamental structure – a safe, ritualized surface engagement with immediate reality. However, invasive metaphysical thoughts occasionally puncture this repressive regime of surface motion, as evidenced by the stark juxtaposition of dichotomous images that occurs in the middle of this passage of otherwise terse declarative sentences and clauses: "There was the laughing man at the far end of the room. There was the fact that they would all be dead one day." Kristiaan Versluys suggests that this "blatant non sequitur in the middle of the paragraph betrays what is really going on: the hypnotic obsession with the poker paraphernalia is a desperate ploy to escape the traumatic awareness of death" (42-43). I take this observation a step further and suggest that DeLillo draws the reader's attention to these two sentences through the use of anaphora in order to emphasize their contrast in imagery: on the surface, poker is a game that can lead to luxury and "laughter," but the game, as a symbolic stand-in for American capitalism as a whole, can no longer serve as such a death-transcending worldview for Keith. Thus, when Richard Gray in *After the Fall* (2011) dismisses the representation of poker in *Falling Man* as ineffective, since "the game as sanctuary… adds next to nothing to our understanding of the trauma at the heart of the action," and furthermore claims that "it evades that trauma, it suppresses its urgency and disguises its difference by inserting it in a series of familiar tropes," I argue that Gray is missing a more subtle reading of the symbolic resonances of poker as a familiar cultural trope in the context of the novel, and specifically in terms of DeLillo's critique of self-made American masculinity exemplified by Keith's symbolic fall into poker as a *masculine* "sanctuary" (28). Keith's post-9/11 confrontation with the inevitability of death undermines the masculine triumphalism promised by poker, and by extension, the pursuit of wealth in American capitalism both at home and abroad: that if one plays his cards right, "self-made" success and wealth will follow. For Keith, 9/11 was an event that made his own mortality more salient, while having the subsequent effect of revealing the contingency of the death-transcending worldviews that give many American lives, including his own, a sense of meaning, purpose, and

resolve. And if, as Carden argues,the United States is a nation underwritten by "narratives portraying self-made fathers creating the U.S. in their image" which "effectively gender[s] the nation as male," then the disruption of these foundational narratives on 9/11 necessarily implies a disruption of the masculine identity of the chief writers and actors of these cultural narratives (28). Thus, those who subscribe to the empowering masculinist ideology of self-making must come to terms with the inevitability of their un-doing or *un-making* by forces beyond their control.

Despite his initial efforts, Keith is not able to reconstitute a meaningful masculine identity as husband and father. Instead, he falls back into the ritualized structure of poker, a game governed by the same – albeit sublimated – ethos that had governed his business relations in the workaday world before 9/11. However, as indicated by Conte, Keith is not the only "falling man" in the novel. DeLillo also punctuates his already fragmented narrative with random appearances by a performance artist who, dressed in business attire, flings and dangles his harnessed body over various precipices throughout the city. This performance of Drew's *The Falling Man* represents the return of what was censored and repressed in the triumphalist turn steered by the American media and the Bush Administration after 9/11: the feelings of loss, despair, and existential dread embodied in the images of the "jumpers" falling to their death. Moreover, Michael suggests that like the "performances of the Falling Man within its pages, DeLillo's novel forces its readers to grapple with the ways in which Americans have been complicit with vast, complex, and arguably unjust global economic systems that cannot be totally divorced from the horrific events of 9/11" (77). DeLillo achieves this raising of geopolitical consciousness through cognitive mapping which dramatizes the symbolic resonances of *The Falling Man* and gestures toward not only the domestic strife in gender relations caused by American hegemonic masculinity, but also the larger reality of geopolitical capitalist oppression of which 9/11 was an intrusive material symptom. DeLillo evokes Richard Drew's symbolically charged image to engage with the greater significance of 9/11 as not only signaling the figurative fall

of American economic dominance throughout the world, but also the fall of the mode of self-made masculinity associated with the rise of American capitalism in the mid-nineteenth century.

Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*

Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* explores the effects of 9/11 on the life of Hans van den Broek, an upper-middle class Dutch equities analyst living in New York City. In what has become an established trope in many 9/11 novels, the crisis of 9/11 serves as a catalyst for a trial separation between Hans and his wife, Rachel. When Rachel moves to London, Hans begins to frequent a local cricket club, organized by Chuck Ramkissoon, a Trinidadian immigrant with an entrepreneurial drive to establish cricket as a major sport in the United States. Hans is inspired by Chuck's determination to be a self-made success in America, sharing in his optimism and passion for cricket as a worldly sport. However, Chuck's optimistic American Dream eventually succumbs to economic reality – the disparity between his personal wealth and that needed to fund his entrepreneurial project leads him to a seedy underworld of crime. In *Netherland*, O'Neill foregrounds the disparities between men who occupy hegemonic positions of power in American society and those who struggle to attain similar positions but without the economic resources to do so. Christine Beasley's refocusing of hegemonic masculinity as a political mechanism that uses homosocial discourse to secure male dominance is particularly useful in my analysis of this contrast in characters, since both Hans and Chuck partake in patterns of practice that secure masculine hegemony, but these practices themselves are markedly different, as are the results. In order to further nuance the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Beasley distinguishes between supra- and sub- hegemonic masculinities, the former referring to men who occupy positions of institutional power, and the latter to those who embody more traditional ideals of masculine power based on brute strength and physical intimidation. In these terms, Hans, as a successful equities analyst, represents a supra-hegemonic mode of masculinity, while Chuck, as an aspiring working class entrepreneur who eventually resorts to crime, represents a sub-hegemonic

mode. Thus, in its centripetal orientation, O'Neill's *Netherland* explores the negative effects of these modes of hegemonic masculinity on interpersonal relations between men and women in the United States, with a specific focus on the homosocial tensions that self-made manhood can create between men. However, like the other novels explored in this chapter, the staging of this centripetal narrative against the catalytic backdrop of 9/11 draws parallels between the oppressive economic practices undertaken in the domestic market and those undertaken in the international market in an increasingly globalized world, as emblematized in the character of Chuck.

Netherland begins in the wake of 9/11, which serves as a catalyst for Hans and Rachel's trial separation. But unlike the separation in *Falling Man*, Rachel takes the initiative to leave Hans, citing that they had "lost the ability to communicate" and that "the attack on New York had removed any doubt about this" (29). Furthermore, she reveals that she feels "abandoned" – "you've left me to fend for myself. And I can't fend for myself. I just can't." (29). Rachel's rhetoric of "defenselessness" echoes the gendered responses to the attacks framed in post-9/11 government and media discourse – her feelings of abandonment and vulnerability after 9/11 cause her to question the "narrative of [their] marriage" and, more specifically, her husband's ability to provide her with a sense of masculine protection. Here, Rachel accuses Hans of failing to live up to his role in the institution of marriage as masculine protector/defender in times of crisis. Soon after this revelation, Hans breaks down: "A hooting sob rose up from my chest. I began to gulp and pant. A deep, useless shame filled me – shame that I had failed my wife and my son, shame that I lacked the means to fight on, to tell her that I refused to accept that our marriage had suddenly collapsed" (29). Using an architectural metaphor to describe the failure of their marriage ("collapsed") further aligns this failure with 9/11, and Hans' own emotional collapse further emphasizes his personal sense of "failure" and "shame" at not having engineered and performed a more steadfast masculinity. This passage hardly depicts Hans as embodying any quality associated with hegemonic masculinity; if anything it depicts the negation of any masculine pride or resolve he may have had before the attacks. Finally, Hans articulates his

shame in terms of how it affects his sense of agency: "I felt shame… at the instinctive recognition in myself of an awful enfeebling fatalism, a sense that the great outcomes were but randomly connected to our endeavors" (30). This confession is particularly telling: in the dissolution of his marriage, "the great outcomes" in his life – career, marriage, family – are no longer perceived to be the earned result of his self-made "endeavors," but rather the result of "enfeebling" fate and external contingency.

Before 9/11 and the trial separation, Hans had a "reputation as a guru" in the equities business. However, his accolades receive a mixed reaction from coworkers, all of whom are men: "My colleagues were both pleased and displeased with my achievement. On the one hand it was a feather in the bank's hat, which vicariously sat on their heads; on the other hand the feather was ultimately lodged in my hatband – and the supply of feathers, and the monetary rewards that went with them, were not infinite" (26). Here, it is evident that Hans commands a certain amount of respect from his colleagues, since they collectively partake in an institution that celebrates a sublimated, supra-hegemonic mode of masculine aggression and achievement. But this homosocial reverence only goes so far: Hans' dominance in this competitive industry and his ever-increasing share of the wealth therein, only increases the disparity between himself and his colleagues, thus stirring their envy and resentment. However, despite his position of financial power, Hans is somewhat hesitant in his dealings with Chuck Ramkissoon. While Hans is a great success in the rarefied realm of equities analysis, Chuck represents a man of hardier character, with a physical bearing that is both intimidating and calculating. Chuck embodies the shrewd ethos of the classic American businessman of a by-gone industrial era, his every move situated in a process of determined self-making, as is evident in his first encounter with Hans:

> Chuck valued craftiness and indirection. He found the ordinary run of dealings between people boring and insufficiently advantageous to him at the deep level of strategy at which he liked to operate. He believed in owning the impetus of a situation, in keeping the other guy

off balance, in proceeding by way of side-steps. If he saw an opportunity to act with suddenness or take you by surprise or push you in the dark, he'd take it, almost as a matter of principle. He was a willful, clandestine man who followed his own instincts and analyses and would rarely be influenced by advice – not my advice, that's for sure. (71)

Here, Chuck's characterization borders on a caricature of the devious American businessman – fiercely individualistic and always sizing-up his competition/potential victim. It is also worth noting that this description of Chuck's "deep level of strategy" in business is remarkably similar to DeLillo's description of the ethos behind Keith's poker matches in *Falling Man*, in which "calculated deceit" and "cunning" were employed to "shred the other's gauzy manhood" (97). For Chuck, business enterprise is a similar game of masculine one-upmanship, and considering his relative economic disparity, he is oftentimes depicted as overcompensating in this regard. Thus, through the juxtaposition of these two exemplars of hegemonic masculinity, O'Neill highlights the varied nature of masculine dominance in American business culture, destabilizing the notion that hegemonic masculinity is a monolithic ideal that benefits all men.[34] In this regard, O'Neill emphasizes Chuck's status as a working class immigrant from Trinidad who came to the United States to achieve his own American Dream.

O'Neill underscores the impact of U.S. citizenship exams on Chuck's vision of America, suggesting that they are the source of his heavy-handed pontifications on American myth and ideology. Chuck explains to Hans the origins of the bald eagle as an American icon: "Benjamin Franklin thought the turkey a better choice and considered the bald eagle – a plunderer and a scavenger of dead fish rather than a hunter, and timid if mobbed by much smaller birds – an animal of bad moral character and in fact a coward" (75). But Chuck continues, professing his "love" for the "national bird": "The noble bald eagle represents the spirit of freedom, living as it does in the boundless void of the sky" (75). Here, Chuck's personal addendum comes off as programmatic and artificial, as if he were a mere mouthpiece for American propaganda. However, this can also be read

as an act of subversive dissembling in which Chuck subtly undermines the symbolic resonance of the bald eagle through the interpolation of an historical anecdote – perhaps picked up from his exam studies – before shifting back to the status quo of American patriotism. This can read as one of Chuck's oscillatory strategies to "keep the other guy off balance" so as to suggest that he has a more critical understanding of American history and injustice than what is permitted on a jingoistic citizenship exam. However, despite Chuck's intimation of the contradictions of American culture, his rhetoric and practices throughout much of the novel support his "love" of the American eagle as an ideal of soaring "boundless" freedom, though he eventually succumbs to the more lowly predatory practices denigrated by Franklin.

Along these lines, O'Neill establishes throughout *Netherland* a dichotomy of symbolic images of "boundless soaring" versus "earthly plodding." This dichotomy begins with Chuck's description of the transcendent flight of the American eagle in opposition to Franklin's inverted image of the same icon, and is later manifested in the symbolic contexts of American big business and the sport of cricket. I argue that this recurrent dichotomy ultimately serves to vertically map the socioeconomic disparity between Hans and Chuck. For Hans – already soaring in the rarefied realm of high finance – Chuck's high hopes of upward mobility often seem trite. Whereas Chuck's symbolic rhetoric of ascension and flight serves to mobilize his process of self-making from the ground up, his transcendent ideals motivate his plodding materialist practices undertaken on the *netherland* beneath Hans' privileged feet. As much as Hans recognizes that the "business world is densely margined by dreamers, men almost invariably," and considers himself as an equities analyst to be impervious to such "entrepreneurial wistfulness," he identifies Chuck as occupying a dangerous middle space between the "fanciful and the actual." Hans believes that Chuck's "head wasn't sufficiently in the clouds. He had a view of the gap between where he stood and where he wished to be, and he was determined to find a way across" (104). Although the metaphor of disparity has witnessed a structural slippage here from vertical height to horizontal gulf, the emphasis remains on

Chuck's clear-sighted view of his own economic disparity and his determination to close the gap by mobilizing whatever means necessary, including more violently oppressive practices of sub-hegemonic masculinity.

Hans is eventually swayed into Chuck's business enterprise to build a world-class cricket stadium in New York City. Chuck begins with "Bald Eagle Field" – a stretch of abandoned land he has acquired and converted into a grassy cricket pitch. Chuck is meticulous in his maintenance of this field, making sure that the ground is perfectly level to match the exacting standards required by professional cricket. Hans describes the contingent nature of cricket in contrast to baseball, the all-American sport: "In baseball, essentially an *aerial* game, conditions are very similar from game to game, from ballpark to ballpark… in *earthly* cricket, however, conditions may be dissimilar from day to day and from ground to ground" (148 emphasis added). Here, the symbolic dichotomy identified above is introduced to sport, characterizing American baseball as an "aerial" game which fosters immutable playing conditions in which the ball soars unimpeded through the sky, whereas "earthly" cricket is subject to the contingencies of the mutable ground, which serves as an impediment to the ball's soaring trajectory, causing haphazard bounces and sudden changes in direction. Chuck's association with the "earthly" sport of cricket once again aligns him with the unstable conditions that characterize the lower grounds of the socioeconomic hierarchy – his struggle to be a self-made success within these conditions requires him to anticipate impediments along the way, and to roll and work with the bounces.

Despite the lingering socioeconomic disparity between Hans and Chuck, they are bonded by a shared homosocial discourse or "code" that secures their collective hegemony as men, or more specifically, as businessmen. Later in the novel, when discussing his relationship to Chuck with Rachel, she is surprised to learn that they had rarely discussed their troubled marriage. Hans considers the implications of this, and concludes that it's a matter of professional courtesy in the "dealings of businessmen":

> where so many of the brisk, tough, successful men I meet are secretly sick to their stomachs about their quarterlies, are being eaten alive by bosses and clients and all-seeing wives and judgmental offspring, and are, in sum, desperate to be taken at face value and very happy to reciprocate the courtesy. This chronic […] particularly male strain of humiliation explains the slight affection that bonds so many of us […] Chuck observed the code, and so did I; neither pressed the other on delicate subjects. (164)

This "code" appears to secure a homosocial "bond" between businessmen of all types – both young and old, rich and poor – with the uniting crux of this discourse being the muted acknowledgment of a shared underlying masculine plight; a masculinity beleaguered by nagging bosses, wives, and children that leads to a "peculiarly masculine strain of humiliation." Despite this shared discourse, material differences between Hans and Chuck remain, which lead the latter to resort to crime and physical violence in an attempt to close the gap. But Chuck's entrance into the criminal underworld eventually leads to his death, putting an end to his sub-hegemonic project of self-made manhood and his unfulfilled American Dream.

In contrast, following Hans' decision to sever all connections with Chuck after witnessing him carrying out a violent interrogation, his life begins to drastically improve. He reconciles with Rachel and his son, and they take a vacation to India to try to reconnect as a family. However, it is in India where O'Neill offers the most critical representation of Hans and his businessman ethos. Rachel is troubled by the poverty in India, and furthermore by the fact that Hans is "not at all troubled" (221-22). In fact, Hans almost takes pride in his business-like expedience with the local poor: "When I haggled, pro forma, with a lungi salesman, she broke in, 'Oh for God's sake, just pay him what he's asking for'" (222). And he also does not fail to mention that "It was I who had to deal with the fruit hawkers, because Rachel could not bear to look into their mouths, abounding in rotted black teeth, or their eyes, abounding in unthinkable need" (222). Again, Hans is depicted here as insouciant, or even smug in the face of the "unthinkable need" of geopolitical disparity – going as far

as haggling in order to gain an upper hand (as if he did not already have it), almost on a matter of ingrained principle. But Hans is not entirely without moral reflection. He betrays a glimmer of moral conscience when – while on a sleepy morning ride in the safe confines of a car with his son – he notices "movement" at the "edge of the beam" of the headlights:

> Men were walking by the side of the road. They were on their way to work. They walked not in groups but alone, in a broken single file. They were almost unnoticeable, and when they were noticeable it was only for an instant. Some of these men wore a shirt; some did not […] They were small and thin and poor and dark-skinned, with thin arms and thin legs. They were men walking in the forest and the darkness […] For some reason I keep seeing these men. I do not think of Chuck as one of them, even though, with his very dark skin, he could have been one of them. I think of Chuck as the Chuck I saw. But whenever I see these men I always end up seeing Chuck. (230)

Hans' peripheral glimpse of these impoverished men at the edge of the beam, shuffling at the margins of his privileged Western existence, forces an acknowledgment, however fleeting, of Chuck's connection to such poverty as a visible racial minority who immigrated to the United States from a country with a relatively high poverty rate. But in the end Hans does "not think of Chuck as one of them," because he had always admired Chuck's self-made attempt to transcend his humble origins in pursuit of the American Dream. Thus, his brief moral reflection, which only ever skirts the edge of sympathy, becomes subsumed within the predominant death-transcending worldview that sustains American life, including his own: the myth of the American Dream and the meritocratic ideology that obscures the structural inequalities that make its achievement the prerogative of the dominant classes. Thus, Hans' nodding acknowledgement of the peripheral plight outside his window – which is sustained by neoliberal policies that encourage outsourcing practices that readily exploit the "unthinkable need" of these "thin" people and the host nation's lax labor laws – ultimately doesn't lead to a moral reevaluation of American ideology and the practices of supra-

hegemonic masculinity that serve to secure the nation's economic dominance in the world, and his own masculine dominance in interpersonal relations at home. Nonetheless, in this scene, O'Neill traces a cognitive map between Hans' privileged experience in the United States (which is generally unaffected by 9/11, the aftermath of which remains relegated to the background) and the impoverished, almost "unnoticeable" workers (hidden in plain sight) whose drudgery underlies the neoliberal capitalism which sustains that experience. These laborers are desperate, atomized individuals – "walk[ing] not in groups but alone, in a broken single file" – whose life of bare subsistence renders them from autonomous to automatons. Lacking the autonomy of the self-made man and also the solidarity of any communitarian ideal, these men at the "edge of the beam" are the abject working class of the growing international division of labor. And though Hans eventually defects back to England to rejoin his family, his motivations are entirely personal, unlike his wife, who left the United States out of fear but also a sense of moral unease concerning America's place in the geopolitical imbroglio that led to 9/11. Thus, Hans resumes a privileged Western life in Europe, and any sense of national self-righteousness in his decision is undercut by England's (or the Blair government's) unflagging support of the Iraq War to secure Anglo-American hegemony in the Middle East.

Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*

Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* depicts the dissolution of an American marriage, underscoring the socioeconomic disparities that exist between the husband and wife that eventually leads to divorce. The novel opens with 9/11 as a catalytic event. Soon after the attacks the reader learns of the married couple's underlying strife and specifically that their arguments were "subsumed by a single point of disagreement: money," with Marshall's "substantially larger" salary as a day

trader being a major point of contention (5). Kalfus' novel is predominantly a satire in which marriage is routinely characterized/caricatured through the rhetoric of war and terror, a perfect instantiation of the centripetal/centrifugal dialectic foregrounded in this study, with domestic crisis frequently aligned with the American-led War on Terror and the Israel/Palestine conflict. However, there are also moments in the novel that reveal an underlying sensitivity and regret in Marshall, interior monologues that betray a yearning for a diplomatic resolution. But these fleeting moments remain inside, with Marshall unable to move beyond a tough and resolute ideal of supra-hegemonic American masculinity. Kalfus' alignment of domestic gender conflict with the greater geopolitical conflicts associated with 9/11 reveal that hegemonic masculinity is deeply engrained in American culture, leading to oppressive relations between men and women on the domestic homefront that end in marital strife and divorce, while also influencing the nation's hegemonic foreign relations, which resulted in the backlash of 9/11 and its aftermath. Thus, in Kalfus' novel, interpersonal and international planes of action directly converge through the narrative lens of 9/11.

Kalfus' novel begins on 9/11, with Joyce witnessing the collapse of the World Trade Center, an event which – inconsistent with the surrounding shock and terror – gives her a feeling of "great gladness" (3). The reader soon learns that Marshall worked on the eighty-sixth floor, a fact that stirs within Joyce a "protracted struggle against the emergence of a smile" (3). Joyce rejoices in the prospect of her husband's death on 9/11 because she and Marshall are already well into the process of spiteful divorce. As mentioned above, their central point of contention has been reduced to money: Joyce feels cheated by the fact that Marshall earns a "substantially larger" salary than her own, especially since Joyce had "twice changed careers and had twice interrupted them to give birth" (5). Here, Joyce cites her disdain for compromising her financial independence and success in fulfillment of the gendered expectations of patriarchal marriage, and the attendant influence of the doctrine of separate spheres on the handling of childbirth and rearing. Moreover, Joyce later reveals that her marital resentment began on the very day of their wedding, when, despite her specific

request that the word "obey" be removed from her vows, and then having practiced them without this word every time, the minister decided to reintroduce the word on the day of the wedding: "Joyce had replied "I do," and had immediately hated herself for it, and hated Marshall too" (103). Thus, behind the major issues that jeopardize their marriage are the structural and financial inequalities perpetuated by American gender relations, and more specifically by Marshall's complicity in maintaining masculine hegemony. Thus, when they finally reach an impasse in their divorce proceedings, they hire "individual lawyers, a woman for Joyce, a man for Marshall," emphasizing the centrality of sex and gender in their marital discord.

Kalfus is quick to align Joyce and Marshall's marital strife with greater geopolitical conflicts, using the rhetoric of war and terrorism to characterize their troubled domestic relations. Marshall (whose name connotes a military "marshal," perhaps in the process of "marshalling troops" for war) characterizes what he sees as Joyce's destructive influence on their family using an architectural metaphor that indirectly aligns her actions with the terrorist attacks on 9/11: "Her pettiness and irrationality had brought the entire structure of their lives down on their heads, down on the heads of their kids" (6). And later, Joyce also evokes an architectural metaphor that aligns their failed marriage with one of the World Trade Center towers: "The spectre of her marriage rose up before her, a tower one hundred stories high" (45). But their strife proliferates beyond the expressive confines of these architectural metaphors, which would otherwise limit symbolic resonance to the context of 9/11. Rather, their interpersonal conflict is conceived in global terms: "Feelings between Joyce and Marshall acquired the intensity of something historic, tribal, and ethnic, and when they watched news of wars on TV, reports from the Balkans or the West Bank, they would think, yes, yes, yes, that's how I feel about you" (7). The conflation of marital and geopolitical conflict continues when Joyce – while mid-sex with one of Marshall's friends – notices several books on her husband's night table: "relationship books and histories of the Middle East: *Winning Divorce Strategies; The*

Ottomans Break Up; New York State Family Law for Dummies; Partition and Exile; How to Keep the House, the Money, the Kids, and the Homeland; The Great Game; Screw Your Ex!" (87).

Joyce's infidelity signals a moving beyond the mere use of hyperbolic rhetoric to articulate marital frustration. Both Joyce and Marshall eventually resort to acts of domestic/interpersonal terrorism to gain an upper-hand. In addition to her infidelity, Joyce also falsely incriminates Marshall in a local anthrax scare. Marshall, on the other hand, after being locked out of the bathroom, defecates in their kitchen sink (which she quizzically overhears as a "series of explosive, hydraulic sounds"), and, in an absurdist scene near the end of the novel, he carries out a botched suicide bombing in their home (53).

But despite their marital discord, there are moments in the novel that indicate an underlying desire to reconcile. From the beginning, Marshall chides himself for his "inability to expunge the memory of having loved her once as romantically as he hated her now" (6). And later he reveals that "even now the marriage didn't seem like a mistake," and instead attributes their current strife to their decision to have children: "he knew that he and Joyce had been happier before they were parents – he couldn't even remember what they had argued about before they were parents" (70). And later still, when Marshall's lawyer (whose smile is "mocking, cruel, and carnivorous") inquires into the possible origins of Joyce's anger, Marshall replies: "I can't say she's entirely wrong. I *can* identify the causes of her anger, but once I do, even to myself, it's almost like justifying them – and that makes me *weak*" (150 emphasis added). Here, Marshall reveals his key problem: he is unable to accept responsibility for his own indiscretions and apologize, because in his mind this would betray weakness. Marshall's obstinacy can be paralleled to the nation's indignation under the sway of the Bush doctrine and its reluctance to admit a degree of complicity in the backlash leveled against the American government for its geopolitical injustices (both past and present) – especially for its oppressive domestic and foreign policies, which would only be amplified after 9/11 through the USA Patriot Act and the War on Terror, both of which target Arabic peoples as potential criminals at

home or abroad. Marshall's lawyer is quick to take up the dangling thread of gender in this admission, immediately refocusing Marshall's attention on their sex life, specifically in terms of identifying their power relation in bed. When Marshall substitutes his lawyer's use of "sex" with "making love" in his response, the latter chastises Marshall: "You're a fool… You're still in love! You're seeing Joyce *romantically*! ... Listen to me, Marshall, she wants to ruin your life. She wants to separate you from your kids. She wants to separate you from your *balls*" (152). Marshall's lawyer seeks to exacerbate the tension between husband and wife, and he does so through the use of rhetoric that exploits the very gender issues that brought Marshall to his office in the first place, specifically preying upon what he perceives as Marshall's softened masculinity. In this sense, as a professional who is exploiting Marshall's weakness for profit, turning "the full contemptuous force" of his "compellingly raw" gaze on his client, his "blunt, bald head like a missile," Marshall's lawyer is perhaps the epitome of hegemonic masculinity in the novel, displaying both supra- and sub-hegemonic tendencies in his dealings with Marshall. In fact, this encounter reveals that hegemonic masculinity can have a detrimental effect not only on women, but also on other men. Nonetheless, despite his lawyer's criticism, Marshall leaves the office with a newfound confidence, which, it is suggested, is actually the result of his lawyer's rhetorical punches. Marshall views his chastisement as an edifying homosocial experience, "an education in rigorous self-interest" (153). That Marshall views the experience as a moment of homosocial bonding is confirmed by his virile attitude upon leaving the office: "Marshall's giddy impulse to ask the lawyer if he was having sex with the receptionist was quickly suppressed. He had intended to use, ridiculously and uncharacteristically, the word *balling*. He went through the reception area past her with his own eyes averted, except for a single reckless moment. In that moment he knew with total certainty that the lawyer was having sex with her" (154). Here, after their homosocial exchange, Marshall adopts the masculine assertiveness and discourse of his lawyer, specifically his sexually potent verbs, substituting "balling" and "sex"

for his chastised and impotent "love." Of course, his knowing with "total certainty" that a sexual exchange took place is illusory at best, a part of the practice of making the masculinist myth real.

Despite Marshall's insecurities, he does come to a greater moral awakening when he escapes the World Trade Center on 9/11. Earlier in the novel, Kalfus reveals that on 9/11 Marshall "nearly learned… the exact lines and patterns that connected him occultly to every stranger in the world" (38). Shortly thereafter, in the midst of an anthrax scare, Marshall comes to a more definite existential epiphany:

> …we lived hardly aware of our connections with each other. We maintained elaborate fantasies of our autonomy, the idiotic belief that we created meaning in ourselves. He understood very well now. The automobile traffic, the subways, the telephone, e-mail, the fuel-laden jetliners dangling above our heads, the U.S. Postal Service: all this held us in a fragile, shimmering, spidery web of meaning. A single act of malice could rip it apart. We held each other's significance in our hands. (48)

Here, Marshall interrogates Western individualism and its "elaborate fantasies" of personal "autonomy," the axiomatic principle that motivates the self-made man to single-handedly create (or so he believes) the conditions that will guarantee his own prosperity and self-fulfillment. Since Marshall's brush with death on 9/11, he is able to see through this American myth, and recognize the connections and dependencies that people share with others. But why, after having come to this existential awakening, does Marshall fail to apply this meaningful moral outlook to his marriage? Why does he fail to recognize the mutual dependencies that he and Joyce share? Quite simply, Marshall's epiphany alone cannot transcend the underlying gender assumptions that condition his everyday patterns of masculine practice. Though he comes to the rational realization that he is fragile and dependent upon others, he still subscribes to an underlying sense of masculine power and autonomy which forces him to deny his own vulnerability. So Marshall's sense of masculine self-making is undercut by the materialist intervention of 9/11, but his resulting sense of corporeal

vulnerability does not lead to a progressive reorientation of his masculinity, but rather, to the stubborn if not confused reassertion of the hegemony he had once exercised, a regression to a mode of masculinity that was clearly not working before the attacks/divorce proceedings. Marshall's denial of corporeal vulnerability and his dependence on others is most evident in one of the final scenes in the novel, when the narrative takes a darker turn.

Near rock-bottom, Marshall decides to go out for a Friday night drink, and eventually finds himself in a drunken, drug-dazed stupor at a house party. He soon notices, amidst the gyrating bodies on the makeshift dance floor, that a young African American man (one of the only non-white party-goers in the room) is being harassed by a man who seems to possess power and authority. Shortly thereafter, the coerced African American begins to strip in front of the other dancers until he is completely naked, swaying uneasily to the pulsating music: "The black youth was entirely naked now, surrounded by white people. Marshall hated looking at undressed men, whether at the gym or in the movies […] the youth maintained a fiercely sullen expression on his face, at odds with his private parts: his testicles had retracted and his uncircumcised dick was left hanging there, no more than a little hooded worm" (214). It is here that Marshall betrays his underlying existential anxiety, one that is intimately related to his sense of masculinity. His fear of "undressed men" can be understood as a greater fear of existential nakedness, of losing his sense of masculine autonomy, of being impotent in the face of external pressures and threats. The other men in the room also exhibit this anxiety through their nervous laughter, and the coercive man responsible for the spectacle mocks the youth, shouting "You call that a cock?" and "What are you, a faggot?" (214-15). This scene depicts a prime example, albeit in an sexualized context, of Judith Butler's critique of the post-9/11 reassertion of masculine invincibility, a gendered exceptionalism that is imparted to male citizens and to the character of the nation in which the self's vulnerability is denied while it is exploited "in others, thereby making [it] 'other to' itself" (41). In what is perhaps the most disturbing scene in Kalfus' novel, the reader witnesses the instantiation of this "violent and self-centered" national

subject on the interpersonal plane of American relations: those who fear and mock the African American's nakedness are denying their own vulnerability while exploiting it in a racialized "other," which presumably establishes a power relation in which their sense of mastery and autonomy is restored and sustained (41).[35] And though Marshall attempts to intercede, he is ultimately ineffective and regrets having even tried – feeling more impotent and hopeless than he did before as a mere passive observer of these exploitative masculine practices. In this sense, Marshall represents a post-9/11 American man who is certainly complicit in sustaining the nation's masculine hegemony, but one who is nonetheless pathetic and fraught with conflicting notions of how he should improvise his own performance of masculinity in his destabilized post-9/11 world – both in terms of his failed role as husband and father, and his general ambivalence as a national subject.

This analysis of three key 9/11 novels written by American men – Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*, and Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* –reveals striking similarities in their representations of post-9/11 American masculinity. These novels share a key narrative feature: they all use the geopolitical crisis of 9/11 as a symbolic catalyst for the dissolution of marriage on the interpersonal plane of narrative action, which subsequently initiates a crisis of masculinity in the male protagonists in which they struggle to come to terms with trauma and a newfound sense of vulnerability and lack of autonomy. The three male protagonists are business professionals who worked in the World Trade Center, and their former sense of "self-made" autonomy is *un-made* on 9/11, since, in the context of these novels, the attacks not only symbolized the fall of globalized American capitalism, but also the ideal of self-made masculinity responsible for its rise as an institution. Thus, the three protagonists featured in these novels are "fallen men," trying to improvise and perform a mode of masculinity appropriate to post-9/11 America. But in the end DeLillo, O'Neill, and Kalfus express a low regard for these post-9/11 American business professionals: Keith shows no sign of redemption in his retreat into the sublimated practices of hegemonic masculinity in poker; Hans eventually reconciles with his wife, but instead of being

humbled by his experience, he continues the exploitative practices that had secured his masculine dominance before 9/11, to the shameful point of applying his ruthless business tactics to the abject poor in India; and finally, though Marshall is perhaps the most nuanced character in terms of moral development, he fails to put what he has learned into practice, and becomes increasingly cowardly and pathetic as the novel progresses, except for the satirical *deus ex machina* at the end of the novel in which he reunites with Joyce and his children, the unlikelihood of which only underscores his ultimate failure. However, despite this rather bleak critique of the post-9/11 American business professional, these novels written by American men tend to focus almost exclusively on white, middle/upper-middle class American men, with the exception of Chuck in *Netherland*. And while these novels also offer representations of the wives of the male protagonists featured therein, these characterizations tend to be secondary and oftentimes peripheral. Therefore, the next chapter will explore three 9/11 novels that feature representations of post-9/11 American masculinity that are more explicitly measured against, or in relation to, post-9/11 American femininity.

Chapter 3: "Falling Men and Tumbling Women"

This analysis of Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2011), Carolyn See's *There Will Never Be Another You* (2007), and Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children* (2007) will extend the critique of the falling man established in the preceding chapter. However, in these novels the falling man is measured against the unsteady rise of women in the public sphere, who are in various stages of transition towards self-made success. Thus, in their centripetal orientation, these novels depict how 9/11 destabilized not only the gender identity of the men responsible for sustaining globalized American capitalism, but also the identity of certain women who had adopted the traditionally masculine business ethos of self-making to survive the neoliberal capitalist job market.

The previous chapter focused on representations of "falling men" – businessmen who worked in or around the World Trade Center on 9/11 – through the perspective of three novelists: Don

DeLillo, Joseph O'Neill, and Ken Kalfus. Using a critical lens crafted from Richard Drew's *The Falling Man* (2001), it examined how these novelists trace the continuities of American masculine "crisis" before and after 9/11, and how they stem from the oppressive patterns of practice perpetuated by neoliberal business masculinity, which is mirrored in American foreign policy. The male protagonists explored in the previous chapter are also characterized in relation to women, with a focus on how their actions lead to the dissolution of their marriages. However, the difference in the novels discussed in this chapter is in the centrality of the main focus: in the preceding chapter the narrative point-of-view is centered through the perspective of the male characters, with the women relegated to the margins (especially in O'Neill; less so in DeLillo and Kalfus), while in this chapter, the male point-of-view is decentered and the women depicted therein take on more significant roles in productive contrast to the male characters (especially in Messud and Waldman). Thus, while the novels in this chapter still critique the "falling man" of post-9/11 masculine hegemony, since such men traditionally embody the capitalist practices that secure the American Dream, these female writers also interpolate, to a greater extent, differences of sex and gender into this context to reveal the ways in which the rise of women in American capitalism has been a "tumbling" progression all along – far before the emergence of the "falling man" of the post-9/11 "crisis" of masculinity – with the regressive gender politics of post-9/11 America only being the most recent setback in a prolonged struggle.

Furthermore, these novelists examine the falling man more specifically within the context of marriage and the problematic gender relations perpetuated therein. Thus, marriage is theorized below in terms of the subsumption of female political agency within/under masculine coverture, and then in the context of the feminist movements that were mobilized against such patriarchal institutions. These writers depict how their male protagonists come to terms with the rise of women, which presents challenges to not only the traditionally masculine claim to the competitive public sphere, but also the masculinist institution of marriage in the private sphere, in which wives traditionally

exercised control over the physical domain of the household, all the while remaining under their husband's protective cover – the figurative roof over their heads. These writers explore how the regressive gender politics of post-9/11 America put this traditional institution to the test, with the depicted gender relations between men and woman revealing that, along with the falling man who signals the decline of American business masculinity, comes the intimately related fall of the masculinist institution of marriage: a falling in of the domestic roof. For this reason, the novelists explored in this chapter decenter the male perspective depicted in the last chapter, and instead reveal the ways in which women constitute this male perspective as its "other," through the destabilization of the self-sufficient masculine subject (as a man, but also as the co-optive masculine "unit" of marriage) and the tensions that arise in the wake of 9/11 concerning traditional gender roles. In the end, these tensions derail the masculinst projects of the male characters in these novels, which brings them to seek new ways of being, though, as concluded in the previous chapter, these alternative modes of masculinity are not always made clear or are simply regressive, ranging from hopeful yet ill-defined new "reasons" and "ways" of being (Waldman), to the rescued homosociality of masculine escapism (See), and finally, to the resumption of the masculine status quo (Messud).

Tumbling Women

The women depicted in these novels experience a different "fall" from the men in their lives, one that pertains to how they are interpellated as gendered subjects in post-9/11 American culture. When George W. Bush campaigned that "W Stands for Women," he put his best feminist foot forward, which in neoconservative terms, is a stride towards configuring "men as dominant, masculine protectors, and women as submissive, vulnerable, and therefore deserving of and in need of men's respect. The ideal self-sufficing unit of private life is therefore the heterosexual nuclear family held together by marriage" (Ferguson and Marso 5). However, before addressing the neoconservative institution of marriage proper, the protective "respect" of the Bush administration's patriarchal

gender ideology needs to be clarified. This ideology of "respect" is decidedly controlling and confining, especially in contrast to the egalitarian "respect" championed by bell hooks in her post-9/11 take on American masculinity. hooks reminds us that "the root of the word 'respect' means 'to look at'" and suggests that "women want to be recognized, seen, and cared about by the men in [their] lives," but in the following way:

> When a man and a woman have promised to give each other love, to be mutually supportive, to bring together care, commitment, knowledge, respect, responsibility, and trust, even if there are circumstances of inequality, no one uses that difference to enforce domination. Love cannot coexist with domination. Love can exist in circumstances where equality is not the order of the day. Inequality, in and of itself, does not breed domination. It can heighten awareness of the need to be more loving. (177)

Rather than the appropriative gaze that characterizes the neoconservative desire to bring women and children under a masculine protective bearing, this "look" of respect does not exploit the gender inequities of the preexisting system for such self-aggrandizing purposes in order to perpetuate masculine hegemony. Rather, it gives the recognition of love, which acknowledges difference but does not try to subject the other to the self's dominative will. To respect is "to look at" from a distance, but in a way that respects that distance and the difference it holds in view by keeping it open, rather than closing in on the subject and bringing him or her under the protective auspices of patriarchy. Love accepts the inherent loss of self in relationships with others, that one cannot be the other, or subsume the other within the self.

In the sense that neoconservative ideology conceives of the "ideal self-sufficing unit of private life" as the heterosexual married family, an underlying parallel can be drawn here to neoliberalism as it has been theorized thus far. Both neoconservatives and neoliberals champion an ideal unit of self-sufficiency and personal responsibility, and both are decidedly masculine: the former is based on the protective control of the patriarch, and the latter on the aggressive, go-getter

competition of the self-made man. The neoconservative rendition of self-sufficiency is a throwback to not only the protective frontiersman mythos, but also to the assimilative English institution of coverture in which husband and wife were legally considered a single political unit or entity, though the autonomy of this unit was the prerogative of the husband who subsumed his wife under his "cover." Although neoconservatives recognize that husband and wife are now separate legal and political subjects, there remains a nostalgia for the coverture of that gender configuration in which the heterosexual family unit is covered under the protection of the male patriarch. Finally, and most importantly, "central to the logic of masculine protection is the subordinate relation of those in the protected position. In return for male protection, the woman concedes critical distance from decision-making autonomy" (Young 119). In contrast, the self-made man, as explored in the last chapter, is an autonomous male unit that is not directly attached to the heterosexual family and its values (though it often is), but rather acts primarily out of self-interest, exploiting the labor of others. Thus, both the neoconservative patriarch and the neoliberal self-made businessman obfuscate their dependence on others, which is a form of exploitation. These exploited "others" are subsumed under the masculine will: the former elevates his autonomy over his family members in exchange for protection, while the latter imposes his will on those who present him – unwittingly or not – with a business opportunity to capitalize upon, which, it is often speciously argued, occurs in exchange for the "trickle down" creation of greater job opportunities and wealth for all.

Along these lines, the women depicted in these novels find themselves fearful of the contingencies and dangers of the post-9/11 world; however, they seek protection from men who are equally fearful, though reluctant to show it. In this sense, 9/11 is revealed to affect both men and women in a way that mirrors the regressive gender stereotyping circulated in the media after 9/11. Women, who have increased their presence in the professional public space, find themselves seeking patriarchal security and protection in the arms of men, many of whom – in their "softened" post-industrial mode of business masculinity, smartphones in holsters – are unable to live up to the

traditional role of impenetrable protector of the feminized home front, the penetrable frontier. Along these lines, these novels explore how certain men *and* women who pursue(d) the ideal of self-made American success became emasculated after 9/11: women find themselves reverting to traditional gender roles in which they seek a sub-hegemonic mode of masculine protection, while businessmen and male professionals find themselves "falling" in the wake of the attacks – equally fearful and helpless, and thus unable to provide the protection deemed their masculine duty in times of crisis. Furthermore, these novels examine how those men and women who did not measure up to the self-made ideal in the first place – from alienated working class men (Waldman) to alienated housewives (See) – are often already struggling to transition from traditional gender roles to the increasing demands of the immaterial labour market. This transition is complicated by 9/11 when such traditional gender norms are culturally reinforced, leading to dissonance and backtracking. Finally, these novels also depict how men and women differing in race and ethnicity (especially immigrants of Middle Eastern affiliation or appearance) experienced the detrimental effects of the falling man, or the emasculation of hegemonic American masculinity, when the nation's reactionary suppression of mortality salience saw a displacement of vulnerability and death onto "others." In line with Judith Butler, this national denial of corporeal vulnerability, which makes it "other" to the national self by reasserting the solidity (and solidarity) of the nation's masculine protection through heightened domestic security, leads to an ossification of social relations in which movement through porous cultural lines is slowed and hardened by suspicious appraisals of character – interrogations that exploit the vulnerability of others under the remasculinized power of the patriarchal, neoconservative American state.

In opposition to coverture and neoconservative conceptions of protective marriage (further explored below), this study will now emphasize that, just as a husband does not ever really subsume and speak for a wife in marriage, the trope of the falling man cannot "speak" for the women who also fell on that day. Richard Drew's *The Falling Man* (2001), though initially suppressed in the media,

has since garnered currency as a rescued image of the human atrocity beneath the spectacle and rubble of the attacks. But the image of the falling man, which has attained a certain monolithic status in terms of its rescue, is a presence which creates a shadow of its own. What of the fallen women of 9/11? Karen Engle explores another work of art that commemorates those who fell on that day, Eric Fischl's sculpture *Tumbling Woman* (2002).

Fig. 2: Fischl's Tumbling Woman

Fischl's work depicts a falling person of another variety: a naked woman, though one of androgynous physique, "with the musculature of a man, breasts sculpted almost as an afterthought" (Engle 11). *Tumbling Woman* depicts a woman in a semi-sidelong plunge: legs projected horizontally leftwards, torso wrenched downwards, head craned upwards, as if upon rolling impact with the pavement below. But just as the fatalistic and mournful image of *The Falling Man* was suppressed shortly after its publication, the *Tumbling Women* soon followed suit. Within a week of Fischl's sculpture being

displayed in the Rockefeller Center, during which it was decried in the media for its obscenity and insensitivity, the *Tumbling Woman* was first, in an oddly puritanical fashion, covered up with a white sheet, and then forcibly removed from the premises, sent a-tumbling. The *Falling Man* and *Tumbling Woman* point to the differences and yet underlying similarities of masculine and feminine conceptions of death in the context of 9/11, and in the end it is their effectiveness as images of mortality – which suspend the viewer at the threshold of death, a moment which does not privilege or spare either sex – that leads to their suppression. But the gendered differences in these works of art are telling.

Fischl's choice of a female subject and "her" sidelong form (suggesting horizontal continuity) is clearly deliberate, and in stark contrast to the top-down linearity of Drew's *The Falling Man*. Fischl's choice of words in the title is also instructive: "tumbling" is synonymous with "falling," but it is qualitatively different. It designates a specific type of fall, one that does not have the romantic resonances of the tragic Edenic "Fall" evoked in the title and form of Drew's image, which marks a momentous demarcation, a clear line between pre- and post-lapsarian stages of history: between the sense of immortality and totality that constitute the purposeful stride of exceptionalism, and the fall of "man" into mortality, loss, and a nostalgic desire for a reconstituted wholeness. *The Falling Man* is decidedly graceful – even in his fall – in Drew's aesthetic selection of the most poised and symmetrical headlong capture from his series of photographs, with the falling man's mid-step pose suggesting the dissonant inversion of the self-made man's purposeful stride. In contrast, Fischl's "tumbling" woman conveys not only the headlong plunge of the falling man, but also a sense of sidelong "rolling," if not in a tumultuous fashion, all of which is suggested by the torsion of the twisted form of the *Tumbling Woman*.[36]

The aesthetic choices in naming a work – which conveys something of the work's form and content, either in verisimilar agreement or counterpoint – can speak volumes. There is a decadent gracefulness to a "fall," whereas a "tumble" implies a crudity, a roughness of movement, perhaps the

result of blunt force or physical violence, and the form of the respective works under consideration here correlate with these titular distinctions. When measuring the male and female characters explored in these novels against these contrasting gendered depictions of the fallen of 9/11, we come to realize that American gender roles, both before and after 9/11, are simply not working – fatally so. *The Falling Man* and *Tumbling Woman* should be read together, forming a relational whole, the significance of which suggests a general state of decline in traditional American gender relations, these falling and tumbling figures representing an underlying continuity of gender practice that seems to lead to violence and death. *The Falling Man*, as a masculine image of the crisis of 9/11, suggests the "fall" of an ideal figure to the ground, which occurs from an exalted height of masculine economic power, a vertical drop in hierarchy that is reflected in the relatively linear form of the figure therein. Such verticality and its attendant ways of thinking, charted in the hierarchies of upward and downward mobility, traditionally occurs in the vacuum of an elevator, which does not permit a horizontal view of the historical context in which such vertical hierarchies are erected and sustained (of course the falling man is no longer safely ensconced within, but is plunging without). The twisted sidelong posture of the *Tumbling Woman* serves as a formal contrast to *The Falling Man*, suggesting a horizontality.

The struggle for success in American capitalism for woman has been ongoing, perpetual, a horizontal continuation of movements. In Fischl's *Tumbling Woman*, the tragedy of 9/11 is directly figured as a contorted woman, her sidelong form misshapen by the forces of misogyny over the ages, and most recently by the effects of 9/11 as yet another obstruction on that fraught and distorted path toward greater gender equality. This is conveyed in the masculinized musculature of the woman depicted, whose path towards socioeconomic equality and success requires the donning of a masculine bearing in order to compete in a capitalist culture that perpetuates hegemonic masculinity.

Although Engle does not explicitly address gender in her analysis, I will reveal how a centrifugal orientation of gender critique underlies her reading of the *Tumbling Woman*, which

complements my centripetal reading above. Like *The Falling Man*, the *Tumbling Woman* can serve

as a sort of *memento mori* (a topic explored further in the Afterward), suspended at the limit of life

and death, which suggests the inevitability of future violence and death to come. But it is here that

Engle implicitly addresses the relevance of gender, in her criticism of the Bush administration's

exploitation of this fear of "inapprehensible horrors to come," in its obfuscatory suggestion that the

violence of 9/11 was unprecedented and only "promise[s]" more violence from the other, which

legitimizes the nation's own imposition of domestic violence in the security measures that enact the

"new normal" of constant masculine vigilance. Engle argues that to

> accept that this promise of violence is new and something up-til-now *unseen* and
>
> *unexperienced* requires that entire histories of colonization, government coups, American
>
> militia-training, and so on be utterly effaced − excised from memory. This is the terror
>
> alluded to by *Tumbling Woman's* liminal state. Her horror as a monument − an object of
>
> commemoration and remembrance − rests in her revelation that we have not yet seen all that
>
> remains to be remembered and that we will fail to see everything that has taken place. (19)

Here, Engle suggests that to construe the violence of 9/11 as unprecedented, as something entirely

new, is to suppress the history of imperialist/colonialist Euro-American violence, of which 9/11 was

a symptomatic backlash. In her horizontal "liminal state," the *Tumbling Woman* elicits in the viewer

questions of continuity/contiguity and asks the viewer to contemplate the greater context of which

she is a significant part: from what contextual scene of violence does her current "tumble" unfold,

and towards what speculative future of violence is still yet to come?

In the sense that masculinist violence is imposed on American women within the nation,

Fischl's *Tumbling Women* takes on a dialectical (centripetal and centrifugal) critique of American

hegemonic masculinity by portraying the complexity of ill effects that 9/11 has had on American

women. The sculpture is not only a testament to the fact that women also fell to their death from the

World Trade Center, whose presence therein marked the progress of women in the public realm of

professional labor, its depiction of the fall of these women in the context of 9/11 also presages yet another setback in what has been a tumbling act all along – a back and forth of purposeful feminist strides and attendant masculine backlashes. Finally, the cultural response to the attacks that occasioned the *Tumbling Woman* is to provide the feminized nation with masculine protection within a "structure of superiority and subordination," enacting a "chivalrous" form of violence against women on the home front in order to combat the backlash of American hegemony in the Middle East, a structural logic that works as a centripetal and centrifugal force of masculine domination that has legitimized colonialist ventures in the past (Young 135). Thus, along with an extension of the framing image/trope of *The Falling Man*, I will also examine American femininity in the context of 9/11 through the lens of the *Tumbling Woman*, suggesting that the women in these novels vacillate between both internal and external pressures to regress and conform to traditional notions of femininity, evincing/dissembling a vulnerability that seeks a masculine protection that is not provided by the emasculated "fallen" men in their lives. These novels explore the complex negotiations of gender performance in the United States after 9/11, suggesting that the regression to the traditional configuration of masculine protector of the feminine home front results in a dissonance of American gender identity that often leads to seething resentment or violence toward the other. Thus, rather than depicting the cultural invocation of the traditional protective gender binary as a success, these novels depict its adverse effects on its proverbial Jacks and Jills, leading to only more falling and tumbling as each fails to live up to his or her respective gender roles.

So while these novels still focus predominantly on representations of falling men, they also configure them in relation to a female foil: women who represent various stages of "tumbling" femininity after 9/11, and who thus trace the (dis)continuities of women's movement towards greater equality, which, in their gains and setbacks, have tumbled through and against various obstructions and impediments along their path. Thus, along with an extension of the critique of falling men established in the previous chapter, these novelists also interrogate the effects of an ideal subject of

neoliberal postfeminism, whose rise has contributed to a sense of masculine "falling" or crisis for certain men both before and after 9/11, revealing the ways in which certain "self-made" men are unmade by the success of "others" in the traditionally male dominated world of business and politics. Finally, along with such figurative examinations of masculine "falling," these novels also foreground material decline or the corporeal vulnerability of men traditionally associated with hegemonic masculinity, a fact of embodiment that all humanity shares but which the masculinized post-9/11 national subject has repressed in "himself" while projecting it onto others. In this regard, I argue that Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2011), Carolyn See's *There Will Never Be Another You* (2007), and Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children* (2007), continue to extend a dominant "falling man" trope in post-9/11 American fiction, all the while articulating this fall against the conflicted, "tumbling" rise of women in American capitalism.

American Marriage: From Coverture to Companionate

In his study of American marriage, *The Marriage-Go-Round* (2009), Andrew J. Cherlin argues that the United States upholds some of the most fervent and tenacious beliefs on the sanctity of marriage, despite a divorce rate nearing fifty percent. Despite such beliefs (or perhaps because of them), American culture also continues to embrace an ideal of individualism that would seem at odds with the institution of marriage. For this reason, Cherlin argues that "marriage and individualism form a contradictory pair of models" in American culture (9). By the time of the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, this contradiction had been reconciled through the institution of "coverture," a marriage configuration derived from English common law in which husband and wife were legally considered to be one person. But of course this "person" was actually the husband: "A wife could not sue or sign legal documents without her husband's approval" and "her assets and earnings became his property" (43). Such ideological maneuvering preserved the illusion of individual freedom in American culture, in harmony with marriage, since man and woman could simultaneously be

married while also functioning as an autonomous individual unit. But such abstractions served to obfuscate the fact that the autonomy of the married unit was actually the prerogative of the husband, whose personal agency was left intact while that of the wife was relinquished to and co-opted by the husband. Thus, the hierarchy of power that developed out of the American colonial era was as follows:

> wives (and implicitly children) consented to the rule of law by the family head just as the (white) family head himself consented to the rule of law in the American republic. To be sure, the husband ruled more like an enlightened despot than an elected official. But to most people, it seemed natural that the husband should be the head of the family. He became the crucial intermediary between the state and the other members of the family. (48)

Here, marriage under the influence of the doctrine of coverture is articulated in terms of masculine hegemony: not only did wives and children *consent* to masculine rule, they also believed such relations to be *natural*. Furthermore, it is important to note that patriarchs served as the "crucial intermediary" between the state and family, forming a patriarchal homosociality that indicates an intimate connection between familial structural practices of governance and those that operate at national and transnational levels. Michael Kimmel makes a distinction between "public patriarchy" and "domestic patriarchy," with the former referring to the "institutional arrangements of a society" which guarantee "the predominance of males in all power positions within the economy and polity, both locally and nationally, as well as the 'gendering' of those institutions," and the latter to the "emotional and familial arrangements in a society," such as "the ways in which men's power in the public arena is reproduced at the level of private life," including "male-female relationships as well as family life [and] child socialization" (146). The dialectical transposition of interpersonal family relations under domestic patriarchy to the (inter)national relations of public patriarchy, and vice versa, sees the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity in those microcosmic family units that end up constituting the macrocosmic character of the American nation. It is precisely this dialectical

transposition of hegemonic masculinity in post-9/11 American culture that I argue is interrogated in 9/11 American fiction, which foregrounds the connection between oppressive practices in centripetal domestic relations and centrifugal foreign relations.

Coverture served to secure masculine hegemony in industrial-era America, promoting a gender configuration that permitted men to exercise a mode of "utilitarian individualism" in the public realm in order to secure "self-made" success. Thus, while this version of marriage was in place to secure the self-made ambitions of men, in the process it not only excluded women from active participation in the public realm, it also took for granted the domestic labor of wives that enabled the "self-made" success of their husbands. Micki McGee notes that the "myth of the self-made man relied, to a very great extent, on the suppression of women's ambitions for the sake of those of their husband and children... the actual labor and material sacrifices of mothers and sisters supported sons and brothers in their aspirations to upward mobility" (37). McGee's emphasis on this gendered contradiction of the self-made man – that the "independence" behind this ideal in fact obfuscates the actual dependence of such men upon the unacknowledged work of women – is the other gendered side of the contradictory ethos of "self-making": not only is the ostensible independence of the self-made man actually dependent on the homosociality of hegemonic masculinity in the public sphere (as explored in chapter 1), it is also dependent on the domestic labor of women in the private sphere. Thus, the "success of the myth itself required the suppression, if not the repression, of the role of women in male self-making" (38). The suppression of the role of women was facilitated by the institution of coverture in traditional marriage: "as long as there was only one true individual per marriage, there was no conflict between individualism and marriage. It was when the dominance of the husband (in law and in culture) began to fade that conflict emerged. That didn't begin to happen until the mid-nineteenth century and gathered steam only in the twentieth" (Cherlin 43). Cherlin suggests that this transition can be traced back to what historian Robert N. Bellah established as a cultural movement from the utilitarian individualism that

proliferated during the industrial revolution and into the twentieth century to the expressive individualism that saw a resurgence in the 1960s, and, as my analysis below will reveal, continues to flourish in postfeminist culture to this day. The masculinist utilitarian individualism of the industrial revolution, which was inspired by what Weber identified as the "Protestant work ethic" and exemplified by more secular self-made men such as Benjamin Franklin, championed the industrious character of a "self-reliant, independent entrepreneur pursuing material success, such as a high position in a corporation or a senior partnership in a law firm" (Cherlin 28). The gendered dichotomy of individualism legitimized by coverture idealized a masculine mode of utilitarian individualism in which

> human life is understood as a struggle in which individuals aim to advance their own self-interest narrowly defined in terms of attaining advantages of wealth and power. Man is understood as an economic animal – *Homo economicus* – an instrumentally rational creature engaged in calculations and strategy to advance his position. Cost-benefit analysis serves as the model for decision-making. (McGee 29)

This "masculine worldview" or death-transcending worldview, in the sense that this orientation assumes an ontological struggle for individual survival, bases its relational capacity with others on an instrumental "cost-benefit" logic of capitalism. This logic positions others in relation to *homo economicus* as objects to be manipulated or exploited for personal gain, denying the economic subject's ontological dependence on the other's recognition, which constitutes, either negatively or positively, masculine subjectivity in the first place.[37] This obfuscatory ontological foundation for self-made masculinity is constructed against the expressive individualism that was deemed the proper worldview for women, which "holds that humans are primarily sensing and feeling creatures, with unique emotional experiences that allow the individual to fuse with others and with nature, to experience a kind of oneness with the cosmos" (29). The key distinction between these utilitarian and expressive modes of individualism is that the masculine mode encourages the formation of an

aggressive capitalist subject who projects his self-interest outwards in an active public struggle for economic self-preservation, *apart from* and against others, while the feminine mode encourages a passive, inward-looking subject of the private sphere whose individualism is unifying rather than antagonistic: in her reverence of the "unique emotional experiences" of the individual subjects who constitute humanity, she respects the alterity of the other by figuring herself as *apart from* but also *a part of* a unity of others. It is precisely this gendered distinction of American individualism – between active/public and passive/private orientations – that is invoked and mobilized (though in transformed ways) in the construction of the neoliberal postfeminist subject. The consumer freedoms deemed the prerogative of American women by neoliberal postfeminism (in actuality a privileged set of women) re-focalize the political aspirations of second-wave feminists in the co-optive, "apolitical" lens of free market capitalism.

Here, the problem is not so much that expressive individualism is invoked, but rather, the ideological ends that its invocation serves. In the context of neoliberal postfeminism, expressive individualism is invoked in a regressive way that, rather than mobilizing its egalitarian tendencies towards greater political action to mitigate masculinist capitalism, focuses on the isolating inwardness of its feminized individualism, which leads to disarticulation and political passivity. Rather than focusing on political alternatives to the fundamental inequities perpetuated by the active aggression of American capitalism and its constitutive mode of hegemonic masculinity – which continues to exacerbate the plight of women in the workforce, despite significant gains made therein – women are admonished to be grateful for their relative success in the public sphere and to express their hard-earned consumer freedom through the products of the marketplace. In this way, neoliberal consumerism is sometimes used as "a safety valve for the excesses of market-driven instrumental rationality," the excesses of which include, in the regressive worldview of conservative masculine hegemony, the accommodation of women in the workplace, which, for all rational and instrumental intents and purposes, is beneficial to capitalism, at least when shorn of its masculine bias (29). Thus,

the expressive individualism offered in the marketplace is a diversionary substitution for feminist political action that is viewed as a threat to hegemonic masculinity in American capitalism.

The transition to expressive individualism began with the advent of American consumer culture at the end of nineteenth century, which itself was the result of the industrial revolution and its production and accumulation of consumer goods. By the 1920s, American culture had achieved a level of material comfort that changed the nature of marriage. This time of increased affluence marked a transition from the doctrine of coverture, in which female agency was subsumed within the masculine married unit, to the more egalitarian companionate marriage in which both subjects were recognized as individuals contributing to the success of family life. Of course, the companionate marriage was still constituted by the iconic gender roles of male breadwinner and female homemaker, and the configuration of relational practices that secured male hegemony in the public realm (Cherlin 68-70). But the change in attitude towards marriage – as companionate and relational rather than masculinist and dominant – saw an increase in the recognition of women's domestic labor and their ability to consume in the marketplace, and an attendant rise in "the emotional satisfaction that husbands and wives obtained from each other and from their children" (83). However, despite the improvements of companionate marriage – which saw its cultural zenith in the 1950s – husbands were still considered the breadwinners and the head of the family, while wives were primarily relegated to the domestic space.[38] It was not until the women's liberation movement, which coincided with the civil rights movements of the 1960s, that women began to actively engage with the lingering oppression of the homemaker role in traditional companionate marriage, or what Betty Friedan identified in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) as "the problem that had no name."

The "first wave" of American feminism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was concerned primarily with securing basic suffrage rights and was established on the liberal premise that autonomy and equality should be granted to all (Budgeon 34). However, these ideals were routinely contradicted in reality, perhaps most visibly in the sociopolitical and economic

disenfranchisement of women, African Americans, and American Indians. The first wave's adopting

of the modern grand narrative of liberalism and its idealized subject of freedom was a success, but

after World War II – during which women had filled many of the public occupations left behind by

male soldiers at war overseas – women began to demand greater access to public freedoms, higher

education and the workplace. Thus, the "second wave" aimed to secure greater socioeconomic

freedom for women, with "an agenda informed by radical and socialist ideologies, which allowed

feminism to extend the borders of political engagement and to enlarge the political agenda by calling

into question, more fundamentally, the structures of capitalism and patriarchy" (Budgeon 34). The

advocacy of early second-wave feminists such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, along with the

more radical incitements of Shulamith Firestone and Valerie Solanas, led to greater media exposure

of feminist aims. Second-wave consciousness-raising introduced feminist concerns into the heated

public debates fueled by the countercultural currents of the late 1960s, and eventually civil rights

legislation in the 1970s led to actual material gains for women in the workplace.

However, as indicated by Angela McRobbie in her analysis of the transition from second- to

third-wave feminism, the former's assumption that the "housewife" or homemaker was the ideal

"subject of attention for feminism" ignored racial, ethnic, and gender differences between women,

and thus sought to improve only the "gender arrangements for largely white and relatively affluent

(i.e. housewifely) heterosexual women" (13). Thus, influenced by the academic movement of

poststructuralism in the late-1960s and 1970s, and the subsequent postmodern turn of late capitalism,

a "third wave" emerged in the 1980s and coalesced in the early 1990s that began to interrogate the

masculinist liberal presuppositions upon which feminism was founded, and the assumed stability and

coherence of the female subject of second-wave feminism. As early as 1981, bell hooks challenged

second-wave feminism and its ideal subject of feminist emancipatory politics by revealing that it

actually privileges white, middle class women and beyond, by forming its gender identity against the

exclusion of black women and other racial, gender, ethnic, and class differences – ultimately

perpetuating white masculinist patriarchy in capitalism. In a polemical passage from a more contemporary work, bell hooks takes Susan Faludi and Susan Bordo to task for their "class privilege," which has contributed to their success at the expense of "the work of feminist women of color" who have critiqued the underlying class disparity that affects both men and women, which is perpetuated by not only hegemonic masculinity, but also second-wave feminism (99). Referring specifically to Faludi's *Stiffed* (1999), hooks claims that

> it is disingenuous of her […] to act as though the liberation movement that women created to confront their 'problem with no name' addressed women cross class lines. Feminist movement has had very little impact on the masses of working-class women who were in the workforce prior to the movement and who still remain there, just as dissatisfied and discontent with their lot as the men in their lives. (100)

Here, hooks argues that third-wave feminism – and its often neglected predecessor, the "visionary feminism" of certain feminist writers of color – works to destabilize the class assumptions perpetuated by second-wave feminism, suggesting that the second wave aligns itself too closely with the classist pursuits of capitalistic hegemonic masculinity.

Following hooks' lead, in the early 1990s academic feminists such as Rebecca Walker continued to challenge unified conceptions of a feminist movement, which tended to elide difference in order to favor a white, heterosexual, middle to upper-middle class subject position. In response to this tendency, third-wave feminism sought to destabilize such whitewashed, monolithic conceptions by drawing attention to difference and emphasizing the plurality of choices and subject positions available to women. However, the limits of such individualizing conceptions of "free choice" has become one of the most contested topics in third-wave feminist debate. Such an emphasis on individual choice and the irreducible difference of each *woman* in opposition to a greater unified conception of *women*, risks the depoliticization – or what will be explored below as "disarticulation" – of the concerns that women share (or can share) in common. So, as an academic movement, the

third-wave's focus on difference and individual choice necessarily broadens and expands the representational horizons of feminist identity politics, which can be viewed as a reflection of the continued success of feminist aims; however, its focus on women's newfound individual agency, sometimes at the expense of a unified political orientation, is a position that has been co-opted at times by postmodern capitalism, which articulates such agency in terms of individual choice offered in consumer markets, a choice deemed the prerogative of the neoliberal postfeminist subject. Thus, third-wave feminism has had to engage critically with a regressive social movement, fueled by postmodern capitalism, that puts forward a postfeminist worldview that often leads "to co-optation, to the dilution of a critique that demands more radical social change, and to the advancement of neoliberal   governance" (Budgeon 48). Thus, third-wave feminism is poised between two orientations: it is a critical engagement with the contradictory socialist leanings of second-wave feminism, which actually privileged certain white women, while also critiquing the social movement of postfeminism, which is guided by neoliberal capitalism's co-optation of feminist notions of freedom and choice in order to disarticulate political movement, and which offers in its place a consumer citizenship that actually serves to support the economic and political structures that perpetuate hegemonic masculinity.

Along these lines, the next section of this chapter will explore how the socialist politics of second-wave feminism – which were critical of patriarchal capitalism while also perpetuating inequities of its own among women – was co-opted by neoliberal academics and politicians in the 1970s and 1980s. During this time, women's political freedom was increasingly articulated in the context of the capitalist workplace and marketplace, oftentimes conflating the sociopolitical freedom to choose a suitable career and partner for marriage or companionship with a consumer-motivated freedom to exercise agency and seek feminine definition through choices offered in the marketplace. This new feminist "empowerment" achieved in the context of consumer choice eventually led to the "postfeminist" culture debated in popular media in the 1990s and beyond (Tasker and Negra 19).

Postfeminism was articulated as an orientation that distanced itself from past feminisms (especially "shrill" second wavers), which were viewed as doctrinaire and limiting, and instead embraced consumer culture and the expression of femininity offered therein. Though varied in character, postfeminism is anchored in the basic premise that the feminist moment is over, that emancipation for women has been achieved, suggesting that "it is the very success of feminism that produces its irrelevance for contemporary culture" (Tasker and Negra 8). However, third-wave feminists, such as Shelley Budgeon, argue that such "dismissal[s] of feminism [are] selective and in this context feminist values are often strategically deployed to support political aims that are not consistent with feminist objectives" (10). Thus, the postfeminist expressive individualism of postmodern capitalism ultimately articulates women's freedom in neoliberal terms, which assumes a transcendent "feminist" subject unconstrained by factors of gender, race, ethnicity and class, and who is thus free to make choices in the marketplace, when in reality postfeminism actually reinforces a minority of women who are already privileged (predominantly white and middle to upper class) (McRobbie 28-29).

The novels explored in this chapter undertake a broad third-wave critique of the class privilege of certain white women who undertake oppressive practices of hegemonic masculinity in order to secure an entrepreneurial political career, often at the expense of others (epitomized by governor Geraldine Bitman in Waldman's *The Submission*). The texts also critique the privileged elite daughters of wealthy patriarchs whose postfeminist sense of entitlement leads to the pursuit of a consumer citizenship that focuses on maintaining an affluent lifestyle. This keeping up of appearances is secured through marriage to disingenuous "self-made" suitors rather than the pursuit of sociopolitical independence (evident in the infantilized women in Messud's *The Emperor's Children*). Finally, in their third-wave critique, these novels explore the detrimental effects of the regressive gender politics enacted by the Bush administration after 9/11, suggesting, in opposition to *post*feminism, that the need for clear-sighted feminist critique is more important now than ever.

The Neoliberal Postfeminist American Dream

Theorizing neoliberalism in the context of 9/11, Wendy Brown destabilizes the myth that the attacks were an unprecedented act of violence, which necessitated, in the name of national security, a retrenchment of democratic freedoms and gender relations at home, and diplomatic geopolitical relations abroad. Rather, she suggests that a political process of "de-democratization" had been well underway in the United States before 9/11, tracing its origins to the advent of neoliberalism and the subsequent imbrication of neoliberal fiscal conservatism on the domestic front with a neoconservative foreign policy that touted American moral superiority and embraced militarism (the religious/capitalist/nationalist American exceptionalism of the Reagan administration). Thus, Brown's post-9/11 political writing focuses less on

> the ostentatious clear-cutting of democratic institutions represented, for example, by elements of the USA Patriotic Act, court stripping, regressive tax schemes, certain practices of Homeland Security, anti-immigrant policies, or corrupt electoral practices than with the hollowing out of a democratic political culture and the production of the undemocratic citizen. This is the citizen who loves and wants neither freedom nor equality, even of a liberal sort; the citizen who expects neither truth nor accountability in governance and state actions; the citizen who is not distressed by exorbitant concentrations of political and economic power, routine abrogations of the rule of law, or distinctly undemocratic formulations of national purpose at home and abroad. (692)

Here, Brown suggests that rather than focus on 9/11 as a disruptive event that created the perfect conditions for a politically malleable citizenry (which certainly holds some truth), it is important to focus on the underlying continuities that predisposed the population to sociopolitical complacency, apathy and ignorance, the preexisting ideological and material conditions that fostered an undervaluing of democracy. As opposed to Butler's focus on the emergence of a post-9/11 national subject who embodies a resurgent masculinism which jeopardizes democracy at home and abroad –

whom I argue coexists, or can be conflated with, the transnational businessman, a subject of supra-hegemonic masculinity who practices a sublimated form of masculine domination – Brown shifts the focus from such dominant modes of hegemonic masculinity to the other half of this equation: the "undemocratic citizen" or the national subject whose tacit consent secures masculine hegemony.[39] Neoliberalism, in its atomizing focus on personal responsibility and independence, rather than social and political dependence, undervalues the basic freedoms that constitute democratic institutions and the welfare state. Instead, neoliberalism conceives of freedom within the contexts of free markets, and "produces the citizen on the model of entrepreneur and consumer," and though not explicitly stated by Brown, these models are gendered, despite the overlap that occurs between them (705). The entrepreneurial neoliberal subject is idealized in the transnational businessman and his exercising of socioeconomic and political freedom in the context of global capitalism, whereas the consumerist neoliberal subject is idealised as an urban, middle-class and above, postfeminist female consumer, whose disposable income allows her to exercise a socioeconomic freedom based on conspicuous consumption, while relegating political freedom to the periphery. Thus, these gendered neoliberal subject positions champion two inequitable modes of freedom: a mode of production tied to masculine political hegemony because generated by homosocial business practice, and a mode of consumption (though women's productive power is also on the rise) whose relative lack of political power can be seen as an attempt by patriarchal capitalism to appease, contain, and ultimately co-opt the more radical/socialist advances of second-wave feminism. The masculine position is constructed in opposition to the feminine position in order to maintain tacit consent to masculine hegemony: the increasingly "apolitical" consumption habits of the latter is a sort of "sexual contract" of the private/interpersonal sphere that substitutes for the public political efficacy of the social contract, which is preserved as the prerogative of the former. McRobbie suggests that this

> encourages activity concentrated in education and employment so as to ensure participation
>
> in the production of successful femininity, sexuality and eventually maternity. The

commercial domain requires that young women prioritise consumption for the sake of sexual intelligibility and in the name of heterosexual desire, and this in turn intersects with and confirms the neo-liberal turn by contemporary government [...] with its emphasis […] on consumer-citizenship. (90)

The "consumer-citizenship" on sale in the marketplace, in which choices in female consumption secure sexual intelligibility in the context of heterosexual desire, often secures hegemonic masculinity in its replication of the traditional gender hierarchies that underpin "heterosexual desire." Recalling Connell and Messerschmidt's observation that hegemony does not "mean violence, although it [can] be supported by force; it [means] ascendency achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion," tacit consent to masculine hegemony is negotiated through the sexual contract of the marketplace, a process by which a capitalist culture uses its economic institutions to manipulate consumer habits and identities in a way that will encourage women to embrace a persuasion of femininity that does not pose a real threat to the patriarchal structure of heterosexual gender relations and its attendant political hierarchies (832). The rejoinder of postfeminism to such conceptions of consumer victimization suggests that the choices offered in the marketplace can have subversive potential in the subject's active, critical performance of the sexual identities consumed therein. However, while it is true that every woman inevitably brings an idiosyncratic particularity of character and performance to such identities (even unintentionally), politically subversive critiques are rarely offered on the shelves and racks of the marketplace itself, which, if it ever veers in this direction, tends to offer co-opted forms of palatable rebellion, hollowed of substantial political content, and generally inoffensive to popular middle-class tastes.

This marketization of traditional, liberal conceptions of autonomy and choice inevitably comes to characterize contemporary American democracy itself. This neoliberal rendition "is equated with the existence of formal rights, especially private property rights; with the market; and with voting. Its practice among the people, whether in choosing political representatives, social

policies, or political parties, is effectively reduced to an individual consumer good, little different in kind or importance from other consumer goods" (Brown 703). As discussed in the previous chapter, the confluence of traditional liberalism with neoliberal market ideals was put into material practice in New York City in the 1970s. David Harvey argues that under neoliberalism, New York City was marketed as a cosmopolitan tourist center that celebrated the "narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, and identity," which "became the leitmotif of bourgeois urban culture," while "artistic freedom and artistic licence, promoted by the city's powerful cultural institutions, led, in effect, to the neoliberalization of culture" (47). New York City's "powerful cultural institutions" persuaded the citizenry and lured outsiders to the consumer freedoms offered by the city's "bourgeois urban culture," which led to the trademarked branding of the city itself in the "I Love New York" campaign. At this time, Harvey suggests that "city government was more and more construed as an *entrepreneurial* rather than a social democratic or even managerial entity" (47; emphasis added). Thus, the neoliberalization of New York City saw the institutionalized convergence of municipal law and governance with business interests, and a restructuring of the city's financial and political sectors. Along these lines, Brown states in more general terms that "neoliberal political rationality produces governance criteria [...] of productivity and profitability, with the consequence that governance talk increasingly becomes market-speak, businesspersons replace lawyers as the governing class in liberal democracies, and business norms replace juridical principles" (694). Neoliberal political rationality attempts to assimilate democratic interests to business interests, and the entrepreneurial subject of neoliberalism, a "businessperson" – most often a man, sometimes a women, though both always in power – ultimately secures masculine hegemony by endorsing a neoliberal American Dream of self-made success in the workplace (which glosses over systemic inequalities) and a co-optive ideology of "narcissistic" individual freedom in the marketplace (which leads to political disarticulation). Thus, neoliberalism serves the interests of hegemonic business

masculinity, and when it does accommodate women, it privileges those who are already middle to upper-middle class and beyond.

The nascent neoliberal regime in New York City offered citizens and tourists a type of "consumer citizenship" which soon became a larger national trend that "produce(d) citizens as individual entrepreneurs and consumers whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for "self-care"—their ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions" (694). McRobbie and Budgeon critique the contemporary female/feminine rendition of this increasingly undemocratic, neoliberal consumer citizen in their exploration of the postfeminist subject, a hegemonic ideal of femininity generated in the powerful cultural institutions of New York City to accommodate/co-opt the modest gains and continued demands of second-wave feminism. This co-optation has created a new normative heterosexual femininity that disarticulates and stifles the political aspirations of second- and third-wave feminism. Both masculine and feminine neoliberal subjects – the driven entrepreneur and the sophisticated/refined consumer – are invocations of the self-made man and its ethos of self-making and "self-care," with the former more traditionally aligned with the self-made business aspirations of industrial capitalism, and the latter with the self-care imperatives and admonitions of a more consumer-oriented, post-industrial market capitalism. McGee notes that this gendered binary can be traced back to the expectations of the self-made man: "Often the measure of a man's success was calculated on the basis of his ability to out-earn his wife's capacity for spending, a criterion for success that mirrored the separation of production and consumption, masculine and feminine" (36). However, despite the gendered nature of these subject positions, the two often overlap in contemporary American society: male entrepreneurs are also consumers (metrosexuality being an ostentatious mode thereof), and female consumers are also increasingly able to pursue entrepreneurial careers (often successfully). But as recounted by Mary Roth Walsh, in "Selling the Self-Made Woman" (1979), American women have struggled to attain an equal footing with men for "success [...] in the public world of work" since the late nineteenth

century, when a proliferation of women writers (some of them proto- and first-wave feminists) began to encourage women to enter the workforce in what might be described as an early movement of female self-help writing "from the 1880s to 1910" (53). Frances E. Willard's *Occupations for Women* (1897), Sara Bolton's *Successful Women* (1888), and Florence Wenderoth Saunders' *Letters to a Business Girl* (1908), attempted to counter the gendered assumptions behind the ideal of self-made masculinity depicted in popular culture, such as Horatio Alger's "popular view of mobility during this period," which often depicted "contrasting pictures of heroes and heroines [which] clearly demonstrated the sex role divisions of the day" (54). Alger's "young heroes," who were "usually rewarded with a step up the career ladder and money for some action which crowns a period of hard work and some luck," were often sharply contrasted with his "heroines" who "live[d] a much more circumscribed life" (54).

In recent years, feminist scholars such as Anita Harris, Rosalind Gill, Angela McRobbie, Shelley Budgeon, and Anthea Taylor, have traced and critiqued the influence of neoliberal thought on postfeminism, with a specific focus on the movements' shared values anchored in postmodern capitalism. Gill suggests that the "autonomous, calculating, self-regulating, subject of neoliberalism bears a strong resemblance to the active, free-choosing, self-inventing subject of postfeminism" (164). And since the "subject of neoliberalism" is the contemporary transformation of the self-made man of the industrial era, whose practices of capitalist domination have become increasingly sublimated in corporate markets, the postfeminist ideal can be understood as one of the most recent incarnations of the self-made ethos, celebrating an image of women who are "flexible, individualized, resilient, self driven and self made and who easily follow nonlinear trajectories to fulfillment and success" (Harris 14). Also, like the self-made man, the neoliberal postfeminist subject is envisioned as a transcendental free-agent unimpeded by sociopolitical circumstance, free to choose and reinvent herself through the possibilities of the capitalist market, both as a producer in the workplace and a consumer in the marketplace. More specifically, especially in terms of consumption,

postfeminism champions what Harvey articulates above as the neoliberal "narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, and identity." According to Fien Adriaens, this individualistic tendency

> fits within [the] neo-liberal discourse where women, as 'entrepreneurs', are required to work on and transform the self and regulate every aspect of their sexual conduct. Linked to this changed representation is the shift from sexual objectification to sexual subjectification, from a focus on a powerful male gaze to a self-regulating narcissistic individualistic gaze. In post feminist discourse, emphasis is placed on sexual subjectification, as women are portrayed as active, desiring sexual 'neo-liberal subjectivities.'

Of course, the encouraging of female sexual freedom is not the problem here, but rather its exclusive alignment with neoliberalism, which contextualizes female sexual freedom as a product of the "liberating" marketplace where sexuality can be expressed through the latest fashions. But neoliberalism is a discourse that enables the freedom, sexual and otherwise, of a privileged minority of women while leaving the majority behind to fend for themselves. Nonetheless, Adriaens defends what she identifies as postfeminism's subversive potential:

> Although embedded in neo-liberal society, proclaiming individualistic, late-capitalist consumerist values, post feminist discourse can (paradoxically enough) be considered as a form of non-hegemonic resistance against neo-liberalism and its values […] The emphasis on consumption has often been criticized by second-wave feminists, defining consumers as victims of commodification. Although consumption seems to be an important topic, it is often mocked at and represented with irony, indicating an ambivalence and contradiction typical for post feminism/postmodernism.

Despite this appeal to the "subversive" irony of postmodern consumerism, a major problem with postfeminist discourse – besides its general reassertion of heterosexual power relations – is that neoliberal consumer culture increasingly depends on exploitative outsourced labor to create the products that are consumed domestically en masse. Thus, certain American women, especially those

who understand themselves to inhabit a *post*feminist age of neoliberal freedom – the reality of which would be indebted to second-wave feminists who critiqued and transformed past sociopolitical injustice – are reproducing the very social injustices that once fettered their own gendered existence, albeit now on an international scale. In the context of transnational American capitalism and the international division of labor, consumer products are increasingly manufactured abroad in developing nations, and women are overwhelmingly the main source of cheap labor that is exploited to produce them for neo-liberated Western women. This major contradiction underlies the glossy New York City urban-chic aesthetic of *Sex and the City* and its postfeminist American Dream, the narcissistic complacency of which continues to have ongoing geopolitical ramifications. So what needs to be focused on here is the tacit but telling admission that this supposed postfeminist critique of neoliberalism *is* "paradoxical" and in line with postmodern "ambivalence and contradiction," which actually calls into question its subversive potential. Instead of celebrating the paradoxical, ambivalent, and contradictory surface of neoliberal postfeminism, this enigma should be interrogated further as a symptom of postmodern late capitalism, which – under the guise of diversity and freedom of choice – will pander to, exploit, and capitalize on the differences and complexities of identity politics through niche marketing. Late capitalism will go as far as co-opting criticism leveled directly against it by adopting a postmodern posture of smug self-awareness, which it then markets as an ideal consumer attitude, thus diffusing criticism through a self-reflexive filter of ironic winks and nods – profiting from the very difference it ultimately works to suppress.

So rather than promoting an emancipatory feminist ethic based on the recognition of difference between women (that each woman is *apart* but also *a part*), postfeminist marketing actively works to undo a collective, unified conception of feminism by creating what McRobbie calls political "disarticulation." She defines disarticulation as "a force which devalues, or negates and makes unthinkable the very basis of coming-together […] on the assumption widely promoted that there is no longer any need for such actions," which co-opts and fetishizes a notion of feminine

individual difference, of the *exceptionality* of each woman's different experience, and offers it (often paradoxically) as a mass commodity to be freely chosen and purchased in the marketplace (26). This co-optation of feminist gender politics by neoliberal postfeminism is underpinned by the assumption that since women have achieved a moderate level of success in the workplace, and are thus free to exercise consumer agency, there is no longer a need to pursue a collective vision of feminism; rather, a celebration of difference and the freedom to choose from a plurality of feminine lifestyles should be encouraged. So although the "mainstreaming of many basic feminist aims has converted gender equality into a recognized social good," which has led to actual material gains for some women, the utopian "dismissal of feminism" as a *fait accompli* obfuscates the continuities of disparity and oppression that characterize women's lives (Budgeon 10).

Such postfeminist dismissals can be understood as the regressive, co-optive strategy of the masculine hegemony at the helm of postmodern capitalism – an attempt to disarticulate and defuse/diffuse feminism (especially the socialist variety that is particularly critical of capitalism). Such contradictions do not call for celebration. Late capitalism does not have the postfeminist consumer's best interests in mind, or those of the outsourced laborers who produce the objects of consumption for this consumer. Capitalism has the capitalist's best interests in mind: the bottom line is to make a profit, to capitalize, and the working-class producer making bare-subsistence wages is the greatest victim of exploitation. Thus, the thin questioning of postfeminism made by Adriaens above evades the larger problem stemming from its neoliberal origins: it is founded upon a notion of *consumer* freedom that increasingly exploits working-class *producers* elsewhere – both women and men alike (recall O'Neill's male laborers at the "edge of the beam," trudging "not in groups but alone, in a broken single file," which highlights the disarticulation of labor created by neoliberal capitalism abroad). Such argumentation betrays an almost willful ignorance of the greater transnational context of late-capitalism and thus resembles a thinly veiled apologia for an urban-chic consumer culture that is increasingly predicated on the exploitation of labor abroad – all in the triumphant name of

neoliberated Western postfeminism. Laura Flanders argues that the Bush administration has maintained the neoliberal status quo in American foreign policies on global trade, increasing the "power divide between the world's rich and poor [which is] closely represented by its male and female populations" (xii). Flanders expands upon this observation by revealing that women appeal to Western industry because they "can be paid less than men," reminding us that

> women in developing countries are estimated to occupy between 60 and 90 percent of jobs in the labor-intensive stages of the clothing industry as well as the production of food crops for export. From Wal-Mart, the consumer retailer, to Dole Foods, the global food corporation, suppliers tend to hire a largely female work force and work them longer hours for less pay in unhealthy conditions. These are jobs, indeed, but globalization's 'benefits' are double-edged."
>
> (xiii)

Since transnational American corporations are still largely controlled by men, neoliberal involvement with such institutions – both as producers and consumers – is at worst an active participation in hegemonic masculinity, and at best a complicit association. Thus, the type of postmodern ambivalence and contradiction cited above should not be framed and celebrated as the basis for emancipatory politics, but rather, in line with third-wave feminism, actively critiqued as the very obfuscatory impediment to such freedom. Postfeminist freedom is decidedly insular and ethnocentric, championing only the top side of the neoliberal coin.

But neoliberalism is not only mobilized and sustained by late capitalism, in which privileged Americans reap the benefits of the surplus value exploited from outsourced labor. Neoliberalism is also given currency through war – another prominent feature on the underside of the neoliberal coin. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq – both part of the much larger War on Terror in the Middle-East – are the latest neoliberal ventures in the post-9/11 world. Zillah Eisenstein, in *Sexual Decoys: Gender, Race and War in Imperial Democracy* (2007), draws attention to Clausewitz's notion that war is simply politics in another form. Eisenstein explores the deeper implications of his theory,

beginning with the premise that "war is an act of violence: to compel one's opponent to succumb to one's will […] is a form of 'human competition' much like business" (10). Eisenstein then quotes Clausewitz's formulation of war as "a carrying out of commerce," which "likens business competition to political intercourse in that it is rational and instrumental. War is a policy that takes up the sword, rather than the pen. As such, war is extreme capitalism by other means" (10). The violent, acquisitive expansionism of the frontiersman comes full circle, still justifying imperialism with an ideology of American exceptionalism that makes it imperative for the United States to spread its democracy and neoliberal capitalist freedoms – in essence its "civilization" – to the Middle East.[40] This "civilizing" imperative includes the spreading of postfeminist freedoms to women, who are said to be in need of Western masculine rescue and protection, another instance of what Gayatri Spivak identified as the colonial ideology of "white men saving brown women from brown men." So in the post-9/11 world, not only is it neoliberal business as usual in terms of the United States profiting from outsourced labor throughout the developing world, the wars in the Middle East have also generated an "extreme capitalism" fueled by "the corporatization of military services – combat training, weapons, consulting, advising, feeding of troops" – all of which is outsourced to privatized military firms (Eisenstein 62).

The problem that underlies both forms of globalized capitalistic exploitation – the outsourcing of industrial labor and the privatization of war efforts that seize foreign territory and resources – is the neoliberal free market values that condition the interpersonal practices of American citizens on the domestic front, which, when understood as collective action, develops into the character of the nation. Zillah Eisenstein critiques the problematic manipulation of gender by the Bush administration to "put a human face on conservatism: his compassionate conservatism in woman-face" (9). Arguing in line with Budgeon's claim (cited above) that "feminist values are often strategically deployed to support political aims that are not consistent with feminist objectives,"

Eisenstein, in her provocative style, establishes the following thesis about the Bush administration's exploitation of the "contradictory" nature of neoliberal gender politics:

> Gender bending, particularly in terms of women's rights, allows females to become or be used as decoys for imperial democracy. US-run antidemocratic wars have a woman's face – Karen Hughes, Condoleezza Rice, General Karpinski, the slain private Michelle Witmer. 'Women's rights' genders the discourses of war while actually constructing the newest stage of US imperial politics. The wars on/of terror use women and people of color like Colin Powell and Rice as imperial decoys while liberal democratic rights are dismantled at home and nowhere in sight in Afghanistan or Iraq. (6)

While Eisenstein focuses on the neoliberal cooptation of gender discourse and optics to legitimize the further expansion of American cultural hegemony in the post-9/11 world, I shift the focus to the domestic front where neoliberalism originated. I explore how a similar neoliberal discourse – one that is often focalized through a postfeminist lens – champions the ostensibly egalitarian, democratic freedoms of the capitalist workplace and marketplace, while actually serving to protect the positions of women who are already members of the dominant class, and privileging the upward mobility of certain women (white, middle-class and above). Neoliberal postfeminist discourse remains prominent in post-9/11 American media and culture, with "chick lit" being the predominant literary genre espousing such neoliberal values. Such cultural texts offer representations of women struggling towards self-made success, a process of identity construction modeled on the competitive ethos and practices of American businessmen, while also maintaining those freedoms traditionally assigned to women: the freedom to buy in the marketplace and to fashion a unique feminine identity through consumer products. Thus, the neoliberal postfeminist subject – who, if not already wealthy, was given greater opportunities to succeed by the activism of second-wave feminists – gains the freedoms of what was once a male-dominated public sphere, all the while working within a capitalist

system guided by masculinist principles that actively dismantle social services under the guise of the advancement of Americans differing in gender, race, ethnicity and class.

This study has thus far characterized the acquisitive neoliberal subject as masculinist, as one who partakes in the patterns of practice that sustain hegemonic masculinity in American culture. However, Anita Harris' characterization of the postfeminist subject as one who is "flexible, individualized, resilient, self driven and self made," suggests that "increasingly these are the characteristics that are demanded of young women" in American culture, in which "feminist ideals of autonomy, choice, and self-determination have become key normative features of 'modernized' femininity" (17). These postfeminist ideals of self-made freedom are derived from the "liberal variety that focuses on women's integration into the masculine public sphere and their access to previously masculine forms of privilege" (Taylor 34). It must be reiterated that hegemonic masculinity is not simply a description of men, but rather an ideal that conditions, through effective leadership, a mode of being that secures the privilege and dominance of certain men. In this sense, women can also adopt and aspire towards the same ideal, embodying all the actions and traits in the process. Taking up hegemonic masculinity does not make women men, but it allows them to partake in a mode of being that is masculinist in the sense that its constitutive actions have been gendered as masculine in American culture. And while there are great pressures for women to replicate hegemonic masculinity in order to achieve independence in capitalist societies, it must be reemphasized that "masculinist" as a gendered term is a pejorative, denoting selfish, domineering, anti-social behavior in defense of male privilege and power. And if, as feminists or gender critics in general, the goal is to discourage such masculinist behavior in order to promote more egalitarian relations, then women who aspire to embody ideals modeled after hegemonic masculinity should also come under critical scrutiny. However, as explored in the novels below, the majority of women fail to live up to the ideals of neoliberal postfeminism, and face increasing pressures to conform to "protective patriarchy" after 9/11, even though they often find themselves tumbling into the arms of

falling men. This emphasizes that 9/11 has focalized the destabilization of gender relations in American culture, despite the regressive efforts of government and media discourse to romanticize a traditional gender binary that promotes the patriarchal protection of the femininized home front.

Amy Waldman's *The Submission*

Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2011) is a complex exploration of the effects of 9/11 on American culture, foregrounding the deeply plural nature of the United States, which generates as many unified responses as it does divisive ones, through and between differing yet intersecting lines of gender, race, ethnicity and class. Waldman's novel highlights the contradictions of American democracy in the wake of 9/11, suggesting that the nation's fallen masculinity has resulted in a compensatory retrenchment of domestic liberties and tolerance towards others, and a reassertion of hard-lined protective masculinity – all of which brings American democracy under a less democratic state of protective masculine coverture. However, Waldman also explores how certain women in neoliberal political spheres are also able to embody such hard-lined masculinity after 9/11. In fact, rather than exemplifying the traditional female victim of the contradictions of American democracy, governor Geraldine Bitman (read "Bit man") is the most convincing embodiment of supra-hegemonic masculine power in the novel, actively suppressing the political justice of certain Muslim Americans – both women and men alike – in order to appease racist populism after 9/11 and advance her own political career. In this analysis, I will explore how Bitman, and another successful women named Claire, are staged against Sean – a white, working class "handyman" who struggles to maintain a coherent gender identity after 9/11. Sean oscillates between a reassertion of traditional sub-hegemonic masculinity as an enraged family member of a 9/11 victim and a more progressive acceptance of his own masculine "crisis," especially as it pertains to his transition from material to immaterial labor, in which he measures and negotiates himself as a "suited man on the make" against Bitman and Claire.

The Submission is set in New York City two years after the attacks, and the narrative is structured around a blind competition for the best design of a 9/11 memorial. Though a fictionalized account, the novel explores the contention that arose during the actual planning and rebuilding process, with religious tensions just below the surface: "many people wanted the site to be designed as a memorial where visitors could pray and remember those who had perished that day. Others insisted that the towers had to be rebuilt as a symbolic rebuke to the terrorists and terrorism" (Haerens 8). Waldman depicts the politically divisive effects of the selection committee's choice: the design submission of Mohammed Khan, a Muslim American. The contest was believed to embody the democratic principles of the nation, echoing Mayor Bloomberg's remarks on the progress of the site after the assassination of Osama bin Laden in 2011: "The construction you see here is a rebuke to all those who seek to destroy our freedoms and liberties" (qtd. in Haerens 10). The memorial contest itself was meant to be a testament to such cherished democratic "freedoms and liberties" – it was open to all and the selection would be based entirely on merit. However, the selection of a Muslim American, who, as representative of a ethnic/racial group that had already experienced widespread discrimination after the attacks, provokes a reactionary response in certain committee members, eventually calling into question the American democratic process and the freedoms therein.[41]

When Paul Rubinsky, the head of the committee, begins to interrogate Khan on his religious background, suggesting that the decision is under heavy scrutiny, the latter begins to parry every question the former thrusts his way. After reflecting upon a key moment in his past business career in which he learned that "to win, you had to intimidate or bluff" and that such business relations were all "a game of risk," Paul says to Khan: "You seem to think this is a game," to which Khan replies "It is a game. One for which you made the rules. And now you're trying to change them." (65). This exchange, in which they describe their rhetorical duel as a "game," also suggests that the memorial competition is a similar game. Taken one step further, the competition as "game" can be read here as

a figurative stand-in for the American democratic process itself, and the meritocratic ideals of neoliberal free markets. This continues a trope in these novels in which certain authors use dominative games and/or sports to analogize American business relations. Like the comparison of the deceptive gameplay of poker with the competitive ethos that informs the business world in DeLillo's *Falling Man*, Paul also articulates business competition in terms derived from poker – as a "game of risk" depending on "intimidation or bluff." And later in the novel, Paul feels a resurgence of his "love of risk," since he was "by profession, a gambler, albeit one who operated with society's respect" (208). Here, Paul's self-regard as a "gambler," that iconic cowboy gamesman of the American wild west, suggests that the modern day banking profession operates according to similar, albeit sublimated, principles of masculine dominance. It is also important here that Khan sees Rubinsky as the author of the rules of the "game" in its multiple layers, since Rubinsky, as a retired investment banker, represents the old guard of hegemonic business masculinity that serves to maintain an economic system that was designed by and for men like himself, who have the hegemonic power to manipulate the rules to their advantage. Here, as throughout much of the novel, Khan foregrounds the contradictions of the "game" of American neoliberalism, which allegedly is played on a level-playing field where fair competition and merit prevail, regardless of differences in gender, race, ethnicity and class. As a Muslim American, Khan won the memorial contest in a process of blind and thus fair competition, based on the merit of his design. But heightened discriminations based on race and ethnicity in post-9/11 America threaten to destabilize the already problematic free market ideals of neoliberal American capitalism, which has always been encoded with contradictions that actually privilege white men.

The Submission critiques the myth of America as a plural landscape of opportunity in which all Americans are able to compete for wealth and private property, destabilizing the egalitarian American Dream which obscures the structural inequalities that severely limit the success of certain Americans. But rather than simply attributing inequality to the dominance of men in capitalist

markets, Waldman reveals the ways in which women are increasingly adopting masculine practices of self-making, which allows them to participate in hegemonic masculinity and perpetuate the very injustices that second-wave feminists advocated against. The novel depicts how several characters "submit" to various forms of power in the sociopolitical hierarchy of the United States. New York governor Geraldine Bitman, retired investment banker Paul Rubinsky, and wealthy widow Claire Burwell represent the upper-crust of New York society – all three are wealthy and white, and occupy positions of sociopolitical power. Despite the hierarchical power relations between them – which depicts masculine hegemony in transition, from the traditional businessman (Rubinsky) to the two women occupying positions of increased sociopolitical power (Bitman and Burwell) – these three characters are developed against several less-advantaged characters varying in race, ethnicity and class, all of whom negotiate various postures of submission and resistance in pursuit of their own American Dreams. These characters all play "the game" – some more adeptly than others – that underlies the American rendition of democracy, which, under the influence of neoliberalism, is increasingly aligned with the principles of free market capitalism.

At the top of the hierarchy is Geraldine Bitman, the New York governor who considers the memorial competition fiasco solely in terms of how it will affect her political career, deciding to position herself against Khan's design. Bitman is driven by self-interest, putting the ruthless, individualistic principles of hegemonic business masculinity into practice, going so far as to conspire to have an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant – Asma, whose husband died in the World Trade Center – deported, only because she posed a threat to her political career. Rather than using her position of power to help a less-privileged woman, she uses it to do precisely the opposite. This opportunistic callousness disturbs even Paul: "A career in investment banking inured even the most sensitive soul, which he was not, to ruthlessness […] The governor's ambition kept outflanking Paul's imagination. And in this case, it offended his sense of decency too" (247). Waldman's representation of Bitman destabilizes traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, revealing that women are inherently no

more peaceful than men. When acting on principles traditionally gendered as masculine in the context of capitalism, women such as Bitman are just as exploitative and self-interested as their male peers. Bitman's characterization suggests that the underlying principles and practices of self-made masculinity which inform American capitalism and democracy will yield the same dominative results in the end, regardless of sex.

Bitman exploits pro-Western women's rights issues to further validate her decision to drop support for Khan. In an interview with *CNN*, Bitman declares: "As a woman, I can't stay quiet about that danger, given that if Islamists were to take power here, it is women who would bear the brunt of our lost freedoms. As you may know, Wolf, I joined a delegation of female politicians on a visit to Afghanistan last year…" (102). Thus, in line with Eisenstein's critique, Bitman's rhetorical invocation of women's rights contributes to a larger postfeminist cultural critique that self-righteously defines Western women as fully liberated in relation to Islamic misogyny, the latter of which is fervently denounced, which legitimizes antidemocratic American wars in the Middle East. This tactic also supports her own local vested interests in taking up an antidemocratic position in relation to Khan. So, under the guise of securing greater democratic rights for Muslim women in Afghanistan, which supports an American war that is anything but democratic, not only does Bitman attempt to stifle the democratic rights entitled to Mohammed Khan as a Muslim American, she also withholds the extension of democratic rights to Asma, an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant. Bitman's self-serving hypocrisy is informed by the practices of "calculated deceit" (DeLillo's poker/business ethos in *Falling Man*) traditionally gendered as masculine in the public sphere of politics and business, reproducing the contradictions inherent in neoliberal ideology that champion civil rights on the surface all the while undermining social initiatives that would extend them to others. Ironically, it is Bitman who best exemplifies Beasley's conception of supra-hegemonic masculinity in Waldman's novel, using sublimated political violence to achieve her own self-made American Dream, all the while supporting the greater war effort to spread American imperial democracy abroad. [42]

In contrast, Sean Gallagher, the novel's sole traditional working-class male, embodies a sub-hegemonic mode of American masculinity, but one that is transitioning from material to immaterial labor. In addition to his destabilized masculine identity, Sean lost his brother, marriage, career, and home in the wake of 9/11, and he is characterized by fits of frustration and generally violent tendencies. A struggling handyman by trade, Sean becomes an impassioned voice for the victims' families, especially in their condemnation of the choice of Khan's design as insensitive. In this sense, Sean is initially depicted as the perfect subject to be interpellated by post-9/11 neoconservatives, whose "exceptionalist US foreign policy […] stood in contrast to neoliberalism; simpler, less pluralist, more muscular" (Weinstein 60). Neoconservatism appealed to rural/small-town working class citizens such as Sean, since its "*domestic* discourse" was relatable to

> American locales far removed from New York City, places protected by their provinciality and their homogeneity. Inner America. Not just a physical place, but a mental one, too, metastasized to every corner of the nation. It is the id of a state, unrestrained by a superego. Its hallmarks are American exceptionalism, xenophobia, muscular Judeo-Christianity, and the privileging of emotional arguments over intellectual ones. It believes that diversity and dissent – the very broad bases of the nation's civic faith before 9/11 – invite national weakness and ruin. (Weinstein 61)

Sean's crisis of masculinity makes him particularly susceptible to such exceptionalist discourses which restore his life with "muscular" purpose and meaning. This "domestic" orientation appeals to the homogeneity and clear-cut binaries that characterize his more traditional background, including the protective mode of masculinity deemed the prerogative of no-nonsense working class men such as himself. But Waldman's characterization of Sean is nuanced and measured, depicting a man in a state of frustrated transition, from an industrial era that once celebrated the material labor of working class heroes to an increasingly post-industrial era that venerates the immaterial labor of business professionals. Through Sean's character development, Waldman suggests that an ongoing post-

industrial crisis of masculinity was already well underway before 9/11, whose iconic "falling man" was the working class hero rather than the post-9/11 transnational businessman explored in the last chapter. But 9/11 focalizes Sean's gender anxieties and mobilizes them into a death-transcending worldview closely aligned with the Bush administration's reactionary response, which, according to Butler's critique of the violent post-9/11 national subject, allows him to deny his own weakness by projecting it onto others, which in this case are Muslim Americans and those who support Khan's design. In this sense, Sean's struggle to transition to the immaterial labor market is partially alleviated by the cultural regression to traditional gender roles after 9/11, in which he finds some currency as a working class spokesman for the victims of the fallen. However, he soon realizes that the invocation of the working class – of which he is an emblem – to mobilize an incendiary populist response to 9/11 is actually just politically motivated posturing.

Sean's crisis of masculinity is situated and developed against Geraldine Bitman and Claire Burwell, the two female leads in the novel with the most socioeconomic power. One scene in particular focalizes his sense of inferiority. At a scheduled meeting, Sean delivers an address to an auditorium of 9/11 relatives and first responders, but his grassroots approach gives way to the professional measured tones of first, the governor, who shows up unexpectedly to deliver her own political plug, and then to Claire, who initially seems to be absent but later emerges to announce her presence in the crowd. Bitman strides onto the stage in the middle of his speech: "'This is a surprise' was all he had time to say before she had one manicured hand on his back and the other easing the microphone from his grip." (85). Here, Waldman articulates a suave and "manicured" mode of power, a civilized and refined pattern of practice that relies on methods of persuasion to seize control of a situation with gentle "ease." Bitman transitions: "'I'm here today so you know you have my support,' she said, speaking with practiced empathy. Her arm casually slid off of Sean so she could clutch the microphone with both hands. A tiny American flag pin glinted from the lapel of her forest-green pantsuit" (85). Again, Bitman seizes the microphone and crowd with grace and ease,

"casually" sliding attention away from Sean and onto her own all-American political agenda, her pin aligning her with the post-9/11 wave of jingoistic patriotism, albeit without the bluster. Hers is a more civilized patriotism of calm measured tones, but one whose "practiced empathy" suggests ulterior motives. Her closing comments, which are an obligatory nod to Sean's "fight" for the memorial, congratulate him for "showing the same bravery as those who gave their lives that fateful day," but this further unsettles Sean, who fails to see himself as a reflection of 9/11 heroism (86). After Bitman's ceremonious exit to a "rock 'n' roll version of 'America the Beautiful,'" Sean tries to "reclaim his audience's attention" by criticizing how the victims' families are being ignored by the committee, drawing special attention to Claire's absence (so he believes) as their sole representative (86). However, just as he makes the comment, she rises from the crowd and announces her presence, which arouses his gendered "resentment" at having "another women stealing his thunder" (87).

But Sean's resentment of Claire runs deeper and is more complex, stemming from his own class anxieties, which are closely connected to his sense of masculinity. As the representative of the victims' families on the committee, he had maintained close ties with Claire. He was "awed by her beauty, her wealth, her intelligence; he'd never met a woman with so many advantages" (86). So while Sean has a degree of respect for Claire as an empowered woman, he ultimately denies his relative sense of inferiority and projects it onto her, adopting a compensatory sub-hegemonic mode of masculinity that is aggressive. He recalls one dinner meeting in particular. Claire orders a beer, perhaps thinking that such a marker of working class masculinity would promote solidarity between them, or that the "booze" itself would "bond them," only to be surprised when he announces that he no longer drinks (86). She drinks the beer anyway, and at the end of the night Sean kisses her "just to prove he could" (86). This forward kiss, which Claire politely denies, is certainly compensatory: not only for his inability to participate in a traditionally male, working class drinking practice, which she indulges in freely, but also for his perceived lack of the socioeconomic "advantages" that she embodies. This kiss is also the harbinger of Sean's later sexual objectification of Claire in personal

fantasies in which he "projected" her onto his bedroom ceiling "where he'd once tacked posters of Victoria's Secret models" as a teenager. Here, Sean's resentment becomes sexualized (though diminished in its adolescent characterization), and he reduces her to his fantasized sex object – likened here to the Victoria's Secret models, the past objects of his gaze. This objectification allows him to exercise dominance and control – in his fantasies "he took her every way he could think of" – over that which challenges his own sense of masculine mastery (87). The fact that Sean easily reduces her to the passive status of a Victoria's Secret model for his dominative sexual fantasies indicates that men as well as women internalize the power dynamics promoted by such postfeminist imagery of "sexual liberation," suggesting that the sexual contract offered by neoliberal postfeminism is closely aligned with agendas of patriarchal dominance, with Sean mobilizing this cultural imaginary to alleviate his class anxiety through sexual domination.

Related to these underlying issues of class and gender is Sean's disappointment with being excluded from the design committee. Claire attributes his exclusion to his "volatile" and "aggressive" personality: "The families stood behind him because he promised to yell on their behalf. Yet for the same reason he would never reach the precincts of real power, whose denizens knew to whisper" (84). Here, Claire suggests that Sean's problem, at least in part, is his inability to sublimate and articulate his frustrations through socially acceptable forms. This further suggests that the "precincts of real power" are populated by people who are no less aggressive than Sean, but who know how to sublimate their aggressive tendencies through the institutional practices and discourses that secure positions of socioeconomic and political influence. The inner workings of "civilization" substitute head-turning bluster for inconspicuous whispers. As argued in the preceding chapter, "real power" in post-industrial America is increasingly concentrated in the hands of an elite few: mostly upper-middle to upper class men who work in the increasingly transnational context of late-capitalism. In these upper-level precincts, "real power" is exercised through complex networks of communication and bureaucracy, which use jargon-laden discourses of specialization only accessible

to those who have the educational and professional background – which is often influenced by class – to decode and deploy it. And in a neoliberal society that actively works to dismantle publicly funded social services, education included, access to these upper-level precincts increasingly becomes the exclusive prerogative of those who already hold positions of socioeconomic power.

This inclination to "whisper" behind the closed doors of the precincts of real power is exemplified in a scene between the novel's two most powerful characters, governor Bitman and Paul Rubinsky. Though Bitman admits in this scene that she will shift blame to Paul's "liberal elite" design committee for making such a controversial choice, Paul recalls in an internal monologue that she had originally "urged him to make sure most of the jurors were artists, professionals" (104). Paul further reveals the extent to which Bitman will contradict herself for opportunistic reasons, recalling that she explicitly stated during the formation of the committee

> "We don't want a bunch of firefighters deciding to put a giant helmet in Manhattan" had been her words. In private, of course. She had vetoed the campaign, led by Sean Gallagher, to have a jury of family members. They would bicker, she was sure; she would gain nothing by choosing among them. Claire Burwell, the only family member on the jury, was picked because her Ivy League credentials and art collection comported with the other jurors' sensibilities. The notion of public input – the hearing, the comment period, the governor signing off – had been written into the process to give the public the illusion that they would be heard, when in fact they were being led. (104)

Clearly, Bitman conceals her classist agenda behind closed doors, "in private," working to actively stifle the voices of family members – Sean included – whose unsophisticated "bickering" would lead her to "gain nothing." Here, Bitman's political self-interest is most closely aligned with hegemonic masculinity, in the sense that "hegemony [does] not mean violence, although it [can] be supported by force; it [means] ascendency achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion" (Connell 832). Bitman's political ascendency depends on her partaking in the patterns of practice that persuade the

public that the government is an instrument of their control. As impresario, she is able to set into motion the pageantry – "the hearing, the comment period, the governor signing off" – to create the illusion of democratic process. And this, her quiet subversion of democracy, her sublimated violence, was "written into the process" itself, which means that it is validated by the very institutional power that should guarantee democracy. Here, Waldman suggests that the democratic process itself is inherently flawed, though this does not absolve the agents of hegemonic masculinity who put it into practice, including Bitman. Her admission of the vested interests and ulterior motives behind such processes is a testament to neoliberalism as put into municipal practice since its inception in New York City in the 1970s, in which "city government was more and more construed as an *entrepreneurial* rather than a social democratic or even managerial entity… City business was increasingly conducted behind closed doors, and the democratic and representational content of local governance diminished" (Harvey 47; emphasis mine). Bitman exemplifies the neoliberal practice of city government as "an entrepreneurial rather than social democratic" process, conducting "real power" from "behind closed doors." Although Bitman also exemplifies the "entrepreneurial" component of Adrieans' characterization of the neoliberal postfeminist subject, the governor is not depicted as extending her entrepreneurial drive to that other key component: her sex life. Bitman does not take up the "sexual subjectification" deemed the prerogative of the neoliberal postfeminist; in fact, she is one of the few characters in the novel almost entirely devoid of any sexual inclination. Rather, she sublimates her "active, desiring sexual 'neo-liberal subjectivit[y]'" into her monomaniacal political career which is perhaps all the more focused because of it (Adriaens). In this sense, Bitman does not take up the consumer-citizenship offered by neoliberal postfeminism, and instead substitutes its fashion consciousness and attendant sexual freedoms of the private sphere for a political consciousness and the social freedoms of the public sphere, an aspect to her characterization more in line with neoconservatism.

At the end of their exchange in this important scene, Paul reflects upon Bitman's manipulation of the rules of the game: "She wasn't rewriting the rules, Paul thought, so much as interpreting them with a new and cynical literalism" (104). Paul extends upon this conceit of neoliberal democracy as a game with manipulable rules, suggesting that rather than rewriting the rules – which would be brazenly undemocratic – Bitman exploits pre-existing bureaucratic loopholes therein. In this way, of all the female characters in these novels, Bitman is the farthest from the *Tumbling Woman*: she can move with sure-footed stealth, and the deceitful actions that arise in her wake never rise above a whisper.

When Paul arranges a meeting with Sean at an expensive Manhattan restaurant, he is casually brusque and arrogant, making Sean feel like he is "in the camp of the enemy – not Muslims but the people born with silver sticks up their asses, the people who made Manhattan a woman too good to give Sean her phone number" (128). Here, Sean conflates his frustrations with both gender and class, personifying Manhattan, the most socioeconomically elite of the five boroughs, as a woman who spurns his advances, which not only refers to Claire's rejection but also to his inability to speak the language of the dominant class. As Paul chats with other restaurant patrons in "financial speak," Sean sees himself as "a no-name worthy of addressing but not worthy of knowing. An audience, not a player" (129). Paul chastises Sean for his "crude" approach and suggests that he speak in a "civilized manner" at an upcoming public hearing (129). In order to be a player in the game, Sean must learn to play by its "civilized" rules, which, more often than not in this novel, mask the clandestine undemocratic practices that operate outside the purview of "civilized" society.

Sean's self-regard as a "no-name worthy of addressing but not worthy of knowing" suggests an underlying sense of alienation from the sociopolitical forces that exercise "real power" to control and effect change. Anthony Giddens outlines the conditions in post-industrial capitalist societies that lead to such sociopolitical anxiety. He claims that every subject, in order to avoid existential dread, requires a sense of "ontological security" in relation to the greater society of which he or she is a

part. More specifically, he states that ontological security refers to "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action" (92). If a subject does not develop this sense of ontological security, they can fall into "persistent existential anxiety" or, at its most profound, "existential angst or dread" (101). Furthermore, Giddens argues that post-industrial capitalist societies, founded as they are upon increasingly abstract technological relations of specialization, leave individual subjects with very little sense of personal agency in their "surrounding social and material environments of action," which often leads to existential anxiety. To further nuance this premise, I argue that this anxiety is exacerbated in American men specifically, since they live in a culture that traditionally idealizes self-made masculinity as independent, active, and always in control. Sean's existential angst is decidedly gendered, and is problematically expressed in his relations with women and racial minorities. After impulsively pulling off a Muslim American women's headscarf in what he believes to be a provocative political act, it is revealed that he has a history of domestic abuse. After the 9/11 attacks, his marriage begins to disintegrate before finally coming to an end when his wife "complained, one too many times, that there was a dead man in bed with them" and "he shoved her into the wall. Cradling her afterward, he couldn't still the angry drumming in his heart, or hers" (163). That his wife's affront to his sexual prowess triggers such a violent outburst is symptomatic of a deeper existential angst: that he feels "impotent" in the world at large, subject to its frightening contingencies. And since this occurred after 9/11, his wife's chastising his lack of virility becomes connected to her resentment (in the "angry drumming" of her own heart) of his inability to provide her with an adequate sense of masculine protection (potency) in the wake of the attacks. 9/11 has rendered him a falling man and her a tumbling woman in his emasculated wake.

When Sean decides to apologize for the headscarf incident at the Muslim American Coordinating Council's headquarters, he is visibly on edge upon his arrival. When they ask to search his bag because they are unsure of what he might be "capable of," he thinks to himself: "I'm not

capable, I'm not capable of anything" (180). Sean's lack of confidence in his abilities, his perceived lack of agency to accomplish anything of consequence, permeates his character, to the point where the victim of the headscarf attack begins to speak to him "like he was the man on the ledge" (181). This line suggests that Sean is a falling man of a different variety, or a man poised on the edge of a fall. He is not a self-made businessman facing a decline that symbolically resonates with the greater geopolitical significance of 9/11, but rather a working class handyman whose cultural and material decline has been ongoing (though his personal life has certainly been affected by 9/11 as well). When further asked about his line of work, he responds: "I'm in transition" (182). And falling is precisely that: a transitional state from one condition to another. 9/11 precipitates a fall in Sean, or at least allows him to peer over the edge, leaving him in a time of prolonged and emphasized mortality salience. This existential crisis destabilizes Sean's death-transcending worldviews and his ability to read others and their motivations: "All these doubles. He couldn't get a fix on anyone, least of all himself, the brother left behind, the striving son, the shabby handyman and the suited man on the make, the guy pulling the headscarf and the one apologizing and somehow meaning both. His empathy kept settling in new, unstable places. It – he – couldn't be trusted" (233). In his destabilized, transitional state, Sean experiences empathy and the "glimmerings of sympathy," although he is suspicious of both. But at the center of his confusion is his self-regard as a successful man, or what it even means to be a "good" American man.

Clearly, Sean is finding the process of "striving" for self-made success to be difficult, especially in his transitioning from the "handyman" ideal of a bygone industrial era to the contemporary post-industrial ideal of the "suited man on the *make*." Waldman suggests that an underlying action-oriented ethos makes this transition difficult: Sean "learned what he felt by what he did" (233). This characterization of Sean as a man who "acts before he thinks" falls within the classic gender binary that configures men as active agents and women as passive objects. But Waldman also anchors this gender binary firmly in history, suggesting that, rather than being

essential, it is the result of the character of the forces of production in a given era of capitalism. The point here is that the transition from the action-oriented practices of the industrial era to the thought and communication practices of the post-industrial era, from material labor to immaterial labor, sees a concomitant change in consciousness: from a praxis-oriented mode that privileges acting over thinking to a theory-oriented managerial mode which implicitly values thinking over action, the latter of which sustains the contradiction between the active/thinking man which remains so pertinent to the gender binary invoked after 9/11. Sean's tendency to act before thinking has been reprimanded by several characters in the novel (Claire, Paul), including himself, as being the reason for his violent behavior and inability to make the transition to the professional sphere, where he could voice his displeasure with the committee's decision. But in the end Sean learns to empathize with the plight of Muslim Americans in post-9/11 America, and after reflecting upon his violent actions to "block" the memorial he decides that it was not "accomplishing anything. They're not going to turn around and ask me to design the memorial instead […] I need to find some other way to be. Some other reason to be" (263). Here, Sean comes to an existential epiphany, realizing that he needs to find a new "reason" or an ideal to condition a new pattern of practice that focuses on accomplishment rather than preventing the accomplishments of others. Through Sean's character development, Waldman suggests that the United States needs to find a new "reason" and "way to be," and not necessarily one that privileges the "civilized" processes of thinking over more action-orientated modes of consciousness. Waldman indicates that the myth of civilized American democracy, which continues to be used to justify American-led wars in the Middle East, is predicated on the neoliberal exploitation of others – which was what motivated the attacks in the first place. Sean's/America's "other reason to be" is, at its most basic, precisely that: a reason that takes the other into consideration as different and worthy of respect, which would generate the actions and practices of a new "way to be" that would focus more on giving than taking way – respecting rather than exploiting difference.

However, Waldman contrasts Sean's redemptive turn with the incisive political commentary of Ansar, a member of the Muslim American Coordinating Council who runs a foreign policy lobby. When a committee member congratulates Khan (perhaps patronizingly) for his efforts to show that "Muslims want to live in peace in America," Ansar snaps back:

> "But does America want to live in peace with Muslims? […] Since we're talking about memorials, where is the memorial to the half-million Iraqi children killed by U.S. sanctions? To the thousands of innocent Afghans killed in response to this attack, or the Iraqis killed on the pretext of responding to this attack? Or to all the Muslims slaughtered in Chechnya, or Kashmir, or Palestine, while the U.S. stood by? […] The attack becomes no less tragic if we acknowledge these other tragedies and demand equal time, equal care for them. They say that when you watch the movies, you root for the cowboys, but when you read history, you root for the Indians. Americans are locked in a movie theater watching Westerns right now, and we've got to break down the walls." (79-80)

Here, Waldman directly addresses America's exceptionalist foreign policy and its oppressive wars responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths in the East and Middle East, tracing its origins back to the oppressive treatment of native Americans during the expansion into the Western frontier. Ansar's blunt critique of American exceptionalism echoes the post-9/11 commentary of critics such as Judith Butler and Slavoj Zizek, who suggest that the United States needs to internalize and make sense of the vulnerability and pain experienced on 9/11 so that the nation might reconsider their unilateral orientation, and maybe begin to sympathize with the pain of other nations. Ansar actively works to demystify the heroic image of America as the benevolent dispenser of civilization and democratic freedoms to the world, suggesting that Khan's memorial ignores "the greater death toll in the Muslim world from American actions" and thus "obscures America's complicity in its own tragedy" (81). Ansar, a radical Muslim American critic of the country's foreign policy, represents the

internal factions within the Muslim American community, with him leveling criticism against Khan for not going far enough, for being perhaps too blindingly patriotic.

Finally, near the end of the novel, Khan himself delivers the most scathing criticism of American foreign policy. He draws a connection between the oppressive treatment of other nations who struggle to maintain autonomy in the presence of American hegemony, and his own personal plight in post-9/11 America, in which institutional power is leveled against him as a Muslim to coerce him into dropping out of the blind competition so as not to disturb the public peace. When Claire finally corners Khan and demands that he publicly "denounce" or "distance" himself from certain Muslim "ideas" if he wants her continued support on the committee, reassuring him that it is not about him personally but rather about Islam, he responds: "How would you feel if I justified what happened to your husband by saying it wasn't about him but about his country and its policies – damn shame he got caught up in it, that's all – but you know, he got what he deserved because he paid taxes to the American government. I get what I deserve because I happen to share a religion with a bunch of crazies?" (271). Here, Khan is not necessarily claiming that the attacks were justified – in fact by calling the al-Qaeda terrorists "crazies" he is denigrating their actions – but rather revealing the underlying hypocrisy behind the memorial competition. Holding a democratic competition to design a 9/11 memorial that pays tribute to the victims and the nation's democratic values, and then disputing the democratically chosen winner based on discriminations of race and ethnicity, is to violate the very democratic principles that underlie the competition and the American Dream. But Khan's scathing criticism is taken by Claire as evidence of his belief that America brought the attacks upon itself and that her husband Cal was mere collateral damage, when the truth is always more complex than such binaries allow. Here, Claire, who is depicted throughout the novel as sympathetic to Khan though unable to choose a correct course of action to appease all parties, decides in the final instance to exercise hegemony

Carolyn See's *There Will Never Be Another You*

As opposed to the neoliberal career women explored in Walden's novel, Carolyn See's *There Will Never Be Another You* (2006) focuses on the problematic gender relations fostered by hegemonic masculinity in companionate marriage after 9/11. See's depiction of hegemonic masculinity therein is dynamic and nuanced, not only foregrounding the sublimated patterns of oppressive practice that generate marital and filial discord, but also an accompanying sense of corporeal vulnerability and existential crisis that challenges the sub-hegemonic ideals of masculinity celebrated in post-9/11 American culture. See's novel features a male protagonist, Phil, who is not only revealed to be more vulnerable than his outer demeanor suggests, he is also depicted as a sociocultural dupe who lives a privileged upper-middle class life but fails to see that it is founded upon masculine oppression, of which he is complicit. Along these lines, See explores the influence of 9/11 on American gender relations, which were already in transition before the attacks: Phil is depicted as a whiny, failed patriarch who does not measure up to his more traditional father, especially when it comes to embodying anything like a protective mode of masculinity, while his wife Felicia exemplifies what Stephenie Genz theorizes as the "postfeminist housewife" – a "polysemic character caught in a struggle between tradition and modernity, past and present" (50). Genz's third-wave critique reveals that the postfeminist subject is often divided by contradictory impulses. Unlike the purposeful sashay of the upwardly mobile career women celebrated in popular culture, the postfeminist housewife, in her attempt to "have it all," is often caught tumbling between lingering societal pressures to reproduce and tend to hearth and home, and more contemporary expectations that a women should have a job or career outside of the home. 9/11 exacerbates tensions between husband and wife, focalizing Phil's self-centered crisis of masculinity, which actually furthers his ignorance of the larger context of capitalist masculine hegemony that underlies his own interpersonal tensions, and the nation's geopolitical tensions in the wake of 9/11.

Felicia is a reluctant homemaker who supports Phil's workaday life with little acknowledgment of her labor. Likewise, Phil's outlook on the world abroad is equally oblivious: regarding American foreign policy he is often either casually dismissive or complacently incredulous concerning the possible motivations behind the 9/11 attacks. Phil remains unaware (though certainly not blissfully) of the detrimental effects of his actions, indicating that hegemony can be sustained without a conscious effort to exploit or oppress, but rather out of embodied habit. Of course, this is not to suggest that certain practices of hegemonic masculinity should be absolved, but rather, in line with Connell's critique of "complicit masculinity," that such hegemony is not always consciously undertaken by men such as Phil, although they benefit from such practices nonetheless. Thus, See emphasizes the relational nature of gender and how the patriarchal underpinnings of traditional marriage and its division of labor is a cause for tension. Phil is unhappy in his traditional role as the "breadwinner" for the "three leeches" that constitute his family, feeling exploited and unappreciated. And Felicia, as "homemaker," feels unfulfilled and lonely in her domestic space, criticizing Phil for not spending enough time with their family.

9/11 exacerbates this marital crisis. After a terrorist scare at his workplace, Phil begins to have persistent thoughts of dying, and Felicia begins to think about having another baby – not only before it is too late, but also to fill her domestic void. Both are decidedly gendered responses to the disruptive effects of 9/11: Phil's preoccupation with death is a lingering effect of the challenge presented by 9/11 to masculine notions of death-transcendence, of the exceptionality of American men and their nation, while Felicia's preoccupation with "life" – or bringing new life into the world – falls into the traditional feminine mystique of reproduction as a means of redressing existential anxiety. In this sense, both are increasingly uncomfortable with their traditional American gender relations in the wake of 9/11. When they openly discuss Felicia's frustrations and sense of existential despair, Phil simply suggests that she get a job despite her insistence that she is uncomfortable with the idea. Here, Phil perpetuates, albeit passively, the neoliberal notion that freedom and satisfaction

necessarily derive from one's involvement in the public sphere and marketplace. Phil's automatic recourse to the capitalist labor market as a solution to his wife's problems reveals the circumscribed state of his socioeconomic consciousness, which is further highlighted by his hypocrisy in this regard: he is as unhappy with his job in the public space as she is with hers in the domestic space. Phil's profession as a doctor, and his fulfillment of the traditional male gender role in their companionate marriage, is the only life that he knows, and he takes his masculine privilege for granted. Thus, when he suggests, rather perfunctorily, that she get a job despite her reluctance, he is assuming that the job market is a level-playing field for all and does not take into consideration her unique circumstances and desires. In this regard, it is apt that Phil is a dermatologist by profession, as he struggles to see beyond the skin-deep surface of their troubled gender roles in marriage, which results in their mutual dissatisfaction and eventual divorce.

Edith, Phil's mother, is a prominent character in the novel who serves to establish the vulnerability of the male body from the outset. In her study of 9/11 fiction, Jessica Zeltner observes that a recurring trope therein of "the deterioration of health [can] be read as a symbol of the decline felt and seen in society after 9/11. Several characters (however, usually not the protagonists) suffer from diseases that are accompanied by mental decline or decline of the body" (177). In this light, the deterioration of masculine health depicted in this novel is a marker of decline that resonates with notions of masculine falling in the context of 9/11. Edith recalls taking care of her terminally sick husband, which required that she become familiar with his most intimate body parts: "I had looked up his behind once, his sphincter helpless, relaxed and open […] it was such a mystery, like a postcard of a subway, pink and clean, curving off into the middle of his body" (5). Edith's characterization of her husband's sphincter as "helpless" and "curving off into the middle of his body" suggests a vulnerable point of entry into the soft tissues of the visceral cavity, which challenges the socially constructed understanding of the male body as hard and impervious. Also, the vulnerability in this particular image would normally be suppressed due to socially constructed male

anxieties concerning homosexuality, which are conditioned by hegemonic masculinity. Edith further recounts a dinner party that she and her husband attended a year before he died, which featured an array of crippled men, physically compromised by age:

> I'd had Charlie – deaf but cunning about it – on my left at the head of the table, conducting a masculine monologue designed not to leave the room for questions. Across from me, our beautiful hostess sat, smiling and determined. To her left, her own husband, deaf, almost blind, and very sloppy, with a good portion of the night's dinner already spread across his pale blue cashmere sweater. Farther on down the table, another determined wife and her bedraggled spouse. (23)

Here, See depicts the less dignified, later years of men's lives when their bodies begin to decline – far removed from the autonomous and individualistic men championed as active agents in the public sphere. The natural process of aging can reduce the male body to a "deaf," "blind," "sloppy," and "bedraggled" state, while benevolent and "determined" wives, who on average live several years longer, care for them. This domestic scene of emasculated patriarchy echoes the actions of the Bush administration after 9/11. Just as Charlie was "cunning" about his own weaknesses, using his deafness as an excuse to conduct "masculine monologues" without leaving room for questions, which allows him to evade his infirmity, the Bush administration likewise mobilized a selective hearing on 9/11 as an excuse to launch masculine monologues (Addresses to the Nation) which also left little room for questions or discussion. In fact, the Manichean monologues which espoused the Bush doctrine – "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" – clearly articulated that dissenting worldviews would fall on deaf ears, which allowed the nation to evade its own infirmity, not only in terms of its fall on 9/11, but also, and more importantly, the much more protracted fall of the nation's foreign policy over the years and its attendant moral stature in the world. In this resonant instance, corporeal vulnerability is suppressed by the masculine subject and projected onto others,

allowing men like Charlie to continue to take their wives – upon whose caretaking they are dependent – for granted.

In a contrasting instance of male corporeal vulnerability, Edith recalls dating a man after her husband's death who was prone to making offhand misogynistic comments. After falling out of contact for six months, she encounters him again at an art show and learns that he is recovering from prostate cancer. One art installation in particular (which, it is suggested, is his work), gestures toward the preoccupation with 9/11 on the national consciousness: "it was an enormous assemblage of airplane parts, old, privately owned planes in shades of faded turquoise and dusty pink, beginning in the center of the room and branching out, with the aid of hundreds of metal pulleys and cables, into the far corners of the roof of the room. Looking like the end of the world" (26). This apocalyptic plane imagery that serves as a backdrop recalls 9/11, and the prostate cancer survivor, looking "frail and drawn," says to Edith and her friend: "You know girls […] I can see you now as human beings instead of just women. I never could do that before. It's strange" (26). His brush with death – which is closely linked to diminished male sexuality (prostate cancer) and the cultural resonances of 9/11 (the art display) – finally allows him to see beyond the surface of what it means to be a woman or a man. His experience of corporeal vulnerability allows him to see the common human frailty that we all share, regardless of sex or gender.

Edith's son, Phil, also begins to experience a heightened awareness of corporeal vulnerability after the attacks. When his workplace receives a biochemical terrorist threat, he begins to have recurring thoughts of death. At home that evening, while trying to hide the potential threat from his family, he feels a sense of dread when having to go upstairs: "Something about not wanting to be alone. Afraid he'd get sick, catch whatever they'd let loose. Afraid he was going to die" (35). However, this mortality salience does not enable Phil to see beyond himself and his superficial relations with his wife. Instead, though he credits Felicia for taking "care of things like health and clothes and running the house," he complains that she has been throwing "a lot of tantrums lately"

(49). Describing Felicia's complaints about her domestic life as "tantrums" infantilizes her experience of frustration. Though the prospect of going back to work is not appealing to her, she also feels a growing confinement and emptiness in her domestic space, claiming: "Four *walls*! That's all that I have […] You get up; you go away. Eloise goes away. Vernon goes away. Nobody talks to me. There's no one to talk to" (65). Felicia's solution is to have another child, but despite her pleading, Phil cannot bring himself to bring another child into the world. Exasperated, Felicia can only weep: "Can't you see? Can't you see *anything*?" (67). This prompts Phil into another existential lament: "Now, tonight, and every night of my life, he thought. This is it. And then I'll die. But first I'll be sick. I'll lose my teeth. My jaw will keep dropping open, even when I'm awake. I'll break my hip […] Felicia will sigh […] I'll wear pajama tops and sweatpants and then I'll die" (67). Here, in this ridiculous scenario of self-pity, it is evident that Phil's greater existential awareness prompted by the terrorist threats fails to open new pathways of empathy, but rather, draws him even further into himself. But neither Phil nor Felicia are entirely self-centered and malicious; rather, they are genuinely frustrated by their gender roles and relations – a falling man and tumbling woman, lost to each other. Since Phil and Felicia are in a relatively traditional companionate marriage, Betty Friedan's critique of post-WWII gender roles is particularly resonant here. In an epilogue to the tenth anniversary edition of *The Feminine Mystique* in 1973, Friedan writes:

> How could we ever really know or love each other as long we kept playing those roles that kept us from knowing or being ourselves? Weren't men as well as women still locked in lonely isolation, alienation, no matter how many sexual acrobatics they put their bodies through? Weren't men dying too young, suppressing fears and tears and their own tenderness? It seemed to me that men weren't really the enemy – they were fellow victims, suffering from an outmoded masculine mystique (521)

Here, Friedan was beginning to theorize a more relational understanding of gender, suggesting that hegemonic masculinity is detrimental not only to women but also to the men that it privileges. The

traditional expectations of men in the workplace created men who died too young, suppressed fears, tears and their own tenderness, all for the appearance of being fiercely independent, virile, self-made successes. If, according to Michael Kimmel, the self-made man is a "model of manhood that derives identity entirely from a man's activities in the public sphere, measured by accumulated wealth and status, by geographic and social mobility," which has the effect of creating a character who is "mobile, competitive, aggressive in business… temperamentally restless, chronically insecure, and desperate to achieve a solid grounding for a masculine identity," then Phil's underlying "irrationality, his fears, his nerves" -- though exacerbated by 9/11 – all stem from his striving to succeed in the professional world, which allows him to live a life of privilege (partially supported by the "help" – "Spanish-speaking peasants" and his wife) that nonetheless leaves him unfulfilled.

Phil resents his wife and children for taking his work for granted, and he sometimes reflects upon fatherhood and the transmission of American fatherly values: "Phil's real dad had been a scholar, a professor, a man of taste who died too young. His stepdad was a man's man, respected by all, kind to his family. Always there in an emergency. He wanted to run his own life on both models, to be an honourable, professional family man, to take his kids both to museums and baseball games" (53). Phil's strained role as respected patriarch is evident when he tries to communicate with his maladjusted son, Vernon. Phil advises Vernon to treat his progression into the sixth grade as a time to leave childhood behind and to start thinking about "becoming a man" (53). Phil pleads with Vernon to take school more seriously, insisting that he must "succeed" -- choosing to drop "*on your own merit*" because he questions whether his son has any. Finally, in frustration Phil shouts: "Pay attention, Vern! All you have to do is look presentable. You come from a good family; your sister's doing all right. We can get through this. This is just one of many steps, some of them hard, some of them easy, that lead to–," but Phil stops there, because he "couldn't stand to listen to himself" (56). His faltering at what it all "leads to" betrays his own dissatisfaction with the *telos* of the American

Dream and his unconscious reluctance to transmit the core values of self-made masculinity to his son.

Phil's insecurities about his masculinity prompt him to begin an affair. But even while in the ornate living room of his mistress' apartment, he cannot help but "cringe" at the plight of her "poor husband, who had worked himself to death to provide all this crap, the puffy couch covered with expensive gray silk, the fragile French straight chairs no human could sit on, the crystal chandelier hanging over the teak dining set. All this stuff piled into a two bedroom apartment because her husband, after all that, had died and left her alone and with next to nothing in the bank" (88). Again, Phil severely criticises the taxing male role of family provider and the consumer lifestyle it supports, which often leaves traditional housewives alone and impoverished despite their ornate surroundings – all in order to achieve the American Dream. But shortly thereafter, he panics when he realizes that his indiscretions threaten his own "American Dream": "Are you *nuts*? […] Everything you've worked for all these years, your career, your kids, your family could – no, it *will* – go down the drain and you'll be out on the street, unable to meet your responsibilities!" (90). Phil's panic reveals his deep ambivalence toward his masculine achievements, since on the one hand he dismisses them as having been slavish and unrewarding pursuits, but on the other he sees them as "everything" he has worked for over the years – indicating a crisis between the American ideals that have conditioned his existence and his material practice of such ideals, which has faltered since 9/11. Phil's ideals of self-made masculinity and being the patriarchal breadwinner for his family are grossly out-of-step with the material reality generated by these ideals, and the cultural reaction to 9/11 as an emasculating event serves as a catalyst for a synthesis of this cultural contradiction in the Bush administration's project to remasculinize the nation through heightened security and militarism.

In this sense, Phil serves as a prime candidate for a clandestine group of "distinguished medical experts" who have been organized to ward off a potential bioterrorist threat. He is summoned to a room that was "bare except for a desk, an American flag, and a color portrait of the

president," suggesting that their "mission" is a "real opportunity to serve the country, and perhaps humanity itself" (96-97). This section of See's novel takes a satirical turn as Phil finds himself in an all-boys club of medical practitioners who suddenly take on the heroic aura of protective masculinity: "They wore their stethoscopes slung across their shoulders – well, he did too – and looked like paratroopers crouched in a plane lined up for their first jump" (99). Phil has been chosen because of his background in dermatology, since symptoms of the most infectious diseases tend to first manifest on the skin. And figuratively, Phil's inclination to operate on the mere surface of things also make him an ideal candidate for such patriotic service, since he is not the type to delve into the complexities and contradictions of contemporary geopolitics. In fact, shortly after being initiated into the group, he launches into a rant with one of the chief operatives: "What was it Americans had done, Phil would think blearily, except act like assholes, and weren't everyone – *wasn't* everyone some kind of asshole? 'What I want to know,' he asked Jack, as they both labored to free their lobsters from their shells, 'is how did we get into this? What is it that we did? As a country, I mean?'" (109). Phil's inquiry betrays a complete lack of historical consciousness or any knowledge of American geopolitics, which allows him to only skim the surface of events. And the image of him wresting the lobster meat from its shell is an ironic, symbolic stab at one of the reasons for America's post-9/11 geopolitical strife: the voracious habits of American consumption which occur, in this symbolic instance, right under his nose and by his own hand. Also, Phil draws the connection (albeit crudely if not unknowingly) between the personal character of individuals (himself included) as "assholes" on the interpersonal plane, and the greater national identity of Americans acting together as a collective "asshole" on the geopolitical plane. Aaron James, in *Assholes: A Theory* (2012), offers an ironic though academically astute take on the masculine figure who drives "asshole capitalism." James defines such an asshole by "the *way* he acts," a performative theorizing of what is explored in this dissertation as American business masculinity (6). James argues that "individualistic" capitalist cultures tend to produce more assholes than "collectivist" ones (99), the

United States being a contemporary exemplar of such "assholery," with Bush's unilateral meddling in the Middle East after 9/11 being only the most recent incarnation (56-7). Deftly engaging with both international and interpersonal examples, James defines the asshole as a subject who "acts out of a firm sense that *he is special*, that the normal rules of conduct do not apply to him. He may not deliberately exploit interpersonal relations but simply remains willfully oblivious to normal expectations" (6). Such a sense of exceptionalism leads American men such as Phil to reluctantly and dismissively acknowledge that the United States has acted like an asshole (oppressively, unilaterally) on the international stage. But Phil's general lack of concern displays a limited grasp of his own complicity in such actions as an American citizen, which is further reflected in his inability to make the connection between this complicity and his own "asshole" actions in his relationship with his wife, which only worsen when he joins the anti-terrorist group. This comes as no surprise, since the group is a sort of refuge for regressive post-9/11 masculinity:

> It was all guys here. Where were all the bossy women, all the female Asian docs who never looked you in the eye? Where were the ones who'd kicked up such a fuss about wanting to excel and be equal and get adequate respect and jumps in promotions, because they had been so oppressed or because they were so smart? Busy at home it looked like. Busy with other projects. Or maybe on somebody's list of suspects? Everyone in here, in folding chairs ranging along dirty white walls, was white male, *trying to maintain dignity or what looked like it.* (98-99)

As a monologue from Phil's point-of-view, this is the first instance in the novel that directly reveals his underlying misogyny and racism. Phil's rant sustains a masculinist delusion, in line with many post-9/11 American media sources, that the protection of the nation was the sole prerogative of men ("white" men in Phil's eyes), who were merely trying to "maintain dignity" in their fallen state. Moreover, Phil's rant launches a paranoid attack against women who have achieved success in the medical field, aligning them with potential terrorists (perhaps they are "on somebody's list of

suspects?"), as if their attempts to succeed in the public sphere are an infringement on the traditionally male role of leading society, which weakens America just as the terrorists had done. If he holds such opinions about women in his workplace in general, then surely he feels the same about his wife, despite his perfunctory suggestions that she get a job. In this way, this all-male group of anti-terrorists serves as a venue to rescue and maintain the dignity of hegemonic masculinity in post-9/11 American culture by positioning itself against a gendered and racialized ("Asian docs") "other," even though See eventually depicts its grim-faced heroism as bumbling farce. But the main point here is that the group is formed to protect the nation and its core democratic values, all the while celebrating a hegemonic mode of masculinity that mocks the gains made by women in the professional workforce, and denies them access into their masculinist anti-terrorist fold.

Eventually, Phil becomes increasingly preoccupied with the anti-terrorist group and further neglects his family. This again highlights the contradictions of the Bush administration's neoconservative retrenchment to patriarchal family values after 9/11, which promotes an ideal of protective masculine coverture that is ultimately detrimental to domestic life. Yet Phil is shocked to discover that Felicia is having an affair (despite his own infidelity). When he asks her how she could do such a thing to him, she reveals that "it was the only way to get his attention, that she was sick and tired of being cast aside and ignored, that her life counted for something too…" (177). Thus, like Phil's general ignorance of the larger geopolitical conflicts initiated by his country's neoliberal foreign policies, and the backlash against them on 9/11, he also remains ignorant of the detrimental effects of his own actions in his relationship with his wife. However, Phil eventually decides to leave the group, citing "domestic problems" and "family emergencies" (181). The "domestic" here functions both in terms of the domestic situation of Phil's family proper, and also of the collective domestic experience of the nation and the gender relations therein. However, what really prompts Phil to make the decision is "a feature story in the *Times* about Americans moving in droves to Brazil and Argentina, 'to pursue a more relaxed, less stressful way of life'" (181). Thus, like Sean in *The*

Submission (2011), Phil discovers that he needs to find "a new way of being," one removed from the vacuous pressures of the American Dream to succeed and consume. He decides to board a freighter with Vernon and live an itinerant existence for an indefinite time. He and Vernon reconcile and the two find happiness in their simple existence at sea, while Felicia files for divorce and is happy with her new partner. Eventually, Phil and Felicia reconcile and accept their new lives apart. But like Keith's itinerant poker playing in DeLillo's *Falling Man*, there is something escapist and isolationist in Phil's solution to his domestic issues. Rather than address his problems at home, he instead embarks on a romantic masculine journey – all the crew members are men – in which "he'd run out on them all," including "his wife," with all "his responsibilities, abdicated" (223). Thus, See suggests that such masculine retreatism evades the larger issues at hand, the novel ending with little resolution: Phil's hegemonic masculinity is merely extricated from its social context and relocated to the homogeneity and sterility of the petri dish of masculinity that is the freighter. The nature of Phil's experiment of masculine isolation remains unclear: he has abdicated his traditional responsibilities as domestic breadwinner, but to what end? If it is only "to pursue a more relaxed, less stressful way of life" apart from patriarchal American capitalism, which in the meantime runs amok in the Middle East, then he is also, as a part of the American nation, backing out of his responsibilities as a citizen – to fellow Americans who live under intensified security measures, but also to citizens of other countries who have come under the gun of America's War on Terror, and who do not have the luxury of such retreat. Only a privileged Western subject could actually decide to simply leave in this manner – abandoning the nation and the geopolitical quagmire of which it is a part in the post-9/11 world.

<u>Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children*</u>

Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children* (2006) is a work of 9/11 fiction in which the attacks and the immediate aftermath occur near the end of the novel. 9/11 serves as a catalyst for the dissolution

of interpersonal relationships founded on hegemonic masculinity, which draws parallels between American geopolitical hegemony and hegemonic American masculinity. In the pre-9/11 narrative, Messud presents two male characters who embody American self-made masculinity. These characters dramatize how the exceptional self-made man on the interpersonal plane of social relations also influences and mobilizes American exceptionalism on the geopolitical plane.[43] However, Messud does not fall into familiar patterns of allegorical representation by offering static personifications of an abstract ideal. Rather, Messud's bifurcated characterization of self-made manhood depicts the unique ways in which each character struggles to negotiate his conflicting senses of individuality and social responsibility in relation to the greater ideal. Messud's approach works as a refractive lens that disintegrates the static ideal by separating out the different social practices undertaken by these men in their striving to embody it, wherein the imperative to pursue "self-made" success is often in tension with the homosociality that comes with securing hegemonic masculinity, which reveals the contradictory nature of the ideal. Finally, along with this gendered conflict between the men in the novel, such "self" oriented pursuits also lead to exploitative relations with the women in their lives. Thus, if hegemonic masculinity is defined as the "the patterns of practice […] that allows men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell 832), and if the striving for self-made manhood is paradoxically a "homosocial" practice in which manhood "has to be proved in the eyes of other men" (Kimmel 19), then Messud's depiction of these men striving to attain self-made manhood is an engagement with the complex "patterns of practice" that constitute an iconic, yet inherently contradictory type of hegemonic American masculinity.[44]

However, Messud also explores pre- and post-9/11 postfemininity in a way that is critical but also sensitive to cultural and sociopolitical context. Rather than ridiculing postfeminist privilege and its sense of entitlement, Messud depicts the *ennui* and lack of achievement that can accompany certain variations of postfeminist subjectivity. Marina Thwaite is the daughter of upper middle-class parents, and she is often immobilized by the pressure to achieve the same success as her father,

Murray Thwaite, an iconic self-made journalist. In her striving to make herself in her father's image, a paradoxical process of self-making very much dependent on the success and status of a patriarch, Marina is a fascinating character study of postfemininity. Marina is a postfeminist subject in that she comes from a position of privilege in a fashionable neighbourhood in urban New York City, but rather than this being a source of empowerment, it becomes the very impediment to her self-made success. Already secure in a position of privilege attained by her father, she lacks the impetus to move forward on her own terms. Furthermore, her father's paternalism only enables and prolongs her infantilized state of dependence. Messud's novel suggests that although postfeminist subjectivity should be criticized for its classist veneration of women who are already privileged, while ignoring the sociopolitical differences that make the postfeminist American Dream unattainable for many women, it should also always be traced back to the oppressive ideologies and institutions of hegemonic masculinity from which it arises and the patriarchal coverture that perpetuates lingering issues of feminine dependency – both as wives and female children (the latter of which includes infantilized women such as Claire, who is her father's – the emperor's – "child").

At the beginning of *The Emperor's Children*, Marina has recently moved in to her parents' Upper West Side apartment after a breakup with her boyfriend, "Fat Al." Although the "official" reason for the breakup is her need to "get her life together," another source suggests that it was "actually because Al was tired of supporting her financially (or else […] Marina had made him tired by her constant vocal neurosis about this fact)" (25). This bracketed "alternative" reason suggests that Marina has a contradictory preoccupation with financial independence that clashes with her seeming inability or reluctance to achieve it: she tumbles from the coverture of the patriarchal family to the public patriarchal institution of heterosexual gender relations (whose *telos* is often marriage), and back again. Marina attributes her own struggles in this regard to the pressure of living under the shadow of her father's reputation: "I don't want some job just because he got it for me, and I can't see just taking any dumb thing because it's somehow 'good for me' to have a job. I've got to believe,

I mean, I *know* that I'm more serious than that" (52). Beyond her father's reputation, it is clear that Marina feels entitled to a job that is "important" and of consequence. Marina is not satisfied with "some job" or "any dumb thing" and feels that there is a more "serious" and authentic occupation, or *vocation*, out there waiting for her *exceptional* talents. Marina's sense of entitlement, her desire to find and choose her own path towards an authentic self, is symptomatic of the expressive individualism conditioned by the neoliberal postfeminist American Dream. But Danielle, Marina's close friend who comes from a more humble background, suggests in consolation (or gentle reprimand) that "everybody starts somewhere" (52). This simple suggestion is a distilled, underhanded critique of the presumptuous nature of postfeminist thought and its sense of entitlement, an ironic play on the "rags-to-riches" sentiment of the self-made ethos, which loses its incentive when one is already rich. And though Murray Thwaite recognizes and has "little patience" for his daughter's sense of entitlement – viewing her (perhaps with affectionate irony) as "a monster he and Annabel" and a "society of excess" had created – he refrains from criticizing her outright, and instead offers his eternal paternalistic welcome and coverture: "A bed, a roof, your dinner… and a little cash too" (73).

However, Messud does not depict Marina as a postfeminist cultural dupe for simple ridicule. Marina struggles with her postfeminist identity and is filled with self-doubt concerning her one "important" endeavour: her book on child fashion and how clothing style can influence identity. Anticipating the negative reviews of her book, she imagines: "'Marina Thwaite flounders about in her subject, with little direction and still less progress'" (140). This imagined book review reflects her own evaluation of the trajectory of her life and her arrested state of infantilization (especially given the book's subject matter). And rather than finding the ambition to complete the book herself, she tumbles into the arms of yet another patriarchal figure, Australian businessman Ludovic Seeley, for reassurance and direction.

Seeley is often aligned with Murray Thwaite, especially through Marina's narrative point of view (226), but the reader soon becomes aware that Seeley has ulterior motives in his seduction of Marina. He seeks to expose the self-made myth and elevated status of Murray Thwaite as a great American cultural commentator, perhaps out of envious masculine competition, since his business enterprise to "take on New York" involves the creation of a magazine that provides the type of subversive cultural commentary that would destabilize American figures such as Thwaite (13). Seeley eventually works to turn Marina against her father, using her book as a way to "expose" Murray's ideological cover (or lack thereof) in a way that also implicates her as a child-like inheritor of his cover: he suggests that she call the book "*The Emperor's Children Have No Clothes*" (226). In a spin on the idiom "the emperor has no clothes," which in general, is used to indicate the power of ideological perception to "dress" a material reality that is otherwise "naked," Seeley criticizes not only Murray as such an American emperor dressed in the American Dream, but also Marina, who on the dressed surface represents postfeminist power and success and yet actually has nothing of her own to show for it. But rather than seeing Seeley's criticism as partially levelled against herself, she instead criticizes and distances herself from her father's paternalism while planning her wedding: "Do I really want him to give me away, and on his property? Do you know what I'm saying? It's not like I'm some crazed feminist, but under the circumstances…" (328). Here Messud articulates Marina's anger in language that is, in a way, distinctly postfeminist: just as postfeminism tries to distance itself from "radical" or "shrill" feminism – despite its indebtedness to feminism's continuing project to uphold women's best interests – Marina likewise distances herself from a "crazed" mode of feminism in her critique of her father's proprietorial masculine hegemony.

But even a culturally disruptive event such as 9/11 ultimately fails to shake the cultural blinders or "clothing" from Marina's perception. She eventually reconciles with her father, and furthermore, agrees to marry Seeley, who, after his subversive magazine fails to launch after 9/11, decides to leave for England to restart his career. When Marina asks him what she should do in the

wake of 9/11, he simply states: "What momentum have you got to lose? You're still your father's daughter, aren't you?" (449). Seeley suggests that 9/11 will have little effect on her privileged position in American society, while his own status as an Australian might somewhat compromise his own, since, as he notes, "they won't want foreigners here now" (449). Marina reacts to Seeley's dismissive remark in a repressive way: "She hadn't known how to take this. What it seemed he was saying was too hideous – rendered him too hideous – to contemplate. But she decided that he was speaking from some baffled, pain-filled place, and so forgave him, even consoled him. She loved him, didn't she?" (449). Rather than Marina suppressing Seeley's disdain for what he perceives as her childlike dependence, it is precisely this type of paternalistic infantilization that needs to be interrogated by women in her position, and feminism would provide the critical framework for such a task. But instead, Marina falls back into the "consoling" posture of the female gender role in companionate marriage, providing emotional support for her partner who must otherwise fend for himself (and thus for *them*) on his own. Thus, Messud suggests that 9/11 did have a regressive effect on American gender relations, all the while indicating that the postfeminist gender politics that preceded the attacks were already problematic, since they were overly dependent on ideals of self-made masculinity which either tend to be enervating in the case of women who grow up in the context of patriarchal privilege (such as Marina), or unsatisfying in the case of women who aspire to masculine ideals of capitalist accumulation, only to partake in the conspicuous consumption deemed the prerogative of postfeminist women.

Along with her critique of the postfeminist subject, Messud also directly engages with the source of Maria's tumbling femininity: the patriarchal masculine hegemony of Murray Thwaite and Ludovic Seeley. As established above, Thwaite is a celebrated New York journalist who takes great pride in being a self-made success. Having risen out of rural obscurity, Thwaite persevered to become a member of New York's liberal elite. But Thwaite is a self-made man who has grown complacent and even hypocritical in his later years. While venerated as a man of great wisdom and

moral fortitude, he engages in a prolonged affair with his daughter's best friend, Danielle. Moreover, when his wife, who works for a social services agency, brings a troubled African American youth to their home, he is visibly uncomfortable and unaccommodating. Despite these hypocritical flaws, he is venerated by other characters as an exemplar of American self-made success – the type of man that other men want *to be* and women want to *be with* (heterosexually speaking). His young nephew, who is obsessed with Ralph Waldo Emerson and in pursuit of his own individualistic path, claims that everyone is in "thrall" of Thwaite's all-American allure, "the women without exception but the men no less so" (437). So although Thwaite holds a paternalistic power over Marina, and a similar albeit figurative paternalism over Danielle, he also evokes the homosocial veneration (which is often fraught with competitive envy) of other men.

However, it is Thwaite's affair with Danielle – his daughter's best friend – that deserves special attention here. Messud characterizes the affair in terms of masculine conquest – not only by representing Thwaite's sexual pursuit of Danielle, but also by depicting Danielle's complicit desire to be the object of his conquest. Danielle "long[s] to hear about his other conquests in order to rank herself among them" (260). Since Thwaite is the symbolic "emperor" referenced in the novel's title, Messud establishes a running subtext throughout in which Thwaite's imperial conquests of women are conflated and thus made analogous to the conquests of the aging American empire as a whole. This recalls, though in far more flattering terms, the deafened and slobbering old guard of American patriarchy arranged at the table in See's novel, whose "masculine monologues" upheld unquestionable American beliefs, death-transcending worldviews designed to keep their wives under their quavering masculine cover. Along these lines, Messud characterizes Thwaite through Danielle's perspective by using architectural similes that further conflate his human presence with aging imperial structures: "He had loomed shaggy and grand like a crumbling castle, a half ruin […] his belt unbuckled and his bare torso monumental, and had held her to him" (230). On the interpersonal plane, Thwaite is represented as an aging, ostensibly benevolent public intellectual who also indulges

in imperial affairs on the side (holding Danielle in his protective thrall), which echoes the greater imperial history of America and its attendant gender configurations. However, on 9/11 these gendered symbolic associations are disrupted by material reality: Thwaite's picturesque "crumbling castle" – his decadent, gracefully aged imperial body – is demystified as a romantic symbol of American imperialism and displaced by the material horror of the destruction of two *real* structures that actually symbolized America's global economic empire. Thus, 9/11 catalyzes Thwaite's disillusionment with his masculine conquest: he realizes that he has been irresponsible and that the affair has become too risky. Thwaite promptly abandons his imperial project and retreats back into his legitimate domestic life, which is the opposite orientation taken by the Bush administration, though, as revealed below, Thwaite will eventually lend his credible voice to the post-9/11 war cause. In the end, Danielle, though complicit in the affair, is the victim in this relationship as she is left abandoned and dejected – another tumbling woman in the wake of the illusory protective cover of imperial manhood.

These contradictions in Thwaite's liberal character, combined with his self-assured sense of entitlement, stirs the ire of Ludovic Seeley, his future son-in-law, who wishes to expose him as just another "sentimentalist" working to perpetuate America as a "Land of Lies" (419). Seeley, though an Australian, is the novel's most static and idealized embodiment of the self-made man. An established entrepreneur, Seeley moves to America to "take on New York" or, as one of the novel's female characters puts it: to "conquer New York, and then the world" (13). Seeley is characterized by a desire to partake in an American mode of economic conquest. However, he wishes to do so at the expense of American capitalism. He plans to establish a subversive magazine whose mandate is to question how emotions "color our reality" so as to dispose of their sentimental "falsehoods… [and] see things for what they are" (122). Seeley envisions the magazine as a forum to deconstruct American hypocrisy – at the core of which is American exceptionalism – all the while making significant profits and turning himself into a celebrity, which only foregrounds his own complicity in

this hypocrisy. But Messud uses Seeley's character for greater satirical ends: as a foreign Australian presence, his conquest for economic and ideological dominance – traits closely associated with American capitalism – is in fact ideologically mobilized against American culture in that he wishes to capitalize from the very system he intends to subvert.[45] Furthermore, Seeley's "taking on New York" – his synecdochic conquest of America itself – also characterizes his relations with American women: he smiles at his future American wife with a "hint of a vulpine incisor," suggesting predatory ulterior motives (116). His courting of Thwaite's daughter is certainly opportunistic, allowing him to marry into a powerful family established on the virtues of self-made manhood, which are embodied in Thwaite as its benevolent patriarch. This is where Seeley's project to undermine American ideology becomes particularly gendered in its contradictions: his attack on American hegemony is mobilized by similarly exploitative practices of hegemonic masculinity in his relations with an American woman. Thus, his infiltration of the American empire occurs on the symbolic familial plane: he opportunistically pursues the Emperor's daughter in order to marry into the empire and take it over from within.

Messud's characterization of Seeley as an ostensibly familiar though insidiously foreign self-made man works to mobilize the exceptionalist ideology of American capitalism against itself, which also exposes the exploitative ideals that legitimize hegemonic masculinity in America. Since he is represented as an ideological terrorist who wishes to "take on New York," Seeley serves to prefigure the actual terrorist attacks in the novel and thus turns the hijacked American ideal of the self-made man and its attendant masculinist ideologies of utilitarian individualism and American exceptionalism against its culture of origin, suggesting that the attacks were in fact precipitated by the very thing mobilized as a response against them: American masculine dominance. However, the actual terrorist attacks on 9/11 ultimately undermines Seeley's revolutionary project, rendering his magazine a "frivolous satirical thing," a mere "fashion magazine… instead of an organ for radical cultural commentary" (449). In the end, the attacks reveal that Seeley's sense of cultural "revolution"

is very different from the one motivating the terrorists: the former operates in a sublimated, rarefied realm of intellectual political discourse, whereas the latter arises out of a culture that, in globalized terms, is still operating from the base and living in conditions of relative material need. When this material difference is violently manifested on American shores, Seeley's "revolution" is reduced to mere dumb show: "So much for taking New York by storm: So much for revolution. The revolution belonged to other people now, far away from them, and it was *real*" (449 emphasis mine). In this sense, Seeley recognizes that his disingenuous attempt to create fashionable cognitive maps in his bourgeois political magazine is infinitely upstaged by the indelible carnage of the cognitive map articulated by the terrorists – Seeley's ideational content is usurped by material reality.

The Emperor's Children (2006) thus critiques the utilitarian individualism that motivates the self-made man on the plane of interpersonal relations, and, by analogical extension, the ideology of American exceptionalism that determines the nation's hegemonic foreign policies. In the pre-9/11 section of her novel, Messud depicts the sublimated mode of frontiersman masculinity through her characterization of the self-made man, and the detrimental effects of this ideal on her characters' interpersonal relations.[46] The post-9/11 section depicts the male characters' different responses to 9/11 as an intrusion of material reality into their attempts to embody an ideal of American masculinity. Though the attacks initiate a minor moral awakening in Thwaite in which he promptly ends his affair, Seeley remains morally unfazed and resumes the hegemonic practices that – through the catalyzing event of 9/11 – seal the fate of his magazine and his conquest of America. Likewise, by analogical extension, the Bush administration steers the nation back into the death-transcending American exceptionalism that had legitimized the geopolitical practices partly responsible for the attacks on 9/11.[47] This recuperation is best summarized by none other than Thwaite the self-made "sentimentalist" himself, who, when called upon by media sources such as *CNN* for commentary on 9/11, "formulates a reasoned middle ground" using euphemistic rhetoric that proposes a "productive realignment" of "America's foreign policy" that is simultaneously not "opposed to the invasion of

Afghanistan" (460). Though Thwaite may not embody the vigilant guardsman of the post-9/11 American frontier, he certainly remains a regressive force in post-9/11 American society, using his status and commanding voice as a public intellectual to salve the nation's wounds in a time of crisis by fabricating more death-transcending Lies to secure his exceptional Land.

The Lengthening Shadows of *The Falling Man*

Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2011), Carolyn See's *There Will Never Be Another You* (2007), and Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children* (2006) extend the critique of falling men through characters such as Phil and Sean, who are caught in the middle of pre-existing falling projects of masculinity (marriages, careers) that are exacerbated by 9/11 as an emasculating cultural event. However, the falling men in these novels are measured in relation to tumbling women who signify the oppressive effects of the sidelong continuities of American masculinity. Such women are depicted *in medias res* of contemporary gender transition, standing in for not only the centripetal violence enacted against gendered others on the American home front, "protective" or otherwise, but also, in the context of 9/11, the centrifugal violence enacted against other nations – the latter of which is often dressed in the "civilizing" rhetoric of imperial/colonial conquest and often construed as the protecting of Middle Eastern women from Muslim misogyny. Both forms of patriarchal violence, the latter being an extension of the nation-building imperatives of the former, with the etymological roots of patriotism tracing back to the Greek combining form *patr-* or "father," have a lengthy Euro-American history. And the masculinist response to 9/11, which largely served as a pretext for the continuation of American imperialist affairs that have kept other nations tumbling in patriarchal America's exceptional wake, was similarly justified by imperatives to protect at home and civilize abroad.

These writers also examine how certain women (mainly white and affluent) have rebounded from the tumble of women's history in the United States and have gained socioeconomic footing. Waldman suggests that while it is true that certain women have achieved success in American culture, both before and after 9/11, such women have conformed to the capitalist culture of masculine hegemony in order to achieve socioeconomic and political power, which ultimately calls into question the exploitative underpinnings of American notions of "success." Geraldine Bitman is the ideal case in point in these novels, who is depicted as exercising masculine hegemony with a ruthlessness and cunning that is unparalleled. Bitman's white privilege certainly comes under the third-wave critique: as an inheritor of her husband's "fortune and his unrealized political ambitions," she is in many ways an extension of a dead man's oppressive legacy, the female heir to masculine hegemony.

However, it is to American citizens such as Mohammad Khan to which this study will now turn, who is a falling man of an(other) variety: one obscured by the presence of the white falling man of traditional American masculine hegemony. As time passes and the path of light changes, the absent presence of the falling man's shadow emerges, lengthens into perspective. Khan represents both the success and failure of American democracy: as a visible minority from the Middle East, his success as an American architect is a testament to the nation's inclusivity – at least for the cultural elite of businessmen and professionals. However, once the "blind" competition succumbs to the suspicious "vision" of post-9/11 America, discriminations of race and ethnicity deprives Khan of recognition for his merit as an architect, and of basic respect as an American citizen. The novels explored in the next chapter will examine the perspective of racial and ethnic "others" on 9/11 – texts that depict the effects of 9/11 on the American Dreams of American immigrants. I will examine how the rise of the nation's mortality salience after 9/11, an exposed tender nerve, leads to the erection of "protective" walls of security at the American frontier, a patriotic enamel demarcating inside from outside. Those regarded as "other" are left to ricochet at the margins, against the

hardened militarism of the nation's fortified democracy after 9/11, tumbling away in the wake of American contradiction as "outsiders," either as dejected citizens within or as defected repatriates without.

Chapter 4: "In the Shadow of *The Falling Man"*

In an article featured in *Esquire* which coincided with the eighth anniversary of the attacks in 2009, Tom Junod documented the retrieval of the real identity of the "falling man" in Richard Drew's photograph, beyond the figure's abstracted status as an icon with its attendant symbolic readings, including the one foregrounded in this analysis. After an investigation conducted by *Toronto Globe and Mail* editor Peter Cheney, it was revealed with near certainty that the falling man was in fact Jonathan Briley, "a light-skinned black man" who worked at Windows on the World (Junod 2009). Thus, as explored in the previous chapter, just as the "falling man" did not speak for the women who fell on that day, it also did not speak for the many "others" who fell on that day who did not fit the "falling businessman" paradigm of symbolic readings, including this one, that have arisen in its wake. And this, despite the fact that the white businessman of past symbolic interpretation was/is in reality a black man who worked at the restaurant on the top floor of the North Tower. This revelation more accurately reflects the reality of the situation: that among the white businessmen who fell on that day were other men, differing in race and/or ethnicity.[48] Thus, the persistence of the dominant reading of *The Falling Man* as an image of the fall of American capitalism and its ideal masculine subject illustrates the potential for the symbolic to overwhelm the actuality of material reality.

In this chapter, I not only extend the critique of the "falling man" to literary representations of "other" Americans who have (im)migrated to the United States in search of their own American Dreams, I also deconstruct the dominant interpretation of *The Falling Man* itself as a somewhat mistaken reading whose symbolic light casts a shadow of its own, beyond the controversial pall created by its significance as a *memento mori* to correct the excessive pride of white American

business masculinity. Illuminating the "falling man" solely as a white American businessman creates a shadow with the very light of its own symbolic critique, which is designed to illuminate underlying material realities and thus eliminate shadows. In this light, this chapter will attempt to bring a more defined and accurate "falling man" into view.

Thus far, my critique of *The Falling Man* has engaged with a particular symbolic reading of the "falling man" therein: the "white male in suit and tie" as characterized by Don DeLillo in his depiction of David Janiak, a performance artist in his novel who is known as "Falling Man" (DeLillo 159). Janiak shows up randomly in various locales in New York City, clothed in a "dress shirt and blue suit," and approximates the image of *The Falling Man* by "dangling" (with harness) from high places (220). DeLillo's characterization of *The Falling Man* as a white man dressed in business attire (an American businessman) fits his overall figurative schematization and critique: his alignment of Keith's domestic/interpersonal "fall" due to his masculine business *ethos* and practices with the symbolic fall of globalized American capitalism embodied in *The Falling Man* of 9/11. That the figure in *The Falling Man* has been characterized as white and besuited is due in part to the popularity of such "falling" figures of masculine crisis in American culture, from John "Scottie" Ferguson in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), to the many American novels written after World War II that explore the vacuous lives of men in gray flannel suits, such as John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960) and Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* (1961), to the most recent iteration of "falling" white masculinity in AMC's *Mad Men* (2007-2015), the latter of which has openly referenced *The Falling Man* in its opening credits sequence, and ran a controversial ad campaign for its fifth season, which dramatizes the gaining momentum of Don Draper's "fall." This accumulated iconography of "falling" white masculinity has created a cultural imaginary whose filtering lens conditions the way we see and interpret certain cultural phenomenon, such as masculine crisis. George Yancy examines the ways in which "whiteness functions" in Western culture as "an ontological given," citing Russell Ferguson's assertion that "'dominant discourse never tries to speak its own name. Its authority is

based on absence. The absence is not just that of the various groups classified as 'other', although members of these groups are routinely denied power. It is also the lack of any overt acknowledgment of the specificity of the dominant culture, which is simply assumed to be the all-encompassing norm. This is the basis of its power'" (300). In this view, whiteness is often an assumed plenitude in Western culture when it comes to matters of power and influence, unless evidence to the contrary is brought to light. Of course, this assumption is always informed by preconceived notions of place and context and attendant racial and/or racist associations of the figures assumed to be therein. So in addition to this "ontological given" of whiteness, there are certain situational factors specific to the context of the "falling man" that may predispose one to make certain assumptions, conditioned by the ideological imaginary and material realities of American capitalism and the masculine subjects idealized in its attendant contexts and settings: namely, that a large number of white businessmen occupy the office towers of high finance, such as the World Trade Center.

Thus, my critical reading of *The Falling Man as* a symbolic figure of the fall of white American business masculinity has been predicated on two hitherto unmentioned absences. The first is an explicit engagement with the specific cultural lens through which the "falling man" is viewed and interpreted, which has afforded a critical view of white hegemony in American capitalism but which nonetheless creates and sustains a second absence, obscuring the reality of the falling man: the absent presence of the "other" therein, the "negative" that foregrounds the illusory presence of whiteness in the photograph. My deliberate withholding of this knowledge up to this point, and the resulting impaired vision, recreates the process by which the presence of the "other," who has always been there in clear view, can be rendered absent when awash in the white light of being, the ontological givenness of whiteness.[49] Thus, at this time, this study takes a self-reflexive turn, revealing a deliberate sleight-of-hand that will now be included as part of its critique. The past three chapters have established a critique of American business masculinity through a symbolic reading of the "falling man" as an aesthetic inversion of self-made masculinity – the white businessman in the

context of globalized American capitalism – but now this critical reading itself will be subjected to deconstruction. Such a move seeks to display the power of the cultural lenses of the American imaginary, to the point where critical engagements with white masculine hegemony can replicate the very discriminative tendencies foregrounded in their critique. This analytical context of 9/11 not only examines how the symbolic is mobilized to deconstruct the material reality of American exceptionalism (the seemingly impervious American homeland and its reified institutions), but also displays how certain rescued material realities/suppressed historicities – such as the identity of the "falling man" – can be used to deconstruct and further nuance the symbolic mythologizing of the attacks as representing the fall of white masculine hegemony in American capitalism. In this way, this chapter will continue to reveal the contradictions in American history that perpetuate the "specificity of the dominant culture" of whiteness through which the image of *The Falling Man* has been read. The cultural-historical and literary analyses that follow will not only reveal the ways in which racism has secured white masculine hegemony throughout American history to the present post-9/11 moment – in outright contradiction of the nation's idealization of freedom and equality – but also how certain middle to upper middle class visible minorities, as agents of American culture and capital, can come to realize their own implication in the contradictions of the American Dream, through their experience of domestic racism after 9/11. As elucidated below, this experience leads to a racially inflected "fall" which sensitizes the (im)migrants foregrounded in these novels to the plight of others throughout the world who live under American oppression, including in the countries from which they have emigrated. The depiction of domestic racism in these novels critiques the ways in which the power of a white, neoliberal, business masculinity is in fact dependent upon the ethnic and racial others (both on the domestic and international front) whom it co-opts through the American Dream that it simultaneously denies them, both symbolically and materially.

This chapter will examine novels written by visible minorities who explore the context of U.S. (im)migration after 9/11: Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2006), Mohsin Hamid's *The*

Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), and Teju Cole's *Open City* (2012). These novelists are men and women with transnational connections to West Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, and who explore how visible minorities from these regions traverse the increasingly racist landscape of post-9/11 America. According to Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser and Eveline Reisenauer, "Transnationality connotes the social practices of agents – individuals, groups, communities and organizations – across the borders of nation-states. The term denotes a spectrum of cross-border ties in various spheres of social life – familial, socio-cultural, economic and political – ranging from travel, through sending financial remittances, to exchanging ideas" (16). As authors with plural national backgrounds, these novelists are transnational subjects who partake in the "socio-cultural" and "political" components of this definition, through the "exchanging of ideas" about transnational subjectivity in the United States. Two of these novelists, Laila Halaby and Teju Cole, are immigrants from Lebanon and Nigeria respectively, and are now American citizens, though they maintain a transnational orientation. And though Mohsin Hamid is a dual Pakistani/UK citizen, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) was directly inspired by his own migration to New York City to attend university and to work for a successful financial firm. King and Christou suggest that current research on transnationalism is too focused on immigration – which is often a reflection of the "assimilation framework of US migration policy and thinking, and the dominance of US scholars in the transnationalism debate" (455). As an alternative to the unidirectionality of traditional immigration models, they suggest that research needs to focus on a plurality of "mobilities," which reflects the increasing reality that "transnational identities are often expressed not from the standpoint of being immigrants, but rather of being 'transmigrants' or 'floaters' whose simultaneous living in two (or more) worlds subverts the rhetoric, policy and scholarly concentration on integration/assimilation" (455). In this chapter, Hamid most accurately reflects such a transnational orientation, both in his own cosmopolitan lifestyle and in the critical trajectory of his novel, though all three writers share multinational backgrounds and use their multiple senses of belonging – their

identification with both the American self and its "other(s)" – to critique American exceptionalism after 9/11.

Hamid's novel is a product of his cosmopolitan/transnational orientation: he has multiple residences in London, Lahore, New York and is a frequent traveler. Furthermore, while growing up in Lahore, Hamid attended an American school and continued his postsecondary education at Princeton. As noted by Anthony Appiah, in the past "colonial education" produced "generation[s] immersed in the literature of the colonizers, a literature that often reflected and transmitted the imperialist vision" (947). Appiah's observation on the influence of Western cultural hegemony applies not only to the personal trajectory of Hamid's life, but also, more specifically, to his postcolonial novel which explicitly problematizes the influence of imperial American ideology on the formation of the American Dreams of certain immigrants. Rather than simply "reflecting and transmitting the imperialist vision," Hamid mobilizes his Western knowledge and experience against this vision in its contemporary form in the context of 9/11. Halaby and Cole also share a cosmopolitan background, which lends to their work a subversive familiarity with views from both inside and outside the United States: the former is an American who was born in Beirut to a Jordanian father and an American mother, while the latter was born and currently lives in the United States, though he was raised in Nigeria. Thus, all three authors share what Inderpal Grewal calls "transnational connectivities," which positions their national identity neither firmly "here" or "there." Given their unique position at the interstices of culture, they critique the United States from the subject position of those who have felt the cultural and political effects of the nation's oppressive domestic and foreign policies after 9/11. In their novels, Hamid, Halaby, and Cole reveal and traverse the porous boundaries of nationhood, disrupting notions of a unified and monolithic America, all the while contending that there *is* a hegemonic American culture that they are writing within and against, especially in the aftermath of 9/11. Thus, these novels explore the problematic allure and influence of transnational American capitalism, by featuring protagonists who are

transnational subjects – immigrants and migrants – who come to the United States to pursue the economic opportunities promised by the American Dream, only to be thwarted by the contradictions inherent in the American freedom they seek, which comes into stark relief after 9/11.

These novels are written through the first person perspectives of their protagonists, all of whom are visible minorities whose civil rights and freedoms are compromised by the policies of surveillance (USA Patriot Act) enacted by the Bush Administration, and furthermore by the populist patriotic fervor generated in post-9/11 media.[50] Extending upon the previous chapter, this analysis will explore how those who were traditionally discouraged from adopting the ideal "self-made" practices of American capitalism are increasingly making a presence in the workplace and marketplace.[51] However, these novels explicitly foreground the implications of race and ethnicity – along with the issues of sex and gender explored in previous chapters – on their protagonists' ability to sustain their American Dreams after 9/11. These novelists, perhaps as a result of their transnational connectivities and sense of multiple national belonging, rigorously contextualize the United States and its post-9/11 domestic and foreign policies within the greater history of Euro-American capitalist imperialism, situating 9/11 within the continuities of hegemonic masculinity perpetuated by American men in interpersonal relations at home and by the nation in its economic and military interventions abroad. Thus, along with the post-9/11 domestic persecution experienced by the Middle Eastern and South Asian (im)migrant protagonists in these novels, the authors also depict an attendant sense of guilt. In their experience of the contradictions of American freedom on the domestic front, these characters come to realize that they have succumbed to the deceptive allure of the American Dream, and are thus complicit in American hegemony as middle and upper middle class agents of American capital – as both producers and consumers – which has adverse effects in nations abroad, including their homelands, and of which 9/11 was a symptomatic backlash. Thus, just as the preceding chapters have examined how certain 9/11 novels interrogate how American culture encourages white men, and increasingly white women, to pursue the self-made success of the

American Dream, only to leave them disillusioned with the vacuity and interpersonal breakdown that ensues, the latter of which is catalyzed or exacerbated by 9/11, the novels in this chapter examine the sense of disillusionment (even betrayal) with the American Dream experienced by (im)migrants after the attacks, suggesting that 9/11 fiction engages with and mobilizes the historical context of 9/11 to dramatize the continuing contradictions of the American Dream.

Post-9/11 Transnational American Subjectivities

The depictions of transnational subjectivity explored in this chapter are focused on characters who have immigrated or migrated to the United States in search of economic opportunity. Thus, to contextualize this study, it is important to establish how the increasingly transnational scope of American capitalism has affected transnational subjects in the world – those who maintain citizenship in foreign countries but who nonetheless mediate "transnational connectivities" with the United States, either as producers or consumers of American products. However, such "transnational connectivities" abroad are increasingly the sites of power relations between corporate managers at home and productive laborers abroad, in which low-paying jobs are outsourced to citizens of impoverished nations overseas. Zulema Valdez attributes this increasing power disparity to the rise of global American capitalism, which

> ushered in a restructuring of the U.S economy as corporations sought to maximize profits by moving the manufacturing sector and associated labor force overseas. Today, the structure of the American economy resembles an hourglass. At the top of the hourglass are high-tech high-skilled businesses and jobs, where capitalists and wage workers in managerial and professional occupations enjoy greater income returns, business longevity, and job security. At the bottom […], low- or no-skilled service jobs are plentiful and survival-strategy self-

employment is on the rise, although these business owners earn substantially less than their middle- and upper-class counterparts. (33-34)

So although discourses of transnational subjectivity and connectivity suggest a greater participation in neoliberal American capitalism throughout the world, the extending of capitalist labor markets throughout the world has yet to result in an equitable extension of fair trade practices and distribution of wealth.

The terms "internationalization," "transnationalization," and "globalization" are often conflated in meaning or used interchangeably. In distinguishing between the terms "internationalization" and "transnationalization," Faist *et al.* suggest that the former refers more generally to the "ties, events and processes involving exclusively states and their agents" throughout the world, while the latter, which began to take predominance in the 1960s, refers to the "increasing economic and political interdependence between industrialized countries" and to "processes which involve powerful non-state actors such as multi-national companies" (10). Finally, Faist *et al.* distinguish these two terms from "globalization," which "assumes that European and North American modernity is globalized or generalized from a national state to a global level, as if these models of modernity – of political, cultural and economic development – could be generalized across the world. In short, they basically upscale nation-state theories" (11). Thus, "globalization" suggests that Western hegemony has been achieved throughout the world. However, despite the necessary critique of tendencies toward terminological and conceptual totality (both "globalization" and "hegemonic masculinity"), this study maintains that the United States – with the most powerful capitalist economy and military in the world – *does* exert a predominant influence, especially through its neoliberal foreign policies which maximize the profitability of transnational American corporations at the expense of disadvantaged host nations. In *Transnational America* (2004), Inderpal Grewal defines "transnational connectivities" explicitly within the power differentials structured by post-industrial American capitalism, as those sites of cultural interface between

professional corporate America, as made manifest in its highly mediated and commodified neoliberal ideology, and the increasingly outsourced and/or migrant labor that produces the consumer products that constitute/signify the American Dream throughout the world. However, while the latter produce the commodities that materialize the American Dream which they themselves are also conditioned to desire through American media, they are ultimately denied entry to the "American way of life" that their exploited labor sustains. Further situating these transnational connectivities in the context of post-9/11 international political economy, Grewal states:

> While the American corporate mantra remains becoming "global," the borders of the United States are being increasingly policed against particular groups of non-whites; and as has been so often mentioned, the mobility of capital and goods is not matched by the mobility of labor (especially labor that is believed to be "unskilled," which defines the work of so many women and the poor), given the new outsourcing not only of low-wage but also of white-collar and pink-collar work. (15)

Although she traces the continuities of exploitation conducted through these transnational connectivities in pre- and post-9/11 neoliberal American capitalism, Grewal also theorizes these points of interface as possible sites of political contestation. Grewal, who positions herself against Hardt and Negri's conception of the United States as a decentralized or "deterritorialized" empire, argues that her "metaphor of connectivity suggests that territories and spaces are rearticulated as new centers of power along new and old routes" (24). In this sense, Grewal's conception avoids the "totalizing" poststructural approach of Hardt and Negri, which articulates American capitalism as a new deterritorialized global sovereignty as opposed to a traditional empire centralized in a nation-state, by instead suggesting that "globalization" has never actually been achieved, but is rather a "powerful imaginary produced through knowledges moving along specific transnational connectivities," which include various media outlets and information technologies, such as television, film, and the internet (24). This is not to say that American cultural hegemony does not

have a global influence and real material effects, but rather that this hegemony is still predicated on a Gramscian notion of ideological consent: this geopolitical economic rule is not totalized and monolithic but must always be negotiated at transnational sites of connectivity, both through virtual forms of media technology and material forms of production. In this sense, Grewal blends the distinctions made by Faist *et al.* above, suggesting that American capitalism is still predicated on the centralization of the United States as a nation-state, but in a way in which transnational American corporations – especially given the neoliberal turn – are increasingly in collusion with the American government/state to override any sense of "economic and political interdependence" in the transnational spread of capitalism, instead promoting a vision of America as independent and exceptional.

Atilio A. Boron argues that Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000) obfuscates the exploitative practices that perpetuate the continued centralization of "global" capital in a few developed nations:

> The neoliberal globalization ideologists' rhetoric is not enough to disguise the fact that 96 percent of those 200 global and transnational companies have their headquarters in only eight countries, are legally registered as incorporated companies of eight countries; and their board of directors sit in eight countries of metropolitan capitalism. Less than 2 percent of their board of directors' members are non-nationals, while more than 85 per cent of all their technological developments have originated within their 'national frontiers.' Their reach is global, but their property and their owners have a clear *national base*. Their earnings flow from all over the world to their head-quarters and the loans necessary to finance their operations are conveniently obtained by their headquarters in the national banks at interest rates impossible to find in peripheral capitalisms, thanks to which they can easily displace their competitors. (46 emphasis added)

So contrary to Hardt and Negri's assessment of the deterritorialized state of transnational American capitalism, Boron, along with Grewal, suggests that such a conception of globalization ignores the

still very centralized national corporate base(s) that privilege a few wealthy Western nations in global capitalism. Ultimately, Boron reads Hardt and Negri's theory of contemporary empire as reductionist in its "economicism," depicting a new world order in which the death of the nation-state in the face of neoliberal globalization leaves little room for establishing the consensus and solidarity needed for political dissent (54-55). However, in fairness to later developments in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004), Hardt and Negri do see opportunities for resistance to this new world order, championing a "form of labor organizing" that "must be the organized expression of the multitude, capable of engaging the entire global realm of social labor" (136-37).[52] Hardt and Negri offer an ethical foundation for dissent based on alterity, which recognizes and respects the singularity of different organized labor interests throughout the world, while also using what these singularities share in common on a global scale to form a multitude to resist the homogenization of neoliberal globalization. Rather than conceiving globalized capitalism as having a paralyzing effect on the subordinated classes of labor which constitute the multitude, they argue that "from the perspective of capital and the global power structure" such organizations of class-based resistance are "dangerous," which suggests that such classes may have more power (albeit latent) than often forecasted:

> If they were simply excluded from the circuits of global production, they would be no great threat. If they were merely passive victims of injustice, oppression, and exploitation, they would not be so dangerous. They are dangerous rather because not only the immaterial and the industrial workers but also the agricultural and even the poor and the migrants are *included* as active subjects of biopolitical production. Their mobility and their commonality is constantly a threat to destabilize the global hierarchies and divisions on which global capitalist power depends. They slide across the barriers and burrow connecting tunnels that undermine the walls. Moreover, these dangerous classes continually disrupt the ontological constitution of Empire: at each intersection of lines of creativity or lines of flight the social

subjectivities become more hybrid, mixed, and misceginated, further escaping the fusional

powers of control. (137)

In these terms, the perceived fatalism or "economicism" of Hardt and Negri's original conception of empire is mitigated by their later theorizing of the dispersive potential of the multitude, whose constitutive singularities can better infiltrate and destabilize global capitalist hierarchies at key points of interface. This development aligns their theory more closely with Grewal's conception of transnational connectivities as porous areas of contact between nations/cultures, those points of interface between Western (predominantly American) hegemony and nations on the exploited side of global economic exchange. In this sense, American hegemony remains both territorial (still rooted to a "national base" or "headquarters") and deterritorialized insofar as the permeation of ideology remains a key aspect to maintaining American hegemony by securing consent to rule through persuasive media forms and content. Along these lines, this chapter will focus on the possibilities of writing and reading fiction as a form of media exchange, one that can forge transnational connectivities by drawing cognitive maps that render visible the international divisions of labor and thus serve as a site of sociopolitical contestation.

Grewal's theory of literature as a politicized site of transnational connectivity traces its origins to Homi Bhabha's conception of the radical discursive possibilities that can occur at the "interstices" of culture(s). The state of being at the "interstices" or "in-between" cultures allows a transnational subject to exist in a space where meaning is negotiated through "borderline work," which are processes of decoding and translation that generate new hybrid meanings that have the potential to initiate ideological change:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with "newness" that is not part of the

continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural

translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it

renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent "in-between" space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. (938)

Here, Bhabha points to the innovative potential of such borderline work, which is a reworking of temporality, a disruption of present assumptions through the interpolation of the past – not the sanctified past of the historical record, but rather, a rescued or re-envisioned past which introduces an awareness of the contingency of present circumstances and cultural assumptions, a sense that things could be other than what they are. The hope is to raise, expand, and transform consciousness beyond the strictures of linear hegemonic narrativity through the rewriting and rearranging of temporality, disrupting the circuit of time that secures hegemony in George Orwell's dystopian world in *1984* (1948), in which "who controls the past, controls the future: who controls the present, controls the past." Since the hegemony of Western and/or American media disseminates a particular cultural vision that espouses Western values through whitewashed fictional and historical narratives, such attempts to wrest and rewrite the past from the control of the present in order to change the future perform the type of borderline work that can transform cultural consciousness.

The three post-9/11 novels analyzed in this chapter perform such "insurgent act(s) of cultural translation." Not only are they written by authors whose transnational subjectivity places them in unique positions of cultural interface between the United States and the predominately Muslim nations from West Africa to South Asia, they use this perspective to translate the dominant post-9/11 discourses that figure 9/11 as an "unprecedented" event of "terrorism" into broader meanings that connect it to larger narratives of Euro-American imperialism. This historicization of 9/11, by tracing its continuities with America's imperial past, "renews" this past by revealing its contingency on the imperialist narrative thread of American exceptionalism that continues to inform post-9/11 foreign policy to this day. By raising cultural consciousness to the continuities of the West's imperial past and present, these novels can generate transnational connectivities for readers that can initiate new ideological debate, hopefully towards material change.[53] These writers take up what Bhabha

considers to be the "political responsibility" of the postcolonial critic, who must "attempt to fully realize, and take responsibility for, the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present" (941). In their rigorous attempts to historicize post-9/11 American culture within larger narratives of cultural imperialism, they critique their protagonists' complacent pursuit of the American Dream, suggesting that they are complicit in the very oppression that they have managed to successfully escape in their emigration. These writers depict the transformation of their protagonists from a pre-9/11 state of complacency to a post-9/11 recognition that the American Dream and its promise of freedom has always been fraught with historical contradiction – the post-9/11 civil rights revisionism of the USA Patriot Act only being the most recent example.

Furthermore, like the novelists explored in previous chapters, Mohsin Hamid, Laila Halaby and Teju Cole situate domestic gender relations against the larger geopolitical crises that led to 9/11, drawing critical parallels between hegemonic American masculinity and the nation's aggressive nationalistic foreign policy. Thus, along the lines of Briggs, McCormack and Way, who argue that a transnational orientation "can do to the nation what gender did for sexed bodies: provide the conceptual acid that denaturalizes all their deployments, compelling us to acknowledge that the nation, like sex, is a thing contested, interrupted, and always shot through with contradiction" (627), I argue that these authors not only put forward such a transnational orientation, they also reveal how the attempt to conserve an exceptional sense of national identity in the wake of 9/11 was intimately connected to the retrenchment of regressive gender politics and hegemonic masculinity that quickly followed the attacks. These novelists use their destabilization of American hegemonic masculinity and the *exceptional individual* of the self-made businessman to destabilize the oppositions constructed by neoliberal ideology, which define the United States as an *exceptional nation-state* and exemplar of civilization in a fallen world.

Race and the Contradictions of American Self-Made Masculinity

The compromising of civil rights in the United States after 9/11, particularly those of visible minorities of Middle Eastern descent or appearance, is a regressive restriction of political autonomy which recalls the historical contradictions between the democratic ideals venerated in American culture and the material practices of racism that have routinely violated them. These contradictions began soon after the founding of the nation in the seventeenth century, with the advent of the slave trade in the Dutch colony of New Netherland – later known as New Amsterdam, and now Manhattan, the financial center of New York City where the World Trade Center once stood. African slaves were brought to the colony as early as 1626, and shortly thereafter white laborers demanded that slaves be denied training for skilled labor, so as to protect their own socioeconomic interests (Harris 341). The Dutch West India Company accommodated the concerns of their white laborers, and it was this racially-motivated denial of such material practices (proper training) that perpetuated the very conditions of disparity (lack of higher skills among African slave laborers) that would later be ideologically seized as proof of the Africans' inherent incompetency, and thus their suitability for lower slave labor (Harris 341-42). This racist tautology obscured historical material causes and instead articulated African enslavement as natural, an ontological given: the slaves are unskilled and poor because they *are* unskilled and poor – their present state, divorced from any historical understanding, is the manifestation of what they *are* by nature. Such self-serving logic helped to establish a racist ontological hierarchy in which the white colonists positioned themselves as the exceptional race over and above the Africans, who were deemed lowly slaves by nature. Thus, the mythologized notion that the United States emerged from the classless New World at the ever-expanding frontier was always contradicted by the class distinctions created by the slave trade, as well as the slaughter of American Indians who were also bought and sold as slaves. This stifling of free competition in the American labor market increased with the transfer of New Amsterdam to British rule, at which time the city was renamed New York. In 1706, African slaves were officially

condemned to a life of slavery, with British law making it illegal for Africans to practice any labor outside the bounds of servitude (342).[54]

In 1741, the institutionalized "slave class" united with working class white laborers to protest the growing disparity between the laboring classes and the New York business elite. Known as the the "Negro Plot," the protest was smeared as a conspiracy to burn and reclaim New York for the slaves. Leslie M. Harris recounts the reaction of those in power:

> Some white elites saw the 1741 plot as a way to prove to New Yorkers the need to rid the colony of blacks, enslaved and free. […] But in general, New York's slave owners relied too heavily on slave labor to begin to end the system. Some tradesmen may have preferred to own slaves rather than to hold indentured servants or apprentices who would become rivals for them in business. Although white workers may have feared competition with slave labor, it was easier for them to travel to another colony for work than try to overthrow the slave system in New York. Those who remained in New York to seek their fortunes may have seen ownership of slaves as a sign of prestige to which they aspired. (346)

Here, the aspirational principles of self-made manhood, which include notions of personal responsibility for one's success or failure in competitive free markets, are violated on two counts: first, certain white tradesmen are speculated to have resorted to slavery so as to stifle honest competition from other white, prospective self-made men on the make; and second, those white workers "who remained in New York" and were inspired to symbolize "*their* fortunes" through the ownership of slaves – whose material labor actually contributed to said fortunes – ended up confirming their dependence on the labor of "others" rather than solely upon their self-made endeavors.

Such contradictions in American conceptions of liberal democracy and meritocratic capitalism would underlie idealized depictions of self-made masculinity in the 19th century, and Frederick Douglass was perhaps the most vocal and articulate critic of this disparity. From the outset

of his speech "Self-Made Men" (1872), Douglass – who in his own eyes was a self-made man who had arisen from slavery to become a respected politician, orator, and abolitionist – dismisses the notion that anyone can actually be entirely "self-made." Instead, Douglass grounds his racially-inflected rendition of self-making in an ontological vision of interdependence, acknowledging the social relations that bring a subject into being and help facilitate his (or her – he was a proto-feminist) independence:

> Properly speaking, there are in the world no such men as self-made men. That term implies an individual independence of the past and present which can never exist […] Our best and most valued acquisitions have been obtained either from our contemporaries or from those who have preceded us in the field of thought and discovery. We have all either begged, borrowed or stolen. We have reaped where others have sown, and that which others have strown, we have gathered. It must in truth be said, though it may not accord well with self-conscious individuality and self-conceit, that no possible native force of character, and no depth of wealth and originality, can lift a man into absolute independence of his fellowmen, and no generation of men can be independent of the preceding generation. The brotherhood and inter-dependence of mankind are guarded and defended at all points. I believe in individuality, but individuals are, to the mass, like waves to the ocean. [55]

In his homiletic style, Douglass situates his ontological vision of interdependence within the historical continuum of human relations, which denies what would otherwise be a transcendent being entirely responsible for his or her existence, a position which would have challenged the more "self-conscious individuality and self-conceit" of his day, deified in such influential figures as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Benjamin Franklin.[56] Furthermore, Douglass' refusal to accept that an essential "native force of character" might somehow be responsible for one's self-made success, would also come into conflict with Calvinist notions of divine election and its ascetic lifestyle, which Weber would later identify as the Protestant influence on the origins of American capitalist accumulation.

Rather, Douglass ascribes self-made success to one's ability to persevere and work hard in the face of adversity, so that one's "personal independence" in this regard "is a virtue and [...] the soul out of which comes the sturdiest manhood." However, he tempers this call to masculine hard work and self-reliance by taking context and situation into consideration, a nuance gained through his own familiarity with racial discrimination as an impediment to self-made success.[57] Likewise, the novels analyzed in this chapter come from a position of liminality, and thus display a heightened sensitivity to the unique circumstances of socioeconomic situation that can influence self-made success – especially in the detrimental context of racial and/or ethnic discrimination.

While Douglass' campaigning for equality seems to lay the groundwork for an egalitarian democracy, his endorsement of self-made manhood at times places too much faith in the good conscience of individuals who have succeeded by the sweat of their brow, evoking Smith's Invisible Hand: "All human experience proves over and over again, that any success which comes through meanness, trickery, fraud and dishonor, is but emptiness and will only be a torment to its possessor." Douglass displays a faith in humanity's ability to learn from past mistakes, a historical consciousness in line with contemporary notions of liberal humanist progress towards greater civilization:

> The order of progress, is, first, barbarism; afterward, civilization. Barbarism represents physical force. Civilization represents spiritual power. The primary condition, that of barbarism, knows no other law than that of force; not right, but might. In this condition of society, or rather of no society, the man of mind is pushed aside by the man of muscle. A Kit Carson, far out on the borders of civilization, dexterously handling his bowie knife, rifle and bludgeon, easily gets himself taken for a hero; but the waves of science and civilization rolling out over the Western prairies, soon leave him no room for his barbarous accomplishment. Kit is shorn of his glory. A higher type of manhood is required.

Here, Douglass cites a heroic frontiersman, Kit Carson – who was a slave owner and a slaughterer of American Indians – as an exemplar of a "barbarous" mode of self-made American manhood, while

suggesting that such figures were poised on the edge of an American society in transition. The industrial revolution was refining the crude resources obtained at the frontier, which itself was coming to a close (twenty years later, in 1893, according to Frederick Jackson Turner). Accordingly, the roving self-made frontiersman, whose horizontal trek from east to west helped expand territory for economic exploitation, would give way to the more disciplined, figurative upward mobility of the self-made businessman, the latter of whom Douglass' sees as representative of a "higher type of manhood." However, as argued throughout this study, this mode of ostensibly "civilized" self-made masculinity merely sublimates the overt barbarism of the frontiersman. The self-made businessman is a transitional figure of masculine power who embodies the character of the new economic system, one which is still predicated on capitalist exploitation. From the exploitation of crude resources through crude labor practices comes an attendant need for processing and refinement. Rough timber into symmetrical planed lumber into precise woodwork; crude oil into rarefied gases – the man is as refined as the means and end-goals of an era of production, and one of the human products of the refinement of American capitalism is a new class of men, a rarefied social class of elite businessmen. But an ideological crudity remains beneath the refined surface planed by "science and civilization." This crudity manifests itself in the oppressive social relations of industrial era capitalism and beyond, which sees greater socioeconomic disparities between predominantly white male capitalists and figures of material and immaterial labor – a far cry from Douglass' idealistic conception of America as relatively free of strife between capital and labor (a point addressed below). [58]

Douglass is invoked here because he is one of the earliest and most authoritative commentators on self-made masculinity who also happens to be a visible minority. Therefore, his racially inflected take on self-made masculinity engages with its contradictions in a way that condemns its racist past while also celebrating its ability to empower, especially given his rousing oratory. In the end, Douglass, as a living example, was a proponent of the self-made man, and his speech enriches the myth of American exceptionalism, both in terms of the potential for individual

American men to be exceptional (though tempered by a notion of interdependence) and the United States as being the exceptional nation-state in which such self-made men can arise:

> America is said, and not without reason, to be preeminently the home and patron of self-made men. Here, all doors fly open to them. They may aspire to any position […] Many causes have made it easy, here, for this class to rise and flourish, and first among these causes is the general respectability of labor. Search where you will, there is no country on the globe where labor is so respected and the laborer so honored, as in this country. The conditions in which American society originated; the free spirit which framed its independence and created its government based upon the will of the people, exalted both labor and laborer. The strife between capital and labor is, here, comparatively equal. The one is not the haughty and powerful master and the other the weak and abject slave as is the case in some parts of Europe. Here, the man of toil is not bowed, but erect and strong. He feels that capital is not more indispensable than labor, and he can therefore meet the capitalist as the representative of an equal power.

Douglass' endorsement of America as "the home and patron of self-made men" is as much a call for domestic men to take up their own projects of self-making as it is a self-congratulatory endorsement of the United States as a beacon – Cotton Mather's "city upon a hill" in the New World – for aspiring self-made men throughout the world. The United States would continue to open its doors to waves of immigrants ("all doors fly open to them") who were lured to its shores by such mythmaking, which depicted America as the "land of the free," the "land of opportunity." Joseph Shaanan considers the enduring influence of such myths:

> There is a common belief that in America, with good luck, one can become a multimillionaire. Hard work and business acumen are one way to accomplish this. Yet what stir the imagination are real or mythical stories about people becoming wealthy beyond their dreams almost overnight. Now one may dismiss this as harmless daydreaming, but the belief

is strong, it is centuries old, and it is not restricted to the United States. In many parts of the

world, it is believed that there is a better chance of becoming rich in the United States than

elsewhere. Regardless whether there is evidence to substantiate this belief, it does give people

hope and attracts immigrants from all corners of the world in search of their own El Dorado.

It also generates support for a system that grants people this type of opportunity. (35)

What is interesting here is Shaanan's gesturing to a measure of "good luck" behind the riches of

American success, which apparently coincides with the more traditional virtues of self-made

masculinity such as "hard work and business acumen," suggesting that the American Dream is as

much underpinned by "mythical stories" as it is by any actual "evidence to substantiate" them. But

this contradiction is certainly not to be dismissed as "harmless daydreaming," since its ideological

allure has very real material effects, creating strife and disillusionment in those who have been

institutionally barred from actually attaining or approximating the American Dream, or who have

been exploited and manipulated by its false promise.[59]

Booker T. Washington, another self-made man of African American descent, founded the

National Negro Business League in 1900, which initiated a spate of books (self-help and academic

studies) aimed at improving racial equality in America and eventually led to significant gains made

by African American entrepreneurs in the early decades of the twentieth century. However,

Washington was a contentious figure, whose advocacy for vocational education for African

Americans drew criticism from contemporaries such W. E. Dubois, who argued that such an

emphasis on skills training in trades and general labor promoted Uncle Tomism and perpetuated the

subservient position of African Americans in the workforce. However, Theodore Lewis suggests that

Washington was following Douglass' lead in fostering the skills needed to usher in the postbellum

sociopolitical and economic "transition" of African Americans: "The difficulty that faced American

society at the end of the Civil War was that following Western canon, citizen and slave are mutually

exclusive categories. There is no provision here for slave as citizen. What are slaves when they are

free? This is what Booker T. Washington was up against, striving to accomplish the transition of black ex-slaves to citizenship through the unlikely vehicle of vocational education" (201-202). Despite Washington's success at ushering in this socioeconomic and political transition, further challenges would arise as the perception of race (both publicly and academically) became increasingly dissolved into broader categories of *ethnicity*, especially given the spike in immigration at the turn of century (Valdez 33).[60]

Immigrant American Dreams and Nightmares

The United States was founded by European immigrants (and the unacknowledged labor of African American and Indian slaves), and has since continued to draw in immigrants of different ethnic and racial backgrounds from around the world, who then become naturalized American citizens, and so on, at which point the binary logic of the Euro-American frontier begins to break down. Naturalized citizens are American immigrants living within the national borders, but who often, through visible markers of racial, ethnic, and cultural difference, embody and connote the world beyond the American frontier. Carol Fadda-Conrey characterizes this destabilization of the American frontier after 9/11 in the following terms:

> A persistent and insidious aspect of the us/them binary prevalent after 9/11 is an acknowledgment (albeit a short-sighted one) of the porous and fluid nature of transnational identities, by which the Arab/Muslim Other (as conceived and constructed by so-called patriotic agendas) is no longer exclusively located outside the realm of the US nation-state. Instead, the difference allocated to a "them," who are positioned as backward and uncivil Arabs over there in the Arab/Muslim world, is simultaneously inscribed on the racialized bodies of Arab Americans over here in the US. Such logic yields a culture of suspicion and

paranoia that uses religious and ethnic markers as yardsticks for determining the American

from the un-American, regardless of citizenship status. (534-35)

Not fully within nor fully without, the liminality of these transnational subjects constitutes the increasingly porous and elastic frontier of transnational connectivity, where American national/transnational identity is being redefined through increasing flows and distributions of American labor – "American" in the sense that either it is conducted within the United States by American immigrants or migrant workers, or it is labor outsourced to citizens of other nations abroad for American corporations. So although the attacks were perpetrated by Muslim men from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and Egypt as a religious/political act of terrorism against neoliberal American capitalism throughout the Middle East, the "defensive/preemptive" reaction of white masculine hegemony behind the American frontier was to protect the nation from – in simplified Manichean terms – the "evil" Islamic "fanaticism" which posed a threat to American democracy. However, the attacks led to a hysterical reaction against not only the externalized racial/ethnic intruders (legal residents from the Middle East), but also racially and/or ethnically visible Americans of Middle Eastern descent living in the United States – citizens and legal residents who had worked their way into the economic frontier from within and now contributed to the success of American capitalism. Sometimes, as depicted in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), such racial and/or ethnic minorities participate in the American economy in elevated capacities that contribute to the very globalized neoliberal agenda that al-Qaeda positions itself against. Thus, the increase in domestic racism after 9/11 was the result of not only the intrusion upon the geographic frontier, but also the refocusing of long-held racist resentments of perceived intrusions upon the economic frontier from within – scapegoating that targeted gains made by immigrants, especially visible minorities, in the workplace. Cook and Martin observe that American "employers often endorse the immigration of foreigners and racial outsiders who might be willing to work for lower wages in worse conditions than natives would tolerate. For the same reason, native organized labor

has generally opposed immigration, particularly that of Asians, Southern Europeans, and Latin Americans" (10). In this sense, the attacks and aftermath of 9/11 materialized the ongoing destabilization of the white European ancestral lines of nativist entitlement which have traditionally defined the frontiers of Euro-American identity. But the contingencies of sociocultural exchange at such frontiers of transnational connectivity always present opportunities to redefine and rework the American way of life or, if the experience at the frontier is particularly negative, to reject the American Dream and defect back to one's country of origin, a path explored by Halaby and Hamid in the context of 9/11.

Such redefinitions of American identity in terms of immigration and citizenship trace their origins to the domestic space and the legislation of the Naturalization Act of 1790. This act granted "citizenship to all white men of good moral character [which] was addressed by having the potential citizenship recipient live within the borders of the United States for at least two years. Women received citizenship only through their husband or father" (Jaggers *et al.* 4). The contradictions in this American iteration of Western democratic values and citizenship through the naturalization of immigrants would come to a head in the antebellum era, exemplified in the court case of Dred Scott, a "U.S.-born slave" who sought "to challenge the notions of white-only citizenship" in light of his own naturalization while living in states that had outlawed slavery at the time (5). Scott

> attempted to purchase his own freedom. When his owners refused, he attempted to sue for it. His case was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court, which held that slaves had no rights under the Constitution. Slaves were property and slave owners could not be denied their property without due process (Dred Scott v. John F. A. Sanford, 1856). The adoption of the 13th and 14th amendments to the Constitution would effectively reverse the court's decision on the Scott case, providing freedom (13th amendment) and citizenship (14th amendment) to the slaves (5)

Such postbellum legislation opened up American citizenship to recently freed African slaves, but institutionalized racism would continue to inform the nation's domestic citizenship and immigration policies. So although the United States was founded by several waves of European immigration, and continues to be a primary destination for prospective immigrants around the world, the exclusionary nativism of the earliest European immigrants has been a problem since the late nineteenth century.

Besides the Jim Crow laws in the South, which perpetuated racism against African Americans, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first major legislation on immigration of its kind, restricting the entrance of most Chinese laborers for decades thereafter, the result of nativist resentment of the increased competition such immigrants brought to the American job market (5). This recalls the similar legal interventions of the early colonial period which curtailed the rise of African slaves as skilled laborers, the result of similar nativist or outright racist whining. In 1892, the United States opened Ellis Island to accommodate a rising wave of European immigration, which saw its peak at the end of first decade of the twentieth century. In 1917 the Immigration Act was passed, which ushered in an era of restrictions, including the Asiatic-Barred Zone which outlawed immigration "from specific geographic regions in Asia and the Pacific Islands from migrating to the United States under any circumstances" (7). The Immigration Act marks the beginning of an era which Jaggers *et al.* refer to as the Era of Restriction, which lasted from 1917 to 1964. By the 1924 iteration of the Immigration Act, a quota system was in operation whereby the number of immigrants to the United States was strictly defined and limited, which "drastically favored Western European immigrants. Furthermore, the law excluded immigration for persons ineligible for citizenship, essentially excluding Chinese and Japanese peoples" (7). This era is also notable for the domestic restriction of large numbers of Japanese-Americans, who were forced into internment camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1942, a paranoid reaction to the possible harboring of domestic sympathizers (potential "terrorists") for imperial Japan. However, shortly after World War II, a "sudden collapse of negative racial discrimination in immigration law" swept over the Western

world, with "global factors" being "the primary drivers of de-racialization – particularly, the global reaction against Nazism and its genocidal form of racism and the anticolonialist movement for sovereignty among people of mostly non-European origin" (Cook and Martin 24). Nonetheless, during the Cold War era, another wave of suspicion swept over American domestic and foreign policy, including immigration, when the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 "allowed the government to deny suspected subversives admission into the country, which during the Cold War was used to deny Communist Party members or Communist supporters" (Jaggers *et al.* 9). However, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 abolished the majority of the discriminatory immigration laws that preceded it, with "annual allotments [...] given on a first-come, first-served basis instead of using race or other sociocultural markers for distribution"(8). Cook and Martin suggest that the passing of this act, and its ending of the exclusionary quota system of immigration, was directly attributable to the U.S. Civil Rights movements in the 1960s, thereby revealing "the extent to which domestic minority politics played a role in driving policy," which, they further suggest, highlights the longstanding contradictions of American notions of freedom: despite the nation's proclamations of liberal freedoms, the United States would remain an "outlier" in the Americas when it came to actually extending civil and immigration rights, only responding (finally) to the pressures of massive social unrest (24).[61] As established above, 9/11 initiated yet another retrenchment of domestic liberties in the wake of crisis, especially for immigrants of Middle Eastern descent (or citizens who fit the racist optics of this profile).

Behind these contradictions in American democracy is the persistence of American exceptionalism, which holds that the United States is an exemplary land of democratic/meritocratic opportunity all the while historically institutionalizing anti-competitive practices that secure white Euro-American masculine hegemony in citizenship, business, and the professions. Furthermore, in its geopolitical relations, the United States espouses the exceptionalist myth of American freedom and democracy, all the while actively restructuring tenuous foreign governments to neoliberal

specifications, so as to render them more conducive to American profiteering. However, the binary logic of American exceptionalism – defined by the frontier separating democratic American "civilization" from lesser (at times "barbarous") national governments – was disrupted on 9/11. The material destruction of the planes flying into the towers and the details that would emerge – namely that "the attacks were planned abroad by citizens of other states" though "preparations [were] undertaken […] by legal residents of the United States" – had the more subtle effect, though far more damaging in the long run, of disrupting the reified borders of the nation, the trajectories of the planes tracing intrusive foreign lines onto the cognitive map of America, dissecting the exceptional frontier (Scheuerman 225). Thus, the War on Terror, in its fervent attempt to recuperate the stabilizing logic of American exceptionalism in frontier warfare and its attendant gender configuration of masculine protector of the feminine nation, "vividly underscores" – as it struggles to oppose – "the increasing difficulties of clearly distinguishing the domestic from the foreign arena" (Scheuerman 225).

After 9/11, for many American immigrants who fit the "Middle Eastern" profile, and even some non-white American born citizens, the American Dream became a nightmare of racial profiling, hostile interrogations, and general paranoia and suspicion. The USA Patriot Act restricted basic civil rights and freedoms for certain non-white citizens and permanent residents, unmaking the lives of fellow Americans in the process of "self-making." William E. Scheuerman suggests that the "Patriot Act has worked to provide little more than window dressing for an emergency legal regime now encircling resident aliens, many of whom have lived here for years, worked alongside us, paid taxes, and participated in a host of civic activities" (225). Carol Fadda-Conrey expands on this line of thought:

> The use of racialized, religious, ethnic, and gendered body markings (including skin color, hijabs, prayer caps, and beards) to gauge true patriotism and national allegiance inevitably ends up conflating widely varied minority groups within the US (Arabs and South Asians, for instance) or even sub-groups within one minority group (Christian Arabs and Muslim Arabs,

for example), thus reducing them to supposedly identifiable subjects that need to be monitored, controlled, and contained. (Fadda-Conrey 535)

Surely this is not the "order of progress" Frederick Douglass had in mind for the American future, in which the "barbarism" of slavery eventually progresses into democratic/meritocratic "civilization." Not only is American capitalism still largely dependent on slavery (outsourced, out of sight, out of mind), systemic racism is still an impediment to the success of non-white minorities in the domestic economy; and 9/11, a reaction against the neoliberal impetus of the former, has exacerbated the plight of the latter. In many ways, 9/11 has created the perfect conditions for the inversion of Douglass' vision of progress in American democracy: if "barbarism represents physical force" then America engages in barbarism both at home (USA Patriot Act) and abroad (War on Terror). And even worse, when Douglass argues that in such a state of barbarism "the man of mind is pushed aside by the man of muscle," he is unfortunately only partially right in the present context, since, in post-industrial American capitalism the physical force of the "man of muscle" has been increasingly sublimated into the hegemonic force of the "man of mind," or white hegemonic business masculinity. Part of the problem with Douglass' rendition of self-made masculinity is that it is still predicated on a problematic ideology of American exceptionalism which positions the exceptional American subject against a "fallen" other. The New World was sought out, settled, and situated as such in relation to the corrupt Old World, with the Native Americans only being the first "other" to be diminished in the eyes of exceptional American subjectivity, the frontier serving as the demarcation between Indian "savagery" and redemptive American civilization. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2008), and Teju Cole's *Open City* (2012) destabilize this problematic binary of American exceptionalism – forged at the Western frontier alongside the development of industrial capitalism, and transposed to the increasingly complex frontiers of transnational capitalism – by depicting the negotiations of national

and transnational identity undertaken by American immigrants targeted by discrimination after 9/11 and who see the unmaking of their American Dreams.

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a 9/11 novel structured by a frame narrative told from the first person point-of-view of its protagonist, Changez, who recounts his migration to the United States to an unnamed male American interlocutor. The novel details the events in Changez's past migration which eventually led to his repudiation of American culture and defection back to his homeland. Hamid's decision to narrate this "dialogue" exclusively in the first person point of view of the novel's Pakistani protagonist strategically denies the American a voice. Readers can only infer and trace the content of the American's utterances through Changez's articulated responses, reducing the American's dominating presence to a haunting, though still intimidating, absence. This narrative decision inverts the traditional Orientalist power relation in which Western representations spoke for the cultural "Others" of the Orient, because it was assumed that they could not effectively (or should not) speak for themselves (Said 875). In this light, Martin Randall affirms that "Hamid's novel is one of the first attempts to reconfigure the attacks through the eyes of a non-Westerner whose thoughts and feelings about 9/11 are strikingly ambiguous and finally ambivalent" (137). Though Hamid's depiction of Changez is hardly "ambivalent," since the latter foregrounds the many contradictions of American culture throughout, Thomas Bjerre notes that Hamid's novel is one of the few 9/11 narratives that effectively foregrounds a "position of liminality" (257). From this in-between position, or what Richard Gray refers to as the "interstitial space" between cultures (65), Changez narrates his story in a monologue in which the reader, along with the protagonist's American interlocutor, is relegated to the passive role of addressee. In this way, the interlocutor/reader subject position is classed, nationalized, and gendered from the outset as a professional American male. Changez, however, explains that it is not the interlocutor's professional "suit" and "button-down

shirt" that necessarily gives him away as American, nor is it his "short-cropped" hair or his "expansive chest – […] of a man who bench presses regularly, and maxes out at well above two-twenty five" – all of which denotes "a certain *type* of American" (2; emphasis added); rather, it is the interlocutor's "*bearing*" that allows Changez to identify him as American. In this sense, from the outset Hamid critically foregrounds not only the *appearance* but also the patterns of *practice* that constitute an ideal type of hegemonic American masculinity. Furthermore, Hamid frames this masculine type through a representational strategy that seizes its idealized autonomy and inverts the ethnocentric power relation that characterizes the Western Orientalist aesthetic. Hamid further destabilizes this ideal by representing the ways in which neoliberal late capitalism has allowed people differing in gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality to adopt the appearances and practices of this American ideal and excel beyond the white, middle to upper class American men who it has traditionally privileged. However, Hamid, like the other writers in this chapter, suggests that the patterns of practice that constitute this ideal are in themselves problematic, since, despite the idealized appearance of cosmopolitan plurality reflected on the glossy tabletop of the transnational corporate boardroom, they still perpetuate the underlying class disparity inherent to capitalist ideology. In this sense, Changez embodies the contradictory ideal of the self-made man – contradictory because constituted by homosociality and dependent on the exploitation of others, all the while being professedly "self-made" – but he symbolizes the modern transformation of this type, which coincides with and reflects the greater neoliberal transformation of American capitalism in the increasingly globalized, transnational marketplace. Thus, the contemporary immigrant American Dream, if successful, is revealed to have the same oppressive effects on others in transnational capitalism as the American Dream practiced by traditional white male figures of hegemonic business masculinity, and Changez comes to experience this oppression from within the domestic frontier after 9/11, which heightens his sensitivity to the effects of this oppression on others without. The

pursuit of the American Dream is revealed to perpetuate the continuities of oppression inherent to American capitalism, despite its increasingly transnational orientation and cosmopolitan "makeup."

From the outset, Hamid's choice of form challenges a Western paradigm by defamiliarizing the narrative point-of-view. This is especially relevant in the context of Richard Gray's criticism that most post-9/11 fiction is staged within the domestic space and told from the point-of-view of the dominant American culture. Gray argues that Hamid's narrative "thrives on the blurring of boundaries," with Changez "vacillat[ing] between American and Muslim cultures," which in turn "situates the reader at a crossroads – in a border territory where we are invited, or rather compelled, to help draw the map" (59). Therefore, Hamid's form is as destabilizing as its content: in depicting a Pakistani's adoption of an American ideal of transnational business masculinity, only to have him reject its economic "fundamentalism" and defect back to his home culture, he inverts the neoliberal binary of the United States as secular, democratic, and progressive in opposition to the Islamic fundamentalism of the Middle East. In fact, though Gray only alludes to Jameson's notion of cognitive mapping in regards to Hamid's narrative strategy, it is precisely this narrative technique that allows Hamid to use allegory in a subversive way. Hamid defamiliarizes and undermines an idealized type of American business masculinity by embodying its contemporary "changes" in his Pakistani protagonist (personified as "Changez") and then situating this colonized – ethnicized/racialized/transnationalized – American type within the foreign context of outsourced labor abroad. This allows the reader to "help draw the map" or begin to develop a cognitive map of the inequitable relations of American capital and foreign labor, to chart the growing disparity between the domestic experience of American affluence and the exploited conditions of productive labor abroad. Hamid's reworking of this American ideal of hegemonic masculinity traces the cognitive map in a way that also implicates a rising dominant class of transnational subjects who are increasingly plural in gender, race, ethnicity, and national allegiance.

At the beginning of the novel, Changez describes his migration to the United States to pursue a degree at Princeton as "*a dream come true*" (3). Changez's initial American Dream is characterized by its measuring up to a mediated pop-cultural ideal: he describes living out his "dream" at Princeton as feeling like a "film in which I was the star" (3). In relation to the other novels explored in this chapter, Hamid places the greatest emphasis on characterizing Changez's pursuit of the American Dream as a performance of self-made masculinity. As theorized in the second chapter of this study, self-made masculinity is a contradictory *ethos* that champions a transcendental notion of a completely autonomous and free subject, all the while depending on homosocial practices of tutelage and repetition which prescribe the very practices which are later celebrated as "self-made."[62] When Changez lands a job at Underwood Sampson, an auditing company that prepares clients for hostile takeovers by calculating and eliminating redundancies, he partakes in such a homosocial relationship with his boss, Jim, who recognizes himself in Changez: "I was the first guy from my family to go to college. I worked a night shift in Trenton to pay my way… so I get where you're coming from, Changez. You're hungry, and that's a good thing in my book" (9). However, Changez immediately contradicts this quintessential moment of homosocial bonding over a rags-to-riches story, when he simply responds, perhaps in his own defense: "I am not poor" (9). He proceeds to explain that he comes from a Pakistani family of old inherited wealth but which is on the decline, mostly as a result of a "rising class of entrepreneurs" (10). Nonetheless, Changez recounts his own Horatio Algerian narrative of up-by-the-bootstraps determination in which he "work[ed] hard" and "held down three on-campus jobs" (11).

This process of self-making is foregrounded in the novel and is depicted as an institution of "soft skills training" that conditions corporate patterns of practice. Changez describes this training as "role-playing real life situations, such as dealing with an irate client or an uncooperative chief financial officer. We were taught to recognize another person's style of thought, harness their agenda, and redirect it to achieve our desired out-come; indeed one might describe it as a form of

mental judo" (36). This training, which is characterized here in terms of martial arts ("mental judo"), recalls the patterns of strategic business practice explored in DeLillo's *Falling Man* and O'Neill's *Netherland*. The latter describes Chuck as a businessman who values "craftiness and indirection […] He believed in owning the impetus of a situation, in keeping the other guy off balance, in proceeding by way of side-steps. If he saw an opportunity to act with suddenness or take you by surprise or push you in the dark, he'd take it, almost as a matter of principle" (71). O'Neill's characterization of Chuck's business strategy in terms of martial arts, especially in reference to exploiting an opponent's own weight and balance to their detriment, is certainly evocative of techniques associated with judo. And informing the "mental judo" of hegemonic business masculinity described by O'Neill and Hamid is DeLillo's depiction of the "calculated deceit" at the heart of poker, which he articulates as the "essence," the "clear and intimate extract of [the] daytime initiatives" undertaken by Keith and his poker-playing business associates (97). That such practices are characterized as the necessary "soft skills training" for businessmen suggests that their violence is of a "softer" variety – the sublimated violence of business dealings, which are mostly immaterial discursive acts.

Expanding on this notion of soft skills training, Changez describes his "initiation to the realm of high finance" as a process of internalizing the "systematic pragmatism" or *professionalism* that "underpins" the success of American enterprise (36-37). Furthermore, he suggests that these principles constitute a fundamental *ethos* of "*efficiency*," with "maximum return" being the "maxim" and *telos* informing his actions. Again, Hamid suggests that such ideology encourages a sublimated form of violence, which Changez characterizes as

controlled aggression – not belligerence, mind you, but determination – and I harnessed this to my desire to succeed […] I worked harder, I suspect, than any of the others: subsisting on only a few hours of sleep a night – and I approached every class with utter concentration. My tenacity was frequently commented upon, with approval, by our instructors. Moreover, my

> natural politeness and sense of formality […] proved perfectly suited to the work context in which I now found myself. (41)

Here, Changez describes his initiation into this homosocial realm of sublimated violence, which, as recounted in the second chapter, traces its origins to the ongoing transformation of masculine aggression in America: from the frontiersmen to the self-made man, and now as institutionalized in the corporate business practices of the transnational businessman. Amy Greenberg suggests that this historical process of sublimation has resulted in a "restrained" mode of aggressive American masculinity (17; 235). Accordingly, Changez's "aggression" is "controlled" through the managerial forms of bureaucracy, "politeness," and "formality" that characterize the post-industrial turn in American business, beginning with the managerial corporate restructuring of the 1950s, and the attendant outsourcing of labor positions in the 60s and 70s which continues to this day – all of which was a function of the corporate *ethos* of "efficiency," guided by the overarching capitalist *telos* of "maximum return." Furthermore, Changez's comments reveal that such practices of "controlled aggression" are encouraged through the homosocial recognition of superiors, who express their "approval." As mentioned above, Jim is Changez's mentor in the business world, providing encouragement and a sense of place within the American "rags-to-riches" mythos, through the homosocial exchange of personal life-stories. Jim assures Changez: "I like you…Really. Not in a bullshit, say-something-nice-to-raise-the-kid's-morale way. You're a shark. And that's a compliment, coming from me. It's what they called me when I first joined. A shark. I never stopped swimming. And I was a cool customer. I never let on that I felt like I didn't belong to this world. Just like you" (70). Jim's address to Changez attempts to situate him within a greater narrative of corporate struggle and success, giving him the "compliment" that he's a "shark" – an informal, if not fraternal rank designating cold, predatory ruthlessness – which also links Jim's personal narrative to Changez's own unfolding story of success. This transmission is an example of how hegemonic masculinity perpetuates itself through homosociality – with Jim, in this specific instance,

narrativizing and thus forming continuities between the "shark-like" business practices of one generation to the next. Jim represents the type of hegemonic American business masculinity to which Changez aspires – the "personification of the self-made man" ideal; however, as his name indicates, Changez also embodies the "changes" that the increasingly transnational scope of American capitalism has had on this ideal type (Hartnell 343). In fact, Changez distances himself from Jim's narrative in so much as it implies that they share an underlying sense of alienation ("I felt I didn't belong to this world. Just like you"). Changez indicates that he always "felt uncomfortable" when Jim attempted to draw him into the continuities of this unified story, especially in regards to his sense of alienation. He explains his difficulty with the confessional aspect of Jim's storytelling: "The confession that implicates its audience is – as we say in cricket – a devilishly difficult ball to play. Reject it and you slight the confessor; accept it and you admit your own guilt." (70). Here, Hamid reveals the oftentimes difficult cultural negotiations that transnational subjects such as Changez must mediate, between assimilation to dominant American narratives and assertions of difference: Changez believes that acquiescing to Jim's homosocial narrative – which not only co-opts his sense of belonging, but also the racial and ethnic difference that makes his striving for the American Dream unique and challenging – will only make him feel "guilty" for betraying his Pakistani heritage. Moreover, Changez's hesitation suggests that – beyond such differences – he is also uneasy about their underlying *similarity* in class as part of a global elite, which in itself is a betrayal of his national background.

In this way, Jim's narrative represents the traditional whitewashed myth of the self-made man and his triumph over the adversities of economic disparity. Jim recounts the source of his alienation: "I grew up on the other side. For half my life, I was outside the candy store looking in, kid. And in America, no matter how poor you are, TV gives you a good view. But I was dirt poor" (70). Here, Hamid further characterizes their homosocial relationship in a way that positions Jim as paternalistic elder, referring to Changez as "kid." However, despite this filial hierarchy, Hamid also works to

destabilize assumed hierarchies through dramatic irony: though Changez is reluctant to subsume himself within Jim's homosocial narrative because he wishes to preserve those distinctions of race and ethnicity that mark the uniqueness of his struggle towards the American Dream, in many ways Changez's class background is far more privileged than his mentor's. In this way, Jim's "rags-to-riches" narrative recalls a more classical era of American "by-the-bootstraps" industrial revolution, whereas the neoliberal inflections of Changez's postcolonial narrative of seeking success in America betrays the increasingly privileged position of certain migrants and immigrants – those transnational subjects of late capitalism who carry on the transformation of the self-made man and redefine the American Dream. Furthermore, it highlights the institutionalized racism that allows less privileged white men to live out such myths of American success, while often it is only privileged immigrants such as Changez who are able to achieve similar success.

However, Hamid also foregrounds the avenues of American culture that serve to unite traditional/domestic American Dreams with postcolonial American Dreams, with a focus on transnational American media. In the passage above, Jim underestimates the transnational influence of American media in the dissemination of American ideology, since it is not only "in America" where "no matter how poor you are" the "TV gives you a good view" of the "other side" of the American Dream, which allows one to measure and thus define one's own economic disparity. Changez's monologue is riddled with references to American pop-culture, especially to blockbuster films, such as *The Terminator* (1984 Cameron) and *Top Gun* (1986 Scott), the latter of which he and a coworker quote in fraternal exchange: "Twirling his pen between his fingers in a fashion reminiscent of Val Kilmer in *Top Gun*, he leaned towards me and whispered, 'No points for second place, Maverick.' 'You're dangerous, Ice Man,' I replied – attempting to approximate a naval aviator's drawl – and the two of us exchanged a grin" (35). Here, Hamid underscores that despite his Pakistani background, Changez is well-versed in American pop-culture, suggesting that a familiarity with such films – action oriented and featuring male heroics – contributes to the homosocial

initiation into the ranks of high finance. Furthermore, Hamid's use of a film such as *Top Gun* for this purpose – a film once known, and perhaps now derided, for its indulgence in American military machismo and the competitive individualism of its male leads – highlights that often such American pop-cultural products espouse ideals of competitive masculinity that are rooted in American ideology and geopolitical agendas.[63] This shows the pervasive influence of American cultural hegemony on the world stage, particularly of Hollywood film, which influences the development of an American-style consciousness abroad that translates effortlessly in this homosocial exchange.

So far, this examination of Changez's homosocial initiation into high finance would seem to suggest that traditional hegemonic masculinity still prevails at the upper echelons, but Hamid suggests that such categories are being destabilized by the transnational business practices of late capitalism. Changez describes the cosmopolitan composition of his workplace in the following terms: "Two of my colleagues were women; Wainwright and I were non-white. We were marvelously diverse… and yet we were not: all of us, Sherman included, hailed from the same elite universities – Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, Yale; we all exuded a sense of confident self-satisfaction" (38). Here, Changez observes that despite the diversity among them (sex/gender, race/ethnicity), he and his colleagues share an underlying similarity in terms of class. So although Underwood Sampson ostensibly champions itself as a "meritocracy," Changez is sensitive to the trend that those with the financial means to secure an elite education also tend to secure positions of power in corporate America, whether hailing from home or abroad. This trend is as utilitarian as it is egalitarian, since, if the goal of transnational American capitalism is to successfully expand markets into other cultures, corporations must not only be able to put on the national/racial/ethnic "face" of the host nation in order to appear more conducive to the unique cultural demands of the host market, they must also act as "transnational connectivities." These cosmopolitan "faces" are not only visible in the commodified representations produced by advertising campaigns, they are also embodied in the transnational business agents who are familiar with both American corporate interests ("the

fundamentals") and the host cultures/markets they wish to penetrate, and who are thus qualified to interface and steer strategic negotiations towards maximizing profit. In this regard, the face of transnational American capitalism is increasingly plural in character as a result of neoliberal marketing strategies which sell American capitalism and consumer products as signifiers of civilization and democracy, as evident in the cosmopolitan commodification of the products and the representatives of the American corporations that produce them. Atillo A. Boron suggests that "cosmopolitan capitalism" operates according to the "postmodern logic of global capital" in which "marketing is a corporate practice intended to maximize sales from the commercial recognition and exploitation of differences" (47). In cosmopolitan capitalism, ostensible markers of difference are flaunted but also ultimately subsumed within the unity of transnational American capitalism, which is conditioned by market fundamentals, creating visible "American" subjects whose difference is both mark(et)ed and effaced: rendered conspicuous by marketable differences of gender, race, and ethnicity, while also made the same by generic markers of professionalism that denote a wealthy class, all of which produces that certain American "bearing" identified by Changez at the beginning of the novel and which is embodied in the actions of his colleagues, and somewhat reluctantly in his own.

This "bearing," which, in the eyes of Changez, is the overall impression of character produced by the patterns of practice undertaken by American business professionals, is something that can be adopted by all adherents to the fundamentals of American capitalism, regardless of gender, race, and/or ethnicity. When reviewing the cosmopolitan makeup of his colleagues, Changez remarks: "shorn of hair and dressed in battle fatigues, we would have been virtually indistinguishable" (38). This observation indicates that despite the overt cosmopolitanism of their external appearance, they are all fundamentally the same, and his paralleling of their collective business practice with military anonymity suggests that this "sameness" is an underlying bearing of aggressivity with geopolitical implications. This martially inflected anonymity simultaneously

evokes the hegemonic masculinity traditionally associated with the military, and transposes/maps it onto the sublimated violence of an increasingly plural transnational business world, which suggests that the overt violence of military and market expansion can still operate under the guise of equality and cosmopolitanism. Hamid's depiction of traditional gender categories and their associations with military and business contexts, destabilizes Connell's conception of "transnational business masculinity" by suggesting that transnational business practices are not always gendered and/or sexed as masculine and/or male on the surface, and that aggressive actions which have been traditionally gendered as masculine are increasingly being undertaken by women as well. The reference in the last chapter of the appropriation of (post)feminism in *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012 Bigelow) to lend credence to the War on Terror is a prominent case in point. However, it must be emphasized, as indicated by Zillah Eisenstein and Inderpal Grewal, that these ostensibly gender neutral practices – or even when presented as progressive or (post)feminist – are practices that have real gendered effects for large numbers of female laborers in developing nations with lax labor laws, who are contracted to do the outsourced labor recommended by firms like Underwood Sampson.

After 9/11, Changez begins to question his ruthless actions as an employee at the firm, seeing the precariousness of his American Dream and his status as an "American" after the attacks. To assuage his anxieties, Wainwright facetiously reminds him that he is "working for the *man*" and that he needs to "focus on the fundamentals," which, despite its humor, contextualizes his business practices within greater continuities of hegemonic business masculinity, despite the neoliberal transformations that have diversified its appearance (98). Randall Martin isolates this as the moment in which "Changez comes to see these economic 'fundamentals' as being crucial components of merciless American capitalism. In effect, Changez adopts the persona, reluctantly, of the American fundamentalist" (138). And though 9/11 serves as a catalyst for anagnorisis in Changez's narrative of American success, symptoms of his difference begin to emerge before 9/11 which make it increasingly difficult for Changez to embody transnational American business masculinity.

Interestingly, rather than emerging in the United States, these symptoms become most evident in the transnational context of his line of work while on a business trip to Manila. On the plane to the Philippines, Changez begins to indulge in what he envisions and embodies as his new persona – a suave Euro-American business professional:

> We had flown first class, and I will never forget the feeling of reclining in my seat, clad in my suit, as I was served champagne by an attractive and – yes, I was indeed so brazen to allow myself to believe – *flirtatious* flight attendant. I was, in my own eyes, a veritable James Bond – only younger, darker, and possibly better paid […] how quickly my sense of self-satisfaction would later disappear! (64)

Here, Changez performs a mode of be-suited, "first class," jet set masculinity that is self-satisfied, confident, ostentatious, and sexually entitled. However, as he indicates, his inflated, and quite literally high-flying, sense of masculinity is firmly brought back to the ground upon landing in Manila – a descent that signals the beginning of his "fall." Changez recounts that, upon his arrival, he did something that he had never done before: "I attempted to act and speak, as much as my dignity would permit, more like an *American*. The Filipinos we worked with seemed to look up to my American colleagues, accepting them almost instinctively as members of the officer class of global business – and I wanted my share of that respect as well" (65). Changez admits to a self-conscious need to perform his sense of American-ness when in Manila, defining himself as superior to the local Filipinos, who, as past subjects of British and American colonialism, have internalized an imposed sense of hierarchical difference to the point where they "look up" to his American colleagues, "almost instinctively."[64] While on this business trip, the purpose of which is to "value a recorded-music business" led by a local businessman who managed to "sign lucrative outsourcing deals to manufacture and distribute CDs for two of the international music majors," Changez visits the "factory floor and several music shops" (65-66). He explains that he felt "enormously powerful on these outings, knowing my team was shaping the future. Would these workers be fired? *We*,

indirectly of course, would help decide" (66). However, Changez soon begins to learn that he is implicated in the fate of these locals on the ground and/or the "factory floor" far more directly than he would like to believe.

Up to this point, Changez has been conducting transnational business from afar, in the safety and comfort of New York City. It is only when he is brought overseas and lowered to the ground in Manila that he is able to have a face-to-face encounter with a local that leaves him "disoriented" (66). When riding in a limousine with his colleagues, Changez notices a man in an adjacent "jeepney" (a small bus-like vehicle) who is gazing at him with "undisguised hostility" (66). Changez is perplexed by this man, whose "dislike was so obvious, so *intimate*, that it got under my skin" (67). After the man with the reprimanding gaze is out of sight, Changez considers that maybe "he resents me for the privileges implied by my suit and expensive car; perhaps he simply does not like Americans" (67). Changez attributes the man's animosity to the visual markers that display a certain American brand of affluence: "suits" and "expensive cars." However, despite his identification with the Americans, he also comes to realize that his offense stems from an "unconscious starting point – that he and I shared a sort of Third World sensibility" (67). Directly after this reasoning, Changez realizes that his transnational business orientation has created a bifurcated subject position: he identifies with both oppressor and oppressed, and it is only when he meets the reprimanding gaze of the latter that he is shaken into this recognition. In this way, Changez serves as a point of interface between two worlds separated by an economic gulf: his embodiment of First and Third World experience creates a point of transnational connectivity in Manila, albeit one rendered static by the underlying tensions of geopolitical power relations – both between himself and the resentful local, and also between the increasingly conflicted sensibilities and allegiances within himself as a divided transnational subject. The disapproving Third World gaze upon Changez's adopted American "bearing" gets under his figurative skin – it sees beyond the façade, the fraternal performance of careless affluence, and sees the historical connotations of his brown skin, a marker of difference

beneath his "American" complacency. But the resentful gaze of the "other" penetrates Changez further still, beneath this epidermal layer of meaning, to the point of destabilizing Changez's sense of racial, national, and existential identity – exposing the "other" within himself to the point where he feels that he is "play-acting" (67). This defamiliarizes Changez's American Dream and wakes him up to the "*foreign*" reality of his "American" situation, which in effect embeds a cognitive map of this hitherto unacknowledged situation in Changez's consciousness.   Thus, the disapproving gaze of the Filipino from "abroad" serves to counter the many looks and acts of approval received by Changez at "home" from Jim, destabilizing the edifying homosocial processes of American corporate identity formation. Changez begins to realize that disparity continues to exist on a global scale despite his own American success, and that he is *directly* implicated insofar as his decisions ultimately have negative effects on "others" on the ground. This experience initiates his "falling" to the ground and traces a cognitive map of the relations between his American success and the exploitation of others from his region of the world upon which such success depends. Perhaps as result, when he first sees the media footage of 9/11 in his hotel room in Manila, he smiles (perhaps momentarily forgetting his own place in America). Changez becomes "caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees," failing to recognize that America's fall will only initiate his own unique fall as a visible minority who will be conflated into the optic of racial profiling that arises after 9/11 (73).

These optics are nowhere more visible than in Hamid's more problematic construal of gender relations in post-9/11 America, in which he allegorically casts Changez's love interest, Erica, as the personification of the traumatized nation. This gendered representation of the nation (a sadistic one at that, with America "brought to her knees") reproduces a traditional gender stereotype in which women are associated with the passive and immobilizing effects of traumatic mourning. As recalled in the first chapter of this study, Radstone critiques the gendered inflections of trauma discourse: "the subject it proposes – the victim – is too absolutely passive. One might argue [...] that trauma theory

feminizes its subject" (121). Hamid's personification of Erica as the nation in mourning – (Am)Erica – reproduces the gender stereotypes that circulated in the American media after the attacks, often depicting passive, traumatized women in need of masculine protection. And though Changez does not embody such heroic representations of American masculinity – in fact he is often emasculated in the presence of Erica – he does eventually adopt and mobilize a rebellious mode of masculinity that sees his defection from America/Erica with a newfound South Asian masculine resolve.

So although 9/11 initially elicits a feeling of happiness in Changez, he immediately begins to experience the negative effects of the domestic surveillance and racial profiling that ensues. He is taken aside and strip-searched at the airport upon his return to New York, and begins to "feel uncomfortable in his own face; I was aware of being under suspicion; I felt guilty; I therefore tried to be as nonchalant as possible" (74). In the discriminatory nationalist fervour after 9/11, Changez begins to feel the "destruction of his personal American Dream" (93). He recounts how he tried to ignore the rumours circulating in a local Pakistani Deli:

> Pakistani cabdrivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI was raiding mosques, shops, and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centers for questioning or worse. I reasoned that these stories were mostly untrue; the few with some basis in fact were almost certainly being exaggerated; and besides, those rare cases of abuse that regrettably did transpire were unlikely ever to affect me because such things invariably happened, in America as in all countries, to the hapless poor, not to Princeton graduates earning eighty thousand dollars a year. (95)

Despite his fear for his own safety and his "personal American Dream," Changez rationalizes that he is somehow insulated from such racially motivated violence because of his class position. In this way, even after 9/11, Changez retains a sense of exceptionalism related to the entitlements of class, and in a sweeping gesture, suggests that a privileged class position always trumps other differences

(race, gender, ethnicity) and serves as a protective barrier against the discriminatory violence sometimes levelled against those who embody these differences, since "in America, as in all countries" such violence is always, in the end, contingent on class and thus inflicted on the "hapless poor." In many ways Changez is correct. As an upper-middle class man, he is able to find sanctuary in two places – his relationship with Erica and his job at Underwood Sampson. But in the end, his relationship with Erica/America turns cold, and only his affluent position in an American corporation can provide him with the unflagging support and affiliation he seeks. The higher echelons of American finance, in an increasingly transnational business world, are ultimately immune to the post-9/11 nostalgia for the exceptional American nation and instead focus on "the fundamentals" that secure transnational American class interests.[65]

Changez does attempt to find sanctuary in Erica, who also serves as the personified stand-in for his infatuation with the American Dream. However, Erica, who had been slowly coming out of a period of mourning for Chris, her deceased American boyfriend, is deeply traumatized by 9/11 and begins to regress. Before 9/11, Erica viewed Changez as a stable *terra firma* upon which she could build a new foundation for a sense of home: "You give off this strong sense of home […] It makes you feel solid" (19). She tries to empathize with Changez's homesickness by saying that she also misses "home," but she clarifies that to her "home" means Chris. Even before 9/11, Erica is thus depicted as in a state of mourning for a solid home, gendered male, and one that is, as suggested by Richard Gray, evocative of America's colonial founding father, Christopher Columbus (60-62). Furthermore, Hamid infantilizes Erica's feminine mourning, with Changez seeing her as "a child who could sleep only with the door open and the light on" (57). This representation recalls and reproduces Bush's singling out of "women and children" as the Americans most in need of masculine military protection in his televised address to Congress and the nation on September 20, 2001. Along these lines, after 9/11 Changez notes that he feels an increasing sense of "protectiveness" towards Erica, despite her withdrawal into nostalgia (86-87).

Hamid's depiction of the tension between public and private, interpersonal and geopolitical, centrifugal and centripetal, is most fully realized in two key scenes in the middle of the novel in which Changez and Erica engage in two abortive attempts at sex. When Erica is unable to become aroused, she reveals that Changez is the only other man she has ever slept with, and the first since Chris' death. And though Changez is sympathetic to Erica, he is also "hurt" that "her body had rejected [him]" (90). After contemplating Erica's story of her past relationship with Chris, he concludes that "theirs had been an unusual love, with such a degree of commingling of identities that when Chris died, Erica felt she had lost herself; even now, she said, she did not know if she could be found" (91). Erica's lost sense of self, her past subsumption within their commingled identities – which figuratively recalls the masculinist institution of coverture explored in the last chapter – suggests that Erica was overly dependent on Chris' "stable" masculinity, upon which she established a sense of self and "home." This can be read as an extended metaphorical engagement with the cultural dependence on founding father figures in America, as argued by Carden:

> Narratives portraying self-made fathers creating the U.S. in their image effectively gender the nation male. They create America as a fatherland, not, as nations are often imagined, as a motherland. Feminized representations of nations tend to accompany crisis – war, for instance, which requires 'her' defence, or exile, which evokes yearning for lost comfort and integration, for the security of infancy. (28)

As a novel that explores American culture as a product of masculine practices of self-making but which is also situated within the crisis of 9/11, Hamid's text engenders the nation as both male and female, and sometimes something in between. The depiction of Changez's homosocialization into corporate America captures the transmission of self-made narratives from one American man to another aspiring American. In this sense, Hamid depicts "America as a fatherland." However, insomuch as the nation is also represented in a state of post-9/11 trauma or "crisis," Hamid's novel follows the traditional, predictable path of literary representation and feminizes the nation

(AmErica). Erica is "yearning for [the] lost comfort and integration" of the founding masculine ideals that shaped her (the nation's) identity, and she is depicted as infantilized and in need of "defense" in their absence. Along this line, Randall reads "Erica" as "another 'reluctant fundamentalist': she narrows her life down to living only in the past (a deeply romanticised past) that mirrors America's cultural and political retreat into the nation's cherished myths and legends" (140). [66] The evocation of Christopher Columbus connects her yearning to the colonial origins of American empire, and the staging of this evocation in the context of interpersonal sexual relations taps into a tradition of "national history and stories of national heroes" in which America is represented as "begotten by self-made men on the sometimes pliant, sometimes resistant, but always feminized wilderness" (Carden 31). [67]

The failed sexual relations between Changez and Erica illustrates the reversal of the traditional, gendered American narrative of colonization. Changez represents a Pakistani migrant who chooses to adopt the self-made practices of American masculinity to secure his own American Dream. As a foreigner, he is, in a way, penetrating the American frontier and colonizing his own small part of the nation – a postcolonial subject staging a reverse colonization. His aspirations are transposed to and embodied in the interpersonal plane through his pursuit of Erica – the nation gendered and personified as female. [68] However, unlike the colonists that prefigure him, he is unable to succeed. In a last desperate attempt to s(t)imulate sexual chemistry, Changez asks Erica to "pretend" that he is Chris. He describes the experience in the following terms:

> I cannot, of course, claim that I was *possessed*, but at the same time I did not seem to be myself. It was as though we were under a spell, transported to a world where I was Chris and she was with Chris, and we made love with a physical intimacy that Erica and I had never enjoyed. Her body denied mine no longer; I watched her shut eyes, and her shut eyes watched him. (105)

Here, Hamid establishes that in order for Changez to reap the physical/material benefits of this relationship, he has to fall under the "spell" or come under the "*possession*" of an ideal "AmErican" subject position/persona: "Chris," a symbolic stand-in for a colonial founding father. However, Changez is not able to fully adopt that antiquated ideal, since he represents the transnational "changes" that the transformations of late capitalism have set in motion. Thus, since Erica remains in a state of nostalgic mourning for her past masculine ideal, it is only when performing (here quite literally) the symbolically laden role of "Chris" that he is able to be accepted into the fold – an acceptance that can only occur if he is entirely effaced, not just transformed but completely replaced. (Am)Erica, after 9/11, is simply not able to accept the changes that Changez personifies. As a successful Pakistani businessman working for/in America, he is a visible marker of both the best aspects of American democracy, but also, in the paranoid wake of 9/11, those forces of "terror" that American democracy increasingly defines itself against. Changez goes as far as to characterize Erica's vagina as a "wound," "giving [their] sex a violent undertone despite the gentleness with which I attempted to move," which again, through sexual analogy, reveals the complex negotiations of gender that constitute Changez's frustrated performance of hegemonic American masculinity: his actions are sometimes ambiguous, characterized by the sublimated violence of deception in his business practices, which is mitigated by a "gentleness" in his trying to fit into a culture that is not his own (106). Bjerre reads this dynamic in the context of "sexualized images of war and conquest," in which Erica can be understood as "a symbol of the wounded nation," while the depiction of Changez perpetuates the traditional "patriarchal paradox of overcoming fear of the woman through conquest and possession, [while] also disturbingly suggest[ing] the Other's, specifically the Muslim's, attack on America" (260).

Bjerre expands upon another key instance in 9/11 fiction in which the interpersonal is used to comment upon the geopolitical, only here notions of national, ethnic, racial, and gendered oppression are so closely intertwined that such categories become blurred. In his dual allegiances, Changez is

characterized as both victim and oppressor: he is a victim of internalized post-9/11 racism which leads him to regard himself as a violent oppressor, a wounding sex partner (though this sense of being an oppressor is a more nuanced commingling of his racist association with Islamic terrorism and the sublimated violence of American business masculinity – another instance of Hamid's destabilization of the binary between these modes of oppressive masculinity, suggesting that they are, at least materially, more similar than different). Afterwards, Changez feels both "*satiated* and *ashamed*":

> My satiation was understandable to me; my shame was more confusing. Perhaps, by taking on the persona of another, I had diminished myself in my own eyes; perhaps I was humiliated by the continuing dominance, in the strange romantic triangle of which I found myself a part, of my dead rival; perhaps I was worried that I had acted selfishly and I sensed, even then, that I had done Erica some terrible harm. (106)

Soon after this moment of shame, Changez realizes that he had been taking on the "persona of another" from the outset of his pursuit of the American Dream. Furthermore, he realizes that, despite his success in the United States as a transnational American businessman, after 9/11 he became dominated once again by what his postcolonial eyes perceive to be his antiquated "dead rival": white colonial America. However, when white America (a nostalgic unity) began to retrench its democratic permissiveness by enforcing the "with us or against us" solidarity of the Bush doctrine, which either sought to subsume/erase difference or define itself against it, Underwood Sampson becomes Changez's last resort for acceptance.

Changez defines the corporate firm as the "bulwark" against the nostalgic "sentiment" of post-9/11 America: "Underwood Sampson, which occupied most of my waking hours […] was – as an institution – not nostalgic whatsoever. At work we went about the task of shaping the future with little regard for the past" (117). Like Keith in *Falling Man*, when faced with his crisis of American

identity, Changez falls back into the abstract routines and patterns of practice conditioned by "the fundamentals" of American capitalism:

> I suspect I was never better at the pursuit of fundamentals than I was at that time, analyzing data as though my life depended on it. Our creed was one which valued maximum productivity, and such a creed was for me doubly reassuring because it was quantifiable – and hence *knowable* – in a period of great uncertainty, and because it remained utterly convinced of the possibility of progress while others longed for a sort of *classical* period that had come and gone, if it had ever existed at all. (117)

Here, the transnational corporation is depicted as the only American institution that is progressive in its politics after 9/11, which in many ways echoes Douglass' sentiment for a future in which the rationality of science would create economic conditions in which the "man of muscle" gives way to the "man of mind," an order of progress in which barbarism is replaced by civilization, slavery by meritocracy. However, this "order of progress" has proven to be far more exclusive than Douglass idealized it to be, serving American corporate class interests and perpetuating an international division of labor. Nonetheless, for Changez, the fundamental creed that underlies transnational American capitalism is willing to accommodate difference, even in the upper levels of employment, as long as *difference* is in service to the underlying principles that secure the *same* underlying American *class* interests.[69]

Economic disparity and class division is an essential outcome of the structure of capitalism, whether performed domestically or transnationally. In terms of the latter, capitalism has adjusted itself to accommodate cultural difference, insofar as differences are proven to be profitable. In this light, transnational capitalism is becoming increasingly "progressive" in the neoliberal sense that it will not allow tradition to get in the way of profits in a rapidly globalizing economy. However, as argued by Lisa Duggan, such neoliberal market based conceptions of democracy – which optimistically champion a post-imperial world order – are in fact conditioned by "policies" that

"reinvent practices of economic, political, and cultural imperialism for a supposedly postimperial world" (xiii). Although Changez initially expresses his sense of helplessness and disconnection from his own activities and those of the American nation during the invasion of Afghanistan – "there was nothing I could do […] all these world events were playing out on a stage of no relevance to my personal life" (100) – he later comes to realize that transnational "finance was a primary means by which American empire exercised its power" (156). Furthermore, Changez realizes that as an individual agent of neoliberal American finance, his "personal life" was contributing directly – in however small a way – to the "world events" that led to the backlash of 9/11, and the subsequent American reaction against domestic Muslims and the predominantly Islamic countries targeted during the War on Terror. Changez's perception that the mediated "world events" of the War on Terror were "playing out on a stage of no relevance to [his] personal life" recalls the central problem, posed by Jameson, facing postmodern capitalist societies: the inability to properly conceive of the economic relations between the reified daily experience of Western privilege and the far-flung sources of bare-subsistence labor that is exploited to sustain this privilege. In many ways, 9/11 was a symbolic intrusion into the reified experience/frontier of Western privilege, an event which Hamid incorporates into his narrative to stage a critique of the most current, progressive image of neoliberal capitalism. Changez's figural role as the personification of the cosmopolitan, progressive "changes" of transnational capitalism is undermined by the material contradictions (both at "home" and abroad) that disrupt his American Dream and ultimately reveal his complicity – as an agent of American "finance" which serves as the "primary means by which American empire exercise[s] its power" – in perpetuating the geopolitical relations of oppression that led to 9/11 in the first place. In this sense, Changez is a "figure through which to express" the changes in the "new and enormous global realities" of transnational American capitalism in "distorted and symbolic ways," which taps into and subverts the contradictions inherent in American exceptionalism (Jameson 411).

Near the end of the novel, Changez begins to address his interlocutor in a way that is more direct, less slyly evasive, and that historicizes 9/11 within the greater project of American imperialism:

I had always resented the manner in which America conducted itself in the world; your country's constant interference in the affairs of others was insufferable. Vietnam, Korea, the straits of Taiwan, the Middle East, and now Afghanistan: in each of the major conflicts and standoffs that ringed my mother continent of Asia, America played a central role […] It was right for me to refuse to participate any longer in facilitating this project of domination. (156)

Here, in contrast to the first half of the novel – which is decidedly postcolonial in its recounting of a Pakistani migrant's successful, binary-dissolving integration into a transnational American corporation – Changez begins to form the lines of a cognitive map that renders into stark relief the international division of labor, revealing that the increasingly transnational scope of globalized capitalism is still dominated by American imperial class interests, despite the ostensibly cosmopolitan surface of what is otherwise a "project of domination."

To further reveal the connections between the socioeconomic ideals and patterns of practice conducted on the domestic interpersonal plane and those on the geopolitical plane, Hamid's text interpolates a scene in the frame narrative in which a beggar approaches Changez and his American interlocutor. The scene is described in Changez's monologue, and not without a trace of scathing irony:

But why do you recoil? Ah yes, this beggar is a particularly unfortunate fellow. One can only wonder what series of *accidents* could have left him so thoroughly disfigured. He draws close to you because you are a foreigner. Will you give him something? No? Very wise; one ought not to encourage beggars, and yes, you are right, it is far better to donate to charities that address the causes of poverty rather than to him, a creature who is merely its symptom. What

> am I doing? I am handing him a few rupees – misguidedly, of course, and out of habit. There,
>
> he offers us his prayers for our well-being; now he is on his way. (40)

The American interlocutor (the reader) is depicted as "recoiling" at the sight of the abject beggar, while Changez ruminates on the causes or "*accidents*" of his misfortune. That "*accidents*" is italicized draws attention to the word and perhaps the tone in which it is uttered: an "accident" denotes an unfortunate happenstance whose causes are understood to be entirely contingent. However, on further investigation, accidents are always contingent on other circumstances based upon certain decisions and/or actions within the greater context in which the accident occurred. When Changez states that "one can only wonder what series of *accidents* could have left him so thoroughly disfigured," he is enquiring (dissembling nonchalance) into the *historical context* that led to the current state of the beggar, and this historical consciousness, even on the interpersonal plane, is something that Changez has developed through his experience in America and continues to uphold and cultivate as a political orientation in Lahore as an outspoken political commentator against American imperialism. And even if he does not enquire further, he assumes that there are reasons for this man's plight that can be factored outside the aegis of personal responsibility – perhaps differences in gender, race, ethnicity or class that make "success," however one chooses to define it, far more difficult. It is this empathy with others, cultivated from his own experience of discrimination in post-9/11 America, that allows Changez to recognize pain in others and commit to a historical consciousness that recognizes a person's and/or nation's plight beyond immediate contexts, taking into consideration socioeconomic contingencies that partially absolve the poor of the burden of being entirely responsible for their poverty – in direct contrast to neoliberal policy. Though he clearly disagrees with the American's austerity (he himself offers charity while dissembling an apology for such "misguided" action), and only alludes to the "causes of poverty" of which the beggar is merely a "symptom," the rest of the narrative clearly indicates that the American's reaction is also symptomatic of the same causes of poverty, albeit from the causal, privileged position where

recoiling is possible: an ideological orientation towards others that is divorced from history and social context, and assumes that economic subjects are "self-made" and thus self-responsible individuals whose economic plight is their own problem, including their exploitability.

Changez initially migrates to New York City because he views it as a progressive, cosmopolitan city, but he eventually learns, especially after the attacks, that "the fundamentals" of American capitalism run deep. Furthermore, as a transnational businessman, 9/11 allows him to see the continuities and repercussions of American economic imperialism in much starker relief. Ultimately, Changez isolates America's inability to empathize with others as the source of much of the resentment – both his own and the international community's – towards the United States:

> As a society, you were unwilling to reflect upon the shared pain that united you with those who attacked you. You retreated into myths of your own difference, assumptions of your own superiority. And you acted out these beliefs on the stage of the world, so that the entire planet was rocked by the repercussions of your tantrums, not least my family, now facing war thousands of miles away. (168)

This inability to "reflect upon the shared pain" of others recalls Judith Butler's call for a new American political ethics based on corporeal vulnerability, the acknowledgement of the fragile embodiment of human life that we all share. We are all susceptible to injury, disease, pain and suffering, and we all eventually succumb to death. So rather than falling back into death-transcending "myths of difference" and "superiority" which reinforce notions of American exceptionalism, the pain felt by the nation on 9/11 could have been, to reiterate the words of Slavoj Zizek, a moment for America to "learn humbly to accept its own vulnerability as part of this world" rather than being its self-appointed policeman who plays by "his" own rules (49).

Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007)

Laila Halaby also works to destabilize binaries constructed in the West, especially in post-9/11 America, in which exceptional Euro-American "civilization" is positioned against the perceived "barbarism" of the Middle East. Angela McRobbie argues that Western postfeminism encourages "young women [...] to conceive of themselves [as] grateful subjects of modern states and cultures which permit [greater] freedoms" in the contexts of employment and sexuality, "unlike repressive fundamentalist regimes" (27). McRobbie suggests that this binary perpetuates a "discourse of Western enlightened values in regard to sexuality" which is "defined in contrast with seemingly less advanced countries of the world" (27), which ultimately leads to the "disarticulation" of feminism:

> It disarticulates possible affiliations which would be based on Western feminist post-colonialist critique of how Western sexual freedoms are strategically deployed so as to support notions of civilization and superiority, and by preventing such a possibility, it displaces possible solidarities, with a re-instated hierarchy of civilization and modernity, and a discourse which celebrates the freedoms of fashion-conscious 'thong-wearing' Western girls in contrast to those young women who, for example, wear the veil. (27)

Halaby stages her deconstruction of this disarticulating binary on the domestic plane of gender relations. Her narrative focuses on the dissolution of an American marriage of Jordanian immigrants, who, after 9/11 and its aftermath of increased racial profiling and discrimination, seek refuge in extramarital affairs with traditional white Americans. Their experiences reveal that the resurgence of this binary after 9/11 obfuscates the rampant misogyny that often goes unnoticed in American culture. This highlights the contradiction in the postfeminist decoy mobilized in American culture, whose assumed freedom and empowerment obfuscates American misogyny, and is used to further legitimize the invasion of Iraq under the false pretences of liberating Middle Eastern women from Islamic oppression. Natalie J. Friedman identifies a trope of adultery in certain immigrant novels, suggesting that "the unraveling of intimate relationships stands in for other representative acts of

immigrant struggle in novels and stories," and that "adultery […] becomes an imaginary space in which authors explore what happens when national and ethnic identity is destabilized" (71). Along these lines, I will explore how Halaby uses the trope of adultery to depict the destabilizing effects of 9/11 on her protagonists' Jordanian-American transnational identities, and their efforts to try to subsume their racial/ethnic difference within their extramarital affairs with white all-American partners who exemplify traditional American gender ideals – all of which ultimately critiques not only domestic gender relations, but also American foreign policy. This analysis will focus primarily on the detrimental effects of Salwa's affair. Her American lover, Jake, comes to personify hegemonic masculinity in American culture, and when positioned as a foil against Jassim, Salwa's passive Jordanian husband, it is the homegrown American who is revealed to be a seductive and barbaric misogynist rather than the "Islamic Terrorist" scapegoat vilified in the American media.

Jassim and Salwa Haddad emigrate from Jordan to Tucson, Arizona in order to achieve their American Dreams. Jassim works as a hydrologist and Salwa is a real estate agent and a part-time merchant teller, occupations which, according to Georgiana Banita, establish the Haddad's as "a couple of upwardly mobile over-achievers living the American Dream" (542). In this light, Fadda-Conrey suggests that in Halaby's novel "Arab American belonging and citizenship (both legal and cultural) is recurrently depicted through the characters' economic success (informing their consumer citizenship) and their purported attainment of the American dream, which nevertheless turns out to be short lived and inauthentic" (542). Expanding upon this premise, I argue that rather than sharing a common monolithic American Dream, their pursuit of economic success sees a gendered divergence. Jassim was drawn to the United States for its educational opportunities (in the sciences, a pursuit often gendered as masculine) and the access to the technology needed to pursue his research, whereas Salwa was drawn to the "fashion-conscious" fantasy of America as depicted in pop-cultural forms and advertising, and the postfeminist "consumer citizenship" offered therein: "America pulled and yanked on her from a very young age, forever trying to reel her in […] the exported America of

Disneyland and hamburgers, Hollywood and the Marlboro Man" (49). But from the outset, it is established that Salwa is not a cultural dupe; in fact, she is often represented as more perceptive and critical than her husband, especially after 9/11. It is Salwa who is outraged by the nationalistic fervor and the backlash against anyone who even *appears* to be Muslim, referring to Balbir Singh Soghi, the Sikh gas station attendant who was killed in Arizona shortly after the attacks. Salwa is also quick to make the connection between such racist impulses and hegemonic masculinity, denigrating such people as "*stupid and macho*" (21). When Jassim calls her "macho" designation into question, she elaborates:

> *Macho*. You know, throwing their weight around if something happens that they don't like. Only it doesn't matter to them if they get the people who did whatever it is that they are angry about, just as long as they've done something large and loud. I hate to think what sort of retaliation there is going to be on a governmental level for what happened. Jassim, it's not going to be easy, especially for you. (21)

Here, Salwa is frustrated over what she sees as Jassim's naiveté and complacency, and his inability to draw the connection between such private acts of retaliation and public/governmental discourse and actions. Salwa recognizes that private sentiment and violence in response to such events can often prefigure the response of the nation at the governmental level, where sublimated forms of violence embedded in legislation (USA Patriot Act) can then be visited back onto entire racial/ethnic groups. However, Jassim dismisses her concerns over such machismo and political bluster.

The implications of gender on 9/11 (and vice versa), however, are not totally lost on Jassim. When he becomes the subject of an undercover investigation by Jack Franks, with whom Salwa is also familiar as a client, Jassim is disconcerted by his masculine character and his exotic fixation on Arab women:

> "He wanted to know about my wife, talked about beautiful Arab women. About how he understood why *you fellas cover them up*. I thought he was crass and arrogant. A bull. A

bulldozer. He wouldn't stop talking while I was taking my shower. First time I've ever met

him and he acts as though he's got the right to all my information." (35)[70]

Jassim focuses on the "crass and arrogant" masculine character of his interrogator, whose *bearing* (to recall Hamid's term) he compares to a "bull" and a "bulldozer," both of which connote brazen masculine violence and destruction, and also figuratively describe his invasive interrogative style. Also, a connection is made here (though perhaps unbeknownst to Jassim) between Franks' dominative American bearing in his predatory assessment of Arab women and the equally oppressive domestic policies enacted after 9/11, of which he is an agent. In one of the most important observations in the novel, especially in the context of this analysis, Jassim recalls the timing of his conversation with Franks: "As the first plane was flying into the World Trade Center building, Jack Franks was expounding on the beauty of Arab women and grilling me about my wife. There's a meaning in that somewhere, don't you think?" (35-36). Though Jassim only hints at the "meaning" of this confluence of events, this is the moment in which Halaby's text establishes from the outset that oppressive American gender relations, and specifically the ill effects of hegemonic masculinity, are closely aligned with the events of 9/11. Halaby's decision to parallel and converge the timing of this interpersonal encounter with the 9/11 attacks clearly characterizes Franks' interrogative behavior as a related attack – not only in his subtle terroristic engagement with Jassim as a visible minority, but also in his use of encroaching language when referring to Jassim's wife and Arab women in general. Not only does this depiction create a predatory image of American masculinity, it also serves to destabilize the gendered "imperial decoys" that were used to help justify the invasion of Iraq, under the guise of securing women's rights as a civilizing imperative in an otherwise barbarous land (Eisenstein 6). This direct linking of oppressive American gender practices to the events of 9/11 will be more fully elaborated in the analysis below of the gender couplings that result from Salwa and Jassim's affairs.

Halaby is quick to provide a view of the seedy underbelly of traditional American gender relations. She introduces Jake by situating him in a telling context: a "topless bar on one of the ugliest streets in the city" (50). However, Halaby initially presents Jake in a sympathetic light, depicting him as a disaffected outsider who does not want to be "the richest or the smartest or the fastest" – who, in other words, does not want to adopt the masculine persona and competitive patterns of practice that secure American Dreams (50). Furthermore, though he works as a parking attendant at this topless bar, he is very critical of its existence, from its misogynistic male clientele to its exploited female performers:

> His friends thought his job sounded cool, mostly because he didn't tell them the whole story: that almost all the girls got high or drunk to perform, that it was not just dancing they did for a fee, and that some of the men who went there and worked there were real-life scary […] It scratched at his heart to see the dancers – not the touched-up kind from television […] the women who pulled at him were the regulars, degraded women with pink skin and stretch marks and buckteeth and nasty boyfriends, the women who tried to hide their flaws in the dark club by shaking themselves here and stretching themselves there, by saving up their tips to pay rent and support their children […] he realized he could do better for himself, became anxious that his experiences there would damage him [...] (50-51)

Here, Halaby reveals the formative context of Jake's recent personal history, which has a damaging effect on his subsequent relations with women, as his relationship with Salwa will attest. Furthermore, the implication that Jake's job in the sex industry provides him with homosocial capital ("his friends thought his job sounded cool") suggests that the gender orientation celebrated at such institutions stems from a larger homosocially sanctioned perception of women as sexual objects in American culture. But Jake is exposed to the reality behind the "brushed-up" sexuality offered in the cultural products that promise a masculinized version of the American Dream: the "real-life scary" men and "nasty boyfriends" associated with the desperate, intoxicated, "degraded women" who

perform. However, despite his removal from this immediate context of gendered/sexual exploitation, it can be argued that Jake had already internalized the more subtle, sublimated practices of gender exploitation reproduced in American culture, perhaps far before his exposure to their more overt and brazen celebration at the sex club. But how is it possible that Jake is able to seduce Salwa into an extramarital affair, when she is introduced as such a vocal critic of American machismo?

In this analysis, Salwa will be established as at least partly under the influence of a neoliberal postfeminist American Dream, the underlying misogyny of which destabilizes the self-congratulatory binary espoused by post-9/11 American foreign policy, which positioned pro-feminist America against the misogynistic Middle East. As explored in the previous chapter, neoliberal postfeminism offers a "consumer citizenship" with freedoms that grant access to the pillars of pro-Western feminine consumer culture: "career, success, glamor, and sexuality" (McRobbie 28). This subject position, with its sexual freedoms, is conducive to exploring a variety of sexual lifestyles and gender relations, including the choice of a more traditional (or regressive) sex partner with the domineering bearing of hegemonic American masculinity. Salwa is already a successful business professional and also indulges in a consumerist lifestyle – both signifiers of postfeminist success in the workplace and marketplace. However, her sex life does not fit the adventurous profile celebrated in the pop cultural ideals featured in the American media, such as the women depicted in *Sex and the City*. Nonetheless, her favorite consumer product, silk pajamas, perhaps reveals that she has internalized an American brand of sexuality that is at least partially inflected with postfeminist influences. As established above, Salwa recalls being seduced by American pop culture and commodities, but this seduction is focalized in her fixation on silk pajamas: "It wasn't just the feeling of the pajamas that she liked, it was the act of wearing pajamas such as these and what it symbolized to her: leisure. Women who wore these pajamas were rich, either in their own right or in someone else's" (47). That Salwa views these luxury consumer products as a symbol of "leisure" and affluence, and more specifically of women who were rich "in their own right" (though "someone

else's" is also fine), suggests that, for her, silk pajamas emblematize the consumer spending power and leisure time deemed the prerogative of the postfeminist American business professional. Furthermore, Salwa recounts how, "as she became more accustomed to American life […] her pajamas narrowed to fit her body more precisely […] As her years away from home lengthened and her susceptibility to American advertising increased, her pajamas transformed, morphed from elegant and flowing to tight, more revealing, more alluring" (48). In this description of the evolution of Salwa's pajama wearing, Halaby is able to trace the transformation of not only an increasingly alluring fashion style, but also Salwa's acquiescence to a "sexier" subject position constructed and marketed in American culture. In this way, Halaby shows how American consumer products can shape sexual identity, and in this context American female sexuality is decidedly more "revealing" and "alluring." So Salwa seems to have many of the things celebrated in the postfeminist American Dream: a professional job, a disposable income, a sense of leisure, and material luxury. The only missing element is a more adventurous sex life, and that comes in the form of Jake. It is Salwa's participation in the "highly conservative mode of feminine 'empowerment'" promoted by American postfeminism that leads to the contradictions in her character: she is a woman who is successful, independent, and vocal, but who is also susceptible to dominative sexual relations that not only develop into more insidious and all-pervasive forms of misogyny, but also eventually spiral into brutal and racist physical violence (27).[71]

After 9/11, Jassim becomes increasingly distant, since he is not only involved in a car accident in which he kills a teenager (which parallels the terrorist attacks), but also is the victim of racial profiling and surveillance. He keeps his problems from Salwa and pushes her away in the process. During this time, Salwa also keeps secrets from Jassim, including a pregnancy that eventually miscarries. During this time of national and interpersonal crisis, both Salwa and Jassim turn away from their marriage and seek shelter in extramarital affairs with homegrown all-Americans – both of whom border on stock characters – to subsume their racial difference, which had become

so conspicuous after 9/11. In this sense, they both retreat into Americana by attaching themselves to people who personify traditional American *types* – Penny, the "large breasted" diner waitress with a heart of gold (69), and Jake, the "strutting" all-American boy with the "brazen smile" (183; 59).

The gender relations that constitute the Salwa/Jake dyad will be the main focus here. One of Salwa's colleagues nicknames Jake "Loverboy" and, while in the middle of a flirtatious conversation with him, Salwa sees "in his eyes, in his body language, why Petra had called him that" (183). Halaby describes Jake's body language, or bearing, as confident and assertive: his smile is generally "brazen," and when he flashes it to Salwa earlier in the novel, she recounts that his "smile broadened and then he winked" (59). Furthermore, the same coworker reveals to Salwa that Jake is "strutting around here like he owns the place, like he spent the weekend fucking some college girl into oblivion" (182). This description unconsciously replicates the conflation of a proprietorial mode of masculinity with misogynistic sexuality; or, in American frat house parlance, the violent "fucking over" of somebody in this way ("into oblivion") translates into "owning" them. That this is uttered in passing by Petra, in a "frat boys with be frat boys" dismissive tone, suggests that such misogyny is deeply ingrained in American culture, where it is almost expected and discussed in idle amusement or feigned disgust. However, Salwa is taken aback by this information, not only by Jake's alleged behavior, which she suspects is related to his flirtation with her, but also the "ugly way" in which Petra articulates his cocky, frat boy bearing (183). Through Petra's second hand account, Salwa is able to envision herself as such a "college girl" for Jake to "fuck" and she is decidedly not comfortable in that role. Also, when Petra reveals that her partner is leaving her for someone else, Salwa contemplates her irritation at this aspect of American culture, "where men and women could choose between men and women, where there were no limits, no taboos" (183). This admission certainly reveals a more conservative strain in Salwa's sexual beliefs, suggesting a discomfort with the sexual freedoms promised in American culture – one of the hallmarks of postfeminist discussions of freedom and choice. Salwa appears uneasy with same-sex partnerships, and, perhaps more

fundamentally, with the increasing fluidity and ease with which American men and women, in whatever combination, enter and leave sexual relationships. This response is more symptomatic of Salwa's own need for stability in post-9/11 America, which she hopes to find in the "promise of American romance" offered by Jake (189). However, as suggested above, her desire to enter more fully into a traditional American gender relation is not without serious doubt. When she first acquiesces to Jake's advances and permits a kiss, which she describes as "allowing an American boy to envelop her married self," she chastises herself for partaking in transgressive behavior that is "an American problem, an American situation" (175). And her "American problem," which includes her increasingly subordinate relationship to Jake in their traditional American gender dyad, only increases with each encounter.

Salwa begins to read beyond the surface of Jake's words and body language, which, according to Salwa's American trained reading practices, are scripted in a way to produce actions and scenarios that secure hegemonic masculinity: "At the core of those words was desire, now lodged in every one of her body's cells. The real words, for they translated internally, were *You turn me on and I want you and I intend to have you*. (Heady plans for such a young man, but this is America and everything is possible)" (186). Here, Salwa positions herself as becoming the passive object of Jake's active, possessive desire, with seemingly little concern for this gendered power relation, even reasoning (perhaps with a hint of irony) that it is natural for Jake to have such impulses, since they are the prerogative of a certain brand of masculine American freedom in which "everything is possible" – in the workplace, marketplace, and the bedroom. When Jake finally pressures Salwa to have sex on the job, in a house she is trying to sell, Salwa begins to realize that his coercive sexual behavior is putting her at risk of losing her job, which highlights the contradictions of the postfeminst American Dream. Furthermore, shortly thereafter, Salwa hears their sexual rendezvous recounted to her in the bank office, again in a second hand account from Petra, who warns Salwa that Jake is "disgusting": "There is something creepy about him. Sometimes he's

okay, and maybe that's how he is with you, maybe with you he behaves, but around other people, especially Sweeney, he's just gross. It's like he leads his life with his dick. I mean, I know lots of men do that, but he seems to have a problem" (265). Petra's revelation indicates that Jake's all-American boyish charm is in fact a deception. The reality behind the ideal American type he represents is misogynistic: he seduces Salwa – with a measure of kindness and sexual charm – only to partake in the frat-like, homosocial practice of bragging about his sexual exploits to office workers behind her back. This practice indicates that such men view sexual conquest as a point of pride, as homosocial capital, and it thus serves to maintain a relation of domination with the women involved – a practice of hegemonic masculinity that is a form of sexual harassment. Petra, again, in a choice of words that perhaps betrays how women can also internalize misogynistic language, tells Salwa that "the way he is talking right now is so degrading to that poor woman he screwed" (266). Here, Halaby indicates that Jake is partaking in the same "degrading" practices (albeit in a more sublimated fashion) that he had criticized at the topless bar.

Coinciding with her disillusionment with Jake's "promise of American romance," Salwa repudiates her encompassing postfeminist American Dream, which had already begun to unravel at the beginning of her affair:

> The promise of American romance was a lovely box filled with teeth that devoured you with gigantic gnashing and crunching […] The kiss had lifted from her eyes the last threads of the remaining tidy veil of name brands and small talk, the cellophane promise, the two-ply vow that anything you wanted could be yours. Anything. From a Mercedes to a house in the foothills to sex with your coworker. It was all, down to the last breath, a neatly packaged lie to disguise real life. (189-190)

Here, Salwa disavows her "romance" with America, which promised the postfeminist freedom to consume and possess "anything" in the marketplace, along with the sexual freedom to choose to have sex with anybody, a "coworker" – all of which are commodified "cellophane promise[s]" conveyed

though hegemonic American media. Such media representations fabricate a "veil" (a subversion of the postfeminist critique of burqas, niqabs, or hijabs as misogynistic) over the "real life" nightmare behind the dream: the exploited women at the topless bar; the sexual coercion and harassment experienced by Salwa; the predatory and racist surveillance of Jassim after 9/11; and America's militant and coercive foreign policy after the attacks. Salwa concludes that "her American freedom had given her exactly that: American freedom," which she aligns with her own tailored version of postfeminist freedom, which she characterizes as "flimsy silk-pajama fantasies of potential" (202). Halaby's alignment of Salwa's "silk pajamas" – a commodity which symbolizes a certain ideal of American female sexuality – with "potential," suggests that the postfeminist freedom marketed to American women idealizes a mode of sexuality that will guarantee individual agency and the potential to succeed, when the reality of female sexuality in the United States continues to be marked by oppression. This fantasy of postfeminist freedom, which envisions a free agent divorced from socio-historical context and circumstance, does not take into account factors of gender, race, ethnicity and class that complicate such idealized conceptions of freedom, especially after 9/11. Finally, in her evaluation of the ruins of their collective American Dream, Fadda-Conrey suggests that "the Haddad's immersion in the consumerist comfort of upper-middle-class American life overpowers any lingering transnational political engagement [with] Jordan," along with their "anti-imperial political identities and viewpoints (an erasure that is both self-willed and imposed by the pressures of assimilation)," all of which "ultimately causes their moral downfall" (546). Here, Fadda-Conrey reveals that the Haddad's partaking in an affluent American lifestyle which comes at the expense of their ethnic and national roots is a betrayal of the "other" who is always within the "self" – here, quite literally in the sense that as dual citizens they *are* still Jordanian, even though they have decided to leave that "other" nation and the "others" within it behind.

Much of Halaby's novel details how an American man exercises hegemonic masculinity (an equal measure of sub- and supra-) over a Jordanian-American woman after 9/11, which is a subtle

restaging and critique of imperial American foreign policy within the domestic space. However, near the end of the novel, Halaby shifts focus from the domestic plane to the international, in order to establish a more direct connection between Jake's practice of hegemonic masculinity in America and the nation's post-9/11 foreign policy. When Salwa finally confesses her affair to her Jordanian friend Randa, the latter reacts in anger: "Randa sat on her couch ready to fight the American Man with his arbitrary borders and sickening sanctions, with his machismo and his rapists' agenda" (286). Clearly, though Randa is reacting to Salwa's experience of domestic abuse, she is articulating her reaction – at least in her own mind – in a way that conflates Salwa's personal experience of masculine dominance with a personified national character modeled on such dominance – the "American Man" and "his" premeditated patterns of practice that secure American hegemony abroad, which she likens to a "rapists' agenda." This furthers Halaby's destabilization of the Western binary that constructs Western democracy as the last bastion of civilization against Middle Eastern Islamic barbarism, specifically in terms of how this binary leverages women's rights discourses to American imperialist ends.

In fact, Halaby's text works to invert this binary by supplementing such subversive representations with a depiction of the dominant, populist sentiment that suffused the nation after 9/11. Though she is a secondary character in the novel, Penny, Jassim's American mistress, is a working class waitress who lauds George W. Bush's speeches after 9/11, which fill her with "unspeakable pride" (280). While watching such a speech on the news, she considers how they (Americans) were showing "all those terrorists what Americans were made of, how they were continuing the great history of this country, getting out there and saving poor people from the oppression of living in their backward countries. As the president said, Americans were bringing democracy to places that knew only tyranny and terror, that didn't have the freedom to choose" (280). However, Penny's unflagging support for Bush's War on Terror and the American exceptionalism it espouses (democratic "freedom to choose") is interpolated by what she sees as

Jassim's "difference" from "those people over there" (281). She reassures her friend Trini that "Jassim is a good guy – he's not like them, shouldn't be judged by them. But those people over there, they oppress women and kill each other. They're the ones that should be bombed" (281). But Trini warns her to be cautious: "Men over there can marry four women at once, make them wear those sheets over their whole bodies" (281). Penny and Trini exemplify the self-righteous populist belief that Middle Eastern women are in need of American liberation (with the veil crudely invoked as a symbol of oppression), which therefore partly justifies an American invasion. In Penny's eyes, Jassim is different because he is an American (which partly subsumes his difference), and is thus "civilized" because she has met him personally in her home country, as opposed to "those people over there" who are represented as misogynistic in the media. Halaby inverts such gendered stereotypes, revealing the misogyny in American culture, which contradicts the pop-cultural/populist claims that America is a postfeminist society marked by civilized gender relations. Such a collapsing of mediated assumptions of what constitutes civilization "over here" and tyranny "over there" allows the tracing of a cognitive map which not only raises consciousness to oppressive American foreign policy, but also to a tyrannical mode of hegemonic masculinity in domestic gender relations.

The final act that brings into stark relief the violent reality of domestic abuse in America occurs after Salwa decides to return to Jordan indefinitely. After informing Jassim of her decision (Jassim is supportive but distraught), she attempts to do the same with Jake. However, Jake, in a drug-induced rage, is unwilling to accept her leaving America/himself. After accusing her of using him for sex (an inversion of their power relations and her increasing victimization), he becomes belligerent in his words and actions. At this point Salwa feels "the balance of power shifting" (recalling the "metal judo" in Hamid, though here it verges on the physical): from her regained sense of autonomy in her decision to leave him to his reactionary attempts to break her resolve (319). He then begins to berate her "home," Jordan, calling it a "pigsty." Finally, when she turns to leave, he breaks a framed painting over her head and begins to brutally beat her:

> In a powerful blink, it came down on her cheek, just below her eye, and she felt as if her face had been sliced with something that was part sledgehammer, part knife. She screamed and bent her head forward, covered her face, caught her blood […] it was the corner of the heavy silver frame that had sliced into her face, she felt a blow again, on the top of her head. She was amazed at the force and pain. She doubled over in a ball on the landing with her hands over the back of her head, thickly wet, and she felt blows again, on her back, on her side, on her hands. (321)

As this brutal scene unfolds – and it does so over a prolonged two pages – Jake berates her: "Bitch! Goddam fucking Arab bitch! You ruined everything!" (322). Here, Halaby channels the worst aspects of America through Jake's dominative masculinity, who mobilizes sexual intimidation, racism, and physical violence against Salwa's autonomous decision to free herself from what she sees as an oppressive American culture. Halaby's intensification of the violence in this crucial scene adds extra emphasis to not only the misogynistic ideals in American culture, but also to the very real, physical, corporeal violence that such ideals often lead to, which strengthens the text's deconstructive inversion of the Western binaries that position America as an enlightened, progressive "civilization" against the misogynistic "barbarism" of Eastern cultures.

Teju Cole's *Open City* (2012)

Teju Cole's novel focuses on a Nigerian immigrant living in New York City after 9/11. Julius spends much of his time wandering through New York and pondering the colonial history of the city, oftentimes recounting, in pedantic first-person monologue, the palimpsest of oppressive events that underlie a cityscape that has otherwise stood as a symbol of freedom and cosmopolitanism. However, despite Julius' attempts to historicize the various surfaces of the city he encounters along his pedestrian routes, there is a cold, cerebral quality to his narration: his attempt to fill the elisions in the local historical record is conspicuously marked by a lack of feeling and humanity. He provides

detailed historical synopses of places, people, and events that read more like clinical history lessons than a history that resonates with him personally. As noted by one of Julius' friends in the novel, this can be partly explained by his status as an immigrant from Nigeria and not a descendent of African American slaves, suggesting that he does not have a personal connection to this past, despite his intellectual interest (203). Pieter Vermeulen suspects a larger narrative strategy at work, noting that Cole's novel "experiments with a flat, nearly affectless tone in its depiction of Julius's dissociated mind. It does so not in order to find appropriate ways to think 'about people whose lives are geographically or culturally unrelated to one's own,' but rather in order to signal the insufficiency of such merely imaginative exercises" (45). I will explore Julius' "affectless tone" in the context of Elaine Scarry's notion that "to have pain is to have certainty" while "to hear about pain is to have doubt," to analyze how Cole interrogates the effectiveness of the academic imperative towards historicization (13). In a way, Cole's novel, especially through Vermeulen's reading above, challenges Jameson's notion of cognitive mapping, an "imaginative exercise" or aesthetic attempt to chart and thus raise awareness to the growing international division of labor, "to find appropriate ways to think about people whose lives are geographically or culturally unrelated to one's own," but upon whose exploited labor Western capitalism is increasingly dependent. It is not until Julius is physically attacked near the end of the novel that he experiences a corporeal pain which breaks him out of his clinical world of abstraction, erasing all doubt about "his own part in these stories" (Cole 59). After the attack, Julius recounts a narrative of African slavery in New York City, at the end of which he feels a pang of residual physical pain – suggesting that his academic historical commentary is now suffused with an equal measure of empathy. However, Cole does not leave the reader with such redemptive narrative closure. Shortly after this glimmer of empathy, and near the end of the novel, Julius is confronted by a friend from Nigeria who accuses him of raping her when they were teenagers. This glaring omission in Julius' first person narrative calls into question his reliability as a narrator and the very imperative of historicization to which he so fervently adheres, an imperative

modeled on an "art of listening" he adopts from an English professor (Dr. Saito), who taught him how to "trace out a story from what was omitted" (9). Furthermore, it reveals his complicity in the hegemonic patterns of oppressive practice that he ostensibly critiques in his endless historicizing: in his interpersonal gender relations, he has engaged in the same rapacious practices as the corporations and imperial nations that come under his historical critique – Coca Cola and the United States being clear examples (136). At the end of the novel Julius reverts back to the clinical narrativizing that characterized his past engagement with history, calling into question our ability to empathize with the suffering of others, even in the light of historical knowledge, since both the fundamentally irretrievable nature of historical material events (historicity), and even the limited framing of the retrievable records of historical knowledge necessarily leave certain histories behind.[72]

Positing the irretrievability of the actual past is not a reason to fall into historical nihilism or to simply fall back into mainly Anglo-American methodologies of historiography that claim to approximate historical "truth" – the latter of which are influenced by the positivism of analytic philosophy (Rorty *et al*. 11-13). Rorty, Schneewind, and Skinner suggest that history must be written nonetheless, taking into account the phenomenological contingencies of context and perspective. History should be written "as self-consciously as one can – in as full awareness as possible of the *variety* of contemporary concerns to which a past figure may be relevant'" (11). In this light, Cole, through Julius, undertakes a project to historicize New York City in the context 9/11, situating it in a variety of rescued American histories that recall not only the flocking of immigrants to Ellis Island in search of redemption, but also the city's colonial heritage and its often lucrative connections to the slave trade. Furthermore, his novelistic/narrative approach to history is decidedly self-reflexive: his use of an unreliable narrator calls into question the motivations behind and overall effect of such historicization, including the authorial/narratological prejudices that construct the unities and continuities represented, and the discontinuities and exclusions that the former are founded upon – those absent presences that haunt the narrator's story. What is the purpose of his narrator's private

historical engagements, which at times adopts the idle air of the *flâneur*? [73] In a novel that is haunted by 9/11, and which proclaims that "history" *is* "suffering," Cole suggests that the need to historicize the surface of events is always necessary (the history in this novel *is* illuminating) but never entirely sufficient, since even shared experiences of pain and corporeal vulnerability – contra Butler and Zizek – will never guarantee empathy for the suffering of others, which is the starting point for any serious political reconciliation (123). This resonates with the difficulty of the United States to come into more empathetic relations with other nations after 9/11, particularly since the U.S. retreated into the death-transcending abstractions of American exceptionalism that served to integrate 9/11 as a traumatic moment into a more meaningful narrative of American progress.

An early example of Julius' dispassionate approach occurs when he delves into a synopsis of *The Monster of New Amsterdam*, a "comprehensive study of Cornelius Van Tienhoven" (25). Julius recounts that Van Tienhoven was an infamous "*schout*" of New Amsterdam in the seventeenth century who supervised the Dutch colonists on Manhattan Island. Julius points out that Van Tienhoven became known for his "brutal acts, notable among them a raid he led to murder Canarsie Indians on Long Island, after which he brought back the victims' heads on pikes" (26). And though he claims that the book made for "grim reading" as it was "full of violent events," he then matter-of-factly makes note of the extensive "endnotes" in "which were reprinted the relevant seventeenth century records" (26). Furthermore, in a moment that suggests a level of self-awareness (though this will be challenged later), Julius indicates that the endnotes were "written in calm and pious language that presented mass murder as little more than the regrettable side effect of colonizing the land" (26). Of course the problem here (or the irony really) is that Julius, in his second hand recounting of the historical research in the book, narrates with the same "emotional distance typical of academic study" that he ostensibly critiques (27). When Julius discusses his psychiatric patient's reaction to the book, who recommended it to Julius in the first place, he recalls how "it was clear […] from talking to her that the horrors Native Americans had had to endure at the hands of the white settlers,

the horrors, in her view, that they continued to suffer, affected her on a profound personal level"

(27). Here, Julius positions himself as a "listener," as a good psychiatrist should be; however, he

betrays an element of doubt in his recounting of his patient's reaction. In terms of the communication

of pain between patient and medical practitioner, Elaine Scarry has theorized the following: "for the

person in pain, so incontestably and unnegotiably present is it that 'having pain' may come to be

thought of as the most vibrant example of what it is to 'have certainty,' while for the other person it

is so elusive that 'hearing about pain' may exist as the primary model of what it is 'to have doubt'"

(4). Here, the medical practitioner operates in the realm of the cerebral as a second hand receiver of

the patient's visceral experience of pain: the former "hears" about the other's pain, but, lacking the

"certainty" of experiential corroboration, is susceptible to "doubt."

In this light, Julius buffers himself from his patient's testimony of personal suffering by

interpolating the words "in her view" in the middle of his recounting of it, suggesting a degree of

doubt as to the authenticity or veracity of her account. So, although he is listening to his patient, the

clinical nature of his profession always presumes a distance from the patient as a scientific subject of

study. Cole's critique of the medical professional's calculating, diagnostic gaze, and the doubt that

can arise from merely *hearing* about pain without further corroborative medical testing, is

exemplified when Julius recalls his patient's "curiously serene face that afternoon, on which the only

physical signs of distress were her tear-filled eyes" (27). Julius' description of her face as "*curiously*

serene" and his noting of the "*only* physical signs of distress" to corroborate her testimony of

suffering reveals his underlying doubt concerning her pain and, as the rest of this analysis will reveal,

also the pain of others in his historicizing. Although Julius' recounting of the atrocities committed by

Van Tienhoven rescues a suppressed history that destabilizes dominant narratives that sanctify New

York City as a beacon of freedom, he is only able to deal with suffering through such mediated

historical abstractions, rather than through the actual people (such as his Native American patient)

who have inherited the suffering of their ancestors through verbal and corporeal transmission, and the pain experienced through daily acts of racism.

As suggested above, Julius' detachment is symptomatic of a masculine mode of rational professionalism, which often masks practices of sublimated violence, such as those committed by the business professionals in the novels written by DeLillo, O'Neill, Waldman, and Hamid. Such practices are often conducted at a remove from actual human suffering, a distance from which human bodies are not visible: whether it is the professionals responsible for outsourcing labor to impoverished nations (Hamid), or those who legislate laws or exercise power to compromise domestic civil rights (Waldman). Of course, Julius *knows* this to be the case and offers the following lecture, after skirting the edge of Ground Zero:

> But atrocity is nothing new, not to humans, not to animals. The difference is that in our time it is uniquely well-organized, carried out with pens, trains carriages, ledgers, barbed wire, work camps, gas. And this late contribution, the absence of bodies. No bodies were visible, except the falling ones […] Marketable stories of all kinds had thickened around the injured coast of our city, but the depiction of dead bodies was forbidden. It would have been upsetting to have it otherwise. (58)

Julius situates 9/11 as a "late contribution" to the history of the professional management of atrocity and death, exemplified by what Hannah Arendt articulated as the "banality of evil" of the Third Reich's rational and muted orchestration of the Holocaust – a bureaucratized and industrialized operation that kept genocide out of sight, out of mind. The American media's reluctance to show the falling bodies is an extension of what is quite literally the institutionalization of repressive, professional practices of death-transcendence, which serve to protect the nation's masculine ideologies, or death-transcending worldviews. But the repressed "falling man" as a symbol and symptom of the nation's reluctance to acknowledge its vulnerability at the expense of its once exceptional, inviolable masculine character, is *understood* by Julius only as an abstract notion, since

his own narratives are often equally bereft of "dead bodies." One wonders why he fails in this instance to put his maxim into practice, to "trace out a story from what was omitted" (9). His skirting the edge of Ground Zero, a profound absence, and its evocation of the "falling bodies" that were omitted from public consciousness, remains precisely that: a skirting of the larger masculinist historical context of which the charred pit is but a symptom. His evasion itself is a symptom of his own reluctance to acknowledge this historical context, perhaps out of a sense of his own complacency/complicity as an American citizen, but also for deeper interpersonal reasons related to his own suppressed history in which he committed rape.

This discrepancy is also the result of his rational, informational mode of consciousness that prefers the sublime *control* of macrocosmic views afforded by historical abstraction over the more visceral, microcosmic *experience* of human contact. The following is Julius' description of the "palimpsest" of erasures that have occurred on the site of Ground Zero, perhaps the best example of his style of abstracted historicizing:

> This was not the first erasure on the site. Before the towers had gone up, there had been a bustling network of little streets traversing this part of town. Robinson Street, Laurens Street, College Place: all of them had been obliterated in the 1960s to make way for the World Trade Center buildings, and all were forgotten now. Gone, too, was the old Washington Market, the active piers, the fishwives, the Christian Syrian enclave that was established here in the late 1800s. The Syrians, the Lebanese, and other people from the Levant had been pushed across the river to Brooklyn, where they'd set down roots on Atlantic Avenue and in Brooklyn Heights. And, before that? What Lenape paths lay buried beneath the rubble? The site was a palimpsest, as was all the city, written, erased, rewritten. There had been communities here before Columbus ever set sail, before Verrazano anchored his ships in the narrows, or the black Portuguese slave trader Esteban Gomez sailed up the Hudson; human beings had lived

> here, built homes, and quarreled with their neighbors long before the Dutch ever saw a
>
> business opportunity in the rich furs and timber of the island and its calm bay. (59)

While this expansive historicization of the countless "forgotten" atrocities – the "obliterat[ions]," displacements, resettlements, genocides, and quarrels that quite literally underlie Ground Zero – works to destabilize 9/11 as a sanctified and exceptional event in American history, the grandeur of its scope, and its glaring "absence of bodies" ultimately diminishes if not completely evades the human suffering that Julius is supposedly trying to rescue and do justice to. Despite the profound breadth of his encyclopedic knowledge, Julius routinely reproduces the very obfuscatory practices that he tries to repudiate and amend.

Furthermore, Julius displays an aversion to historical narratives that implicate himself, either as victimizer or even as mere witness to the suffering of others. This is especially evident when he travels to Brussels. While in conversation with Farouq, a politically informed Moroccan Julius has befriended in town, he becomes uncomfortable when the former begins to defend terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah as political insurgents against American imperialism. Farouq argues that Saddam Hussein was the most "moderate" of the dictators in the Middle East and suggests that he was killed "only because he defied the Americans" and should rather "be admired because he stood up for the right of his country against imperialism" (119). Farouq's friend, Khalil, also weighs in on the issue, suggesting that the region is full of dictators – "the king of Morocco," "Gaddafi," "Mubarak" – and "they remain in power because they sell the national interests of their countries to the Americans" (120). Such stark rehistoricizations of the Bush administration's War on Terror in the Middle East puts Julius on the defensive, inciting him to ask whether they support Al-Qaeda. Khalil responds that "it was a terrible day, the twin towers. Terrible. What they did was very bad. But I understand why they did it" (120). In Julius' knee-jerk reaction to this admission, he calls Khalil "an extremist" (120). However, he admits that his indignation is partially staged: "I was pretending to an outrage greater than I actually felt. In the game, if it was a game, I was meant to be

the outraged American, though what I felt was more sorrow and less anger. Anger and the semiserious use of a word like *extremist*, was easier to handle than sorrow" (120).

Interestingly, Julius, as a black postcolonial, transnational American subject, is here situated as an ideal post-9/11 American *type*, and one not without its masculine connotations: "the outraged American," whose masculine bearing, according to Judith Butler, would come to characterize the post-9/11 nation. Furthermore, Julius finds it easier to adopt this masculine persona, even if half-heartedly, since it is "easier to handle than sorrow." Perhaps, as discussed in the first chapter, anger is easier to handle because sorrow is not gendered as a properly male reaction to such attacks – whether actual (9/11) or verbal (Farouq and Khalil's testimonials). However, this gap in his performance of his American masculine identity abroad – in a defamiliarizing context – suggests that Julius is open to change: at this site of transnational connectivity, he is forced to negotiate competing historical narratives at the interstices of Western and Eastern cultures. But ultimately Julius is unable to take responsibility for his government's rapacious imperialism in the Middle East, in which Americans exploit the "national interests" of resource-rich nations, which, as suggested by his interlocutors, was one of the reasons for the Al-Queda's attacks on 9/11. Again, this reluctance on Julius' part to acknowledge and take some responsibility for his nation's violence prefigures his own failure to apologize and take responsibility for his committing of rape years earlier.

In another invocation of American masculine types, which also depicts the transnational influence of American culture, Julius notices that Farouq bears a "startling resemblance" to Robert De Niro, "specifically in De Niro's role as the young Vito Corleone in *The Godfather II*" (121). When Julius further considers the "meaning of De Nero's smile," he suggests that "one had no idea what he was smiling about," which made it "a face to be liked but feared," perhaps the face of a "charming psychopath" (121). This instance of what Julius reads as the adoption of an American icon of hegemonic mobster masculinity, not only traces an influence of American culture on Middle Eastern subjects, but also how this culture can be internalized and leveraged against its country of

origin. Furthermore, the use of Vito Corleone is symbolically charged, recalling a celebrated American narrative in which a first wave Italian American immigrant feels the need to trump the hegemonic practices of the local don, who himself colludes with the local police and government – the preexisting power structure – in order to profit from illicit business deals and achieve the American Dream. Julius sees this same desire to infiltrate and renegotiate preexisting power relations (albeit geopolitically) in Farouq and his smile, which "spoke": "For us, America is a version of Al-Qaeda" (121). De Nero's smile and his bearing, which Farouq imitates, consciously or not, recalls the ideal of hegemonic American business masculinity explored in DeLillo, O'Neill, and Hamid's novels, all of which are based on masculine practices of "calculated deceit" (DeLillo 97). But Julius is unable to take seriously their historicization of the War on Terror, which implicates his/the nation's complicity in the 9/11 attacks, believing that Farouq has "overplayed his hand" – his use of an American idiom derived from poker (again recalling DeLillo) suggesting that even their geopolitical debate is partaking in those same hegemonic practices, with history articulated here as like a game of poker, determined by the winning hand of the alpha male (122). Farouq's suggestion that "history" *is* "suffering" perhaps best explains Julius' difficulty accepting their historicized testimony: he *hears* their stories of suffering under American imperialism, but without the *certainty* that comes with sharing their pain, he doubts their historical veracity, even acknowledging that Farouq had "brought me too close to his pain, and I no longer saw him" (129).

When back in the United States, Julius continues to partake in the practice of historicizing the cityscape around him, almost as if fulfilling a moral duty. When taking a stroll through Wall Street, the centre of American capitalist trade, he wanders to a spot that provides a vista of the Statue of Liberty and begins another historical lesson on the slave trade in New York: "Trading in slaves had become a capital offense in the United States in 1820, but New York long remained the most important port for the building, out-fitting, insuring, and launching of slavers' ships" (163). Julius then goes on to trace the continuities between the quasi-legal "profiting from slavery" that companies

such as the City Bank of America conducted in the nineteenth century, and other contemporaneous companies who now operate under the names of AT&T and Con-Edison (163). Furthermore, Julius documents the influence of businessmen such as Moses Taylor on New York's involvement in the slave trade. As "one of the world's wealthiest men," Taylor

> had helped fund the war effort on the Union side; but he had also made massive profits from brokering the sale of Cuban sugar in the port of New York, investing the profits of the sugar planters, facilitating the processing of the cargo at the New York City Customs House, and helping finance the acquisition of a 'labor force.' He had made it possible, in other words, for plantation owners to pay for the purchase of slaves. (163)

Here, Julius reveals that New York, as one of the urban centers of American "civilization," was able to play a key role in providing the financing and infrastructure for the slave trade: the result of the inconspicuous, abstract business practices conducted by professional managers and bureaucrats, whose sublimated violence – brokering, investing, processing, and financing – sustained the practice of slavery on the ground in the South. Of course, such profiteering occurred under the civilized surface of financial support for the "war effort on the Union side" – the contradictions of which destabilize the self-congratulatory binary that establishes the North as a civilized land of redemption for slaves and immigrants, against the barbaric South and its condoning of slavery. But Julius drops this extended history lesson as quickly as he launches into it and, like his other lessons, it is filled with information but very little humanity. However, shortly thereafter Julius is the victim of an attack, and his perspective changes as a result.

When on a random stroll, Julius notices two conspicuous black men who seem to have an interest in him. Initially he feels that there had been "only the most tenuous of connections" between them, exchanged by "looks on a street corner by strangers, a gesture of mutual respect based on our being young, black, male; based, in other words, on our being 'brothers,' […] glances [that] were exchanged between black men all over the city […] a little way of saying, I know something of what

life is like for you out here" (213). However, several instances occur throughout the novel in which Julius is skeptical of other black men who "tried to lay claims" on him in their extension of brotherhood (40; 53), an isolationism that breeds racial disarticulation rather than solidarity. For this reason, he finds it conspicuous that these two men abandon this black homosocial practice and simply pass him by. Then, before he knows it, they attack. After an initial beating that consists of a series of kicks to the "shins, back, arms," he loses the "will to speak" and takes "the blows in silence": "The initial awareness of pain was gone, but now came the anticipation of how much it would hurt later, how bad tomorrow would be, for both my body and my mind. My mind had gone blank except for this lone thought, a thought that made my own eyes sting, a prospect more painful, it seemed, than the blows" (212). For the first time in the novel, Julius' attention shifts from the academic historicizing that characterizes his conscious reality to the immediacy of his body in pain, from the cerebral to the visceral, the abstract to the material. But a sense of temporality is not entirely lost here. Julius' sense of time is no longer a sublime experience of abstract thought, but contracts and reifies into a material dimension measured in futural pain: "how much it would hurt […] tomorrow," both "mind" and "body" – "a *thought* that made my own eyes sting, a prospect more painful […] than the blows." His thoughts become so suffused with physical pain that the very thought of the anticipation of prolonged pain in the future is, in a way, more painful than the physical blows themselves. Distinctions of body and mind collapse in the throes of pain, in which thoughts and temporality – the very unfolding of conscious experience itself – are *felt* as material: "We find it convenient to describe time as a material, we 'waste' time, we 'take' our time. As I lay there, time became material in a strange new way: fragmented, torn into incoherent tufts, and at the same time spreading, like something spilled, like a stain" (213). This "strange new way" of experiencing time as material, the palpability of prolonged pain, marks Julius' transition into a more empathetic engagement with the historical atrocities he often recounts.

Emmanuel Levinas suggests that "in suffering there is an absence of all refuge. It is the fact of being directly exposed to being. It is made up of the impossibility of fleeing or retreating. The whole acuity of suffering lies in this impossibility of retreat. It is the fact of being backed up against life and being. In this sense suffering is the impossibility of nothingness" (69). Levinas conceives of suffering as a suffusion of consciousness with "being," which is both material and experiential: an acute awareness of the materiality of the body and the experience of that materiality as pain, and when prolonged, as suffering, since, in the indefinite duration of pain there is an intimation of the impossibility of relief, or "nothingness." But Levinas takes this conception a step further and suggests that "in suffering there is, at the same time as the call to an impossible nothingness, the proximity of death. There is not only the feeling and the knowledge that suffering can end in death. Pain of itself includes it like a paroxysm" (69). Thus, in the presence of acute pain, Levinas suggests that the experiential and the material collapse into the *existential* – pain/suffering makes the intimation of death a *felt* experience, "like a paroxysm." And in language that is interestingly (though unnecessarily) gendered, Levinas posits that "death is *ungraspable*," it is a relationship with "mystery" that "marks the end of the subject's virility and heroism": "My mastery, my virility, my heroism as a subject can be neither virility nor heroism in relation to death. There is in the suffering at the heart of which we have grasped this nearness of death – and still at the level of the phenomenon – this reversal of the subject's activity into passivity" (72). Finally, according to Levinas, this state of passivity, which occurs in the emasculating intimation of the alterity of death in suffering, can open a person to more ethical relations with others: "the encounter with the alterity of death is like nothing so much as the encounter with the alterity of the other person, 'as though the approach of death remained one of the modalities of the relationship with the Other'" (75).

Immediately after the beating, Julius feels that his body has been "violated," and he cannot stop focusing on the "physical pain" that "came streaming in" (213). In his body's suffusion with pain, he chastises his complacency before the attack: "I […] felt only the fear of pain and the love of

being free from pain. But how could I have missed this! […] How could I have been less than completely aware of how good it was to be injury-free?" (215). Later, when he is tending to his injuries, he observes that he has been brought down into the harsh reality of the underside of New York City: "violence for sport was no strange thing in the city; but now: me" (216). This suggests that Julius' past engagement with the city – his sublime historicizations of the atrocities he sees beneath the cityscape – is now marked by his own passage into suffering. He is no longer the empowered yet detached subject projecting narratives upon the exteriority of the city. Rather, after having been thrown into the immediacy of its violence, he is now *one who has been written upon* by the exteriority of the city and subjected to its pain. The diminished "virility" (to borrow from Levinas) of his new orientation is directly acknowledged by Julius, who reflects upon his past relationships with women: "As I examined the bruises, a herd of thoughts clattered through me: Why had this same body hale so often hurried past its lovers?" (216). So not only does the attack cause Julius to reflect upon his past complacency and lack of empathy for the "other" – which he directly links to having a healthy "hale" body – it also leads him to specifically contextualize this complacency within his disregard for "past lovers" (217), suggesting that he had partaken in patterns of gender practice that secured a sense of masculine exceptionalism and power.

Julius' newfound empathy is evident in his subsequent strolls throughout the city – his historicization of his surroundings now having a more visceral, corporeal quality. When recounting the history of an African burial ground in the city, now only marked by an inconspicuous monument and a plot of grass, he describes how "human remains were still routinely uncovered" in the area, "the bodies of some fifteen to twenty thousand blacks, most of them slaves" (220). He continues to recount how the land has since "been built over and the people of the city had forgotten that it was a burial ground," lost "in the shadow of government and the marketplace" – which establishes the continuity between the city's past exploitation of the lucrative slave trade recounted above and the present marketplace (221). Julius' newfound focus on human bodies continues in ways that suggest

the corporeal vulnerability of these slaves and their brutalized lives: "excavated bodies bore traces of suffering: blunt trauma, grievous bodily harm. Many of the skeletons had broken bones, evidence of the suffering they'd endured in life" (221). And finally, in a symbolic moment that embodies (quite literally) Julius' newfound empathy, Julius walks onto the grassy plot of the memorial and does the following: "Bending down, I lifted a stone from the grass and, as I did so, a pain shot through the back of my left hand" (222). Julius' residual pain from his attack connects him to the pain of those slaves buried beneath the grassy plot recounted in his historicization. Jonathan Hart's reading of Northrup Fry's work on historical criticism asserts that such criticism "involves "alienation because […] history involves difference between one time and another" (121). In this sense, any historical engagement is always conducted from afar, at a remove from the immediacy of the time frame under consideration and is thus somewhat alienated in its rational distancing. This observation partly explains the cerebral nature of Julius' historical engagement with the cityscape around him. But his personal experience of acute suffering allows him to feel the visceral import of his recounted histories and the continuities of suffering embodied by ancestors in the present-day. This is in line with Frye's advocacy of a critical orientation to history that is a "recreation of the past in a kind of self-resurrection, in our vision that gives flesh and blood to the vision of the valley of the dry bones. History is the memory of humankind and our own buried life, so that a 'study of it leads to a recognition scene, a discovery in which we see, not our past lives, but the total cultural form of our present life.'" (121). Here, Frye conceives of history as the tracing of continuities from then to now, which reveals the ways in which the past is still alive in the here and now, in the cultural form of the present. Poststructural philosophers such as Michel de Certeau have tempered Frye's optimism by suggesting that history, even self-reflexive historiography, ultimately serves to bring the dead back into the present, but only in a way that emphasizes their ultimate absence or death, their flesh and blood finding movement and voice only through the possessor (historian). So although, like Frye, de Certeau asserts that "historiography resurrects and breathes new life into the dead, marking out for

them a sacred place in the world of the living," he nonetheless argues that "the process of writing buries the dead by transforming them into discursive objects and thereby fixing them, pinning them down with the rules of discourse" (Reekie 53). Here, de Certeau emphasizes the difference between the *process* of historiography and the actual writing of history, the experiential unearthing and sifting that eventually leads to a conception of the dead that is then interred in a more definitive monument of writing. Julius' historicizing is such a form of writing – an alternative history that offers one cold monument in place of another – but this moment in the novel offers the glimmering of something more.

Julius' pain in the living present allows him to give the "skeletons" with "broken bones" recounted in his history a sort of "flesh and blood" embodiment. His historicization connects him with the cerebral "memory of humankind," and his own pain connects him with the visceral feeling of corporeal vulnerability that was exploited in this recounted context of slavery. This becomes "a recognition scene" for Julius in which his own pain leads to the cognitive mapping of the "total cultural form" of capitalist success in America: he sees the connection between the thousands of bodies of black slaves that continue to be forgotten "in the shadow of government and the marketplace," symptomatic of the continuities of racism that persist in the "total cultural form" or structure of present life in the United States. However, this moment of redemption may come off as contrived, as perhaps lacking in poignancy, and for good reason. Cole does not provide the reader with such easy, redemptive closure, but instead follows with a twist that destabilizes Julius' reliability as a narrator and, since his narrative style is marked by an imperative to historicize, also calls into question the limits of historicization.

Before recounting his friend Moji's accusation of rape, he begins with a meditative preamble on the biased perspective of storytelling: "we are not the villains of our own stories […] we play, and only play, the hero, and in the swirl of other people's stories, insofar as those stories concern us at all, we are never less than heroic" (243). After putting this narrative buffer in place – which suggests

that Julius' "virility and heroism," though tempered, is still operative – he proceeds to recount his encounter with Moji. In a cold, "flat" tone, she describes her "precise memory" of what happened in 1989, when they were both teenagers, which Julius distills into: "we had both been drinking beer, she was close to passing out, and I had taken her to another room and forced myself on her" (244). According to Moji's testimony, Julius committed sexualized violence against her, exploiting her compromised state for his own benefit, an instance of him capitalizing on the disparity in the situation: his youthful "hale" body "hurrying past" his lover, who was disabled by drunkenness. And though she further reveals that she had "wanted to die" thereafter (244), Julius had always appeared to be unfazed:

> I had acted like I knew nothing about it, had even forgotten her […] and had never tried to acknowledge what I had done. This torturous deception had continued until the present. But it hadn't been like that for her, she said, the luxury of denial had not been possible for her. Indeed, I had been ever-present in her life, like a stain or a scar, and she had thought of me, either fleetingly or in extended agonies, for almost every day of her adult life. (244)

Though Moji's testimony clearly establishes Julius' attempt to completely separate himself from his crime, Cole's use of language here to articulate her pain (as a "stain" or "scar") actually recalls Julius' articulation of his own pain after the beating (a "spreading stain," "bruises"), which suggests a commonality in their shared experience of corporeal vulnerability. Julius, however, does not make this connection, and again, in the immediate absence of pain and its certitude, he is left with only doubt – not only in terms of her pain, but also of the veracity of her narrative of their personal history.

Julius' reluctance to "acknowledge" and assume responsibility for his rapacious interpersonal actions echoes his earlier reluctance to accept Farouq's allegations leveled against the imperial rapaciousness of American profiteering in the Middle East and Julius' complicity in this ongoing geopolitical exploitation as an American citizen, especially after 9/11. Julius remains cold in his

reception of Moji's testimony. His past experience with pain, which seemed to have initiated a newfound empathy, has not changed what Moji sees as his "callousness" (245). In a line that recalls the problem of domestic abuse in America explored in *Once in a Promised Land*, Moji tells Julius that she is "just another woman whose story of sexual abuse will not be believed" (245). Finally, she tells him that "things don't go away just because you choose to forget them," seeking his confession, asking him twice: "But will you say something now? Will you say something?" (245). However, according to Julius' narrative (of whose omissions the reader is now suspicious), their conversation is interrupted, which prevents him from answering, and there is no indication that he ever does answer in the rest of the novel. Julius' crime of rape is repressed throughout the novel, and can only be found in spectral traces throughout. One of the earliest examples is an initially inconspicuous moment, but when reread in light of his sexual crime, it takes on greater significance: while looking out his window, he notices a crowd of young women attending a "Take Back the Night" protest march, and recounts their chanting, "*Women's bodies, women's lives, we will not be terrorized*. I shut the window" (23). With Julius' bluntly articulated shutting of the window – a repressive action against a protest of domestic abuse, a quite literal silencing of women's voices (at least in his world) – their march is shut out of his mind. Furthermore, the protestors' characterization of domestic abuse as terrorism connects American masculine hegemony with the greater acts of geopolitical terrorism surrounding 9/11 – suggesting that the United States also displays a reluctance to narrativize the continuities of its own terroristic foreign policy. In this way, in rereading *Open City*, as a post-9/11 novel in which 9/11 itself is mostly absent, one notices in such symptomatic instances that, like the public national crime of 9/11 which implicates its citizenry, Julius' private crime haunts the surface of the text. It is only later, after a second reading, that the reader can self-reflexively recontextualize, reintegrate, and thus historicize these otherwise seemingly disparate and insignificant moments within the novel's full narrative arc. These parallel hauntings of absent presences – exemplified by Julius' meditative walks to the periphery of Ground Zero under Spiegelman's "Shadow of No

Towers," and by the symptomatic silencing noted above – suggest a key link between the repressed histories of 9/11 and Julius' sexual abuse.

The last chapter in Cole's novel sees Julius fall back into the same comfortable routines that defined his life before, and the same patterns of civilized, cultured practice. His pedantic musings return, and they are again bereft of humanity or "human bodies." He recounts a recent experience at the symphony; weighs in on the works of Mahler and how they address "frailty and mortality" with neither in sight in the comfort of the music hall; then launches into a cerebral existential lament while staring up the stars. And in the final two pages, while on a tourist boat under the "towering" presence of the Statue of Liberty, he begins his final act of historicization. He describes how, "since late 2001," the observation deck in the Statue of Liberty has been closed to tourists, but also informs us that it was not always a tourist attraction to begin with. Until 1902 it was a lighthouse, but "that same light" which "guided ships into Manhattan's harbor" also "fatally disoriented birds" (258). He continues to provide the historical context of the numbers of migratory birds killed as a result and how they were disposed of or used at "scientific institutions," listing several. His clinical detachment of observation increases until he actually recounts the dead bird tallies recorded in a report:

> On October 1 of that year, for example, the colonel's report indicated that fifty rails had died, as had eleven wrens, two catbirds, and one whip-poor-will. The following day, the record showed two dead wrens; the day after that, eight wrens. The average, Colonel Tassin estimated, was about twenty birds per night, although the weather and the direction of the wind had a great deal to do with the resulting harvest. Nevertheless, the sense persisted that something more troubling was at work. On the morning of October 13, for example, 175 wrens had been gathered in, all dead of the impact, although the night just past hadn't been particularly windy or dark. (259)

These are the final lines in the novel. Cole's choice to end on such a cold note of clinical arbitrariness is a chilling recollection of the very dehumanization in the "pens" and "ledgers" of the

"well-organized" bookkeeping behind modern atrocity that Julius had previously critiqued (albeit as a dispassionate critic, since he himself is a symptom of the rationality behind such processes) (58). Here, in an ending that ossifies into cold hard data, denying any redemption or closure, Cole suggests that, when considered within the greater context of the novel, the modern American way of life reproduces the sublimated and highly mediated patterns of violence that underlie many of the atrocities that happen at home and abroad – the result of the rational actions of a professional class in civilized society at home, exemplified historically by New York City's financial and managerial contributions to the slave trade. Such statistics on the casualties of misled migratory birds provides little in the way of explanation or closure in the narrator's personal narrative, but taken as yet another repressive/suppressive diversion rich in latent content, it serves as an extended metaphor for the way in which migrants have flocked to America in search of liberty and the American Dream, often only to find hardship and discrimination, all of which has been exacerbated "since late 2001." The impersonal processing of the "huddled masses" of humanity through Ellis Island, that point of transnational connectivity between the American Promised Land and the outside world, admitted only desirable potential citizens into the American fold – excluding people on financial, medical (physical and mental), and criminal grounds. And the standards of admission have risen since the closing of Ellis Island. However, as a medical professional from Nigeria, Julius would be considered an asset to the country, in line with the change in immigration policy in 1965 mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, when the "United States focused on selectively bringing professionals to the country," which has resulted in a more educated and wealthier demographic of immigrants over the past fifty years (Grewal 67).

In this sense, Julius is an asset to American "civilization." However, as indicated above, the professional class of this civilization – businessmen, lawyers, and even certain doctors and academics – are often complicit and/or perpetuate sublimated acts of violence, abusing their privileged socioeconomic positions in relations with others. When one is relatively free of acute

physical or mental suffering – a state more easily achievable for a class with a disposable income to enjoy the luxuries of civilization, including elite education, medical service, and legal representation – to merely hear about the pain of others is to have doubt. And doubt is a desirable inclination in this context, since in neoliberal capitalist societies, which aspire to "maximum efficiency" and make it an individual's responsibility to perform at this level, it is important to be suspicious of those individuals who may be unwilling to uphold personal responsibility, regardless of personal circumstance. Despite Julius' high-minded attempts to keep suppressed histories alive in his mind, a "civilized" undertaking displaying an erudition and breadth of knowledge befitting his class, he does so all the while suppressing a history of sexualized violence of his own. Thus, his practice of the deconstruction of the "civilized" surface of New York City to reveal its barbarous underside is contradicted not only by his disarticulating aversion to share a sense of domestic racial "brotherhood" (based on the oppressive domestic histories he routinely recounts) and his failure to acknowledge a history of American geopolitical aggression in the Middle East, but also his inability to confess his rape. This last aspect connects Cole's *Open City* to Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in that all three share a tendency to contextualize their depictions of post-9/11 immigrant experiences of discrimination – which serves to destabilize the binary between Western civilization and Eastern barbarism – within oppressive (real or perceived) sexual relationships and domestic abuse. However, whereas in Hamid's text, Changez's perceived sexual violence against Erica is an indication of his conflicted sense of being an intrusive presence in post-9/11 culture – which is symptomatic of his internalization of the barbarous treatment of "suspicious" immigrants in America; and in Halaby's text it is the barbarity of homegrown American misogyny that is foregrounded against the relative docility of Salwa's immigrant husband; in Cole's text, the unnamed narrator committed his act of rape in Nigeria *before* immigrating to America, which situates America as a refuge for one's past violations, a "civilized" New World in which one can seek redemption, ensconced in the cultural and financial Mecca of New York City. But as the

narrator himself reveals, this vision of America as redemptive civilization is contradicted by a history of slavery and discrimination that continues to this day, though this does not stop him from pursuing the American Dream while suppressing aspects of his own and his adoptive nation's rapacious history. In this way, Cole's treatment of immigration is remarkably balanced and critical: rather than idealize his protagonist, he instead depicts the complex negotiations involved in reconciling personal history with the national history of the adoptive nation, while also subjecting the narrator to a critique similar to the one applied to the European immigrants who attempted to establish a New World in the first place – at the expense of the native people who were already living there, and the African slaves brought along to conduct the necessary material labor to build the American "city upon a hill." Ultimately, Cole suggests that Julius' central problem is his failure to acknowledge and confess his complicity in masculine violence under the guise of American civilization, aligning this with the failure of the United States government to acknowledge its own geopolitical violence, legitimized and put into practice by the hegemonic masculinity of politicians, businessmen, and others in the professional sector.

In the late nineteenth century, Frederick Douglass was hopeful that greater civilization would arise out of the contradictions of the nation's founding, that the natural order of scientific progress would see the barbarous "man of muscle" displaced by the civilized "man of mind." In postindustrial American society, it seems that the "man of mind" has increasingly displaced the "man of muscle" – at least on this side of the ocean – but the supra-hegemonic masculinity that characterizes the former has only sublimated the sub-hegemonic violence of the latter, transposing it into refurbished social structures and hierarchies of power, all of which has been underway in New York City as the center of American culture and civilization since the slave trade. And the increasing cosmopolitanism of the city has seemingly done little to change this: the colors may be changing, but the underlying narrative threads that draw immigrants to American shores produce a similar fabric. A "devilishly difficulty ball to play" indeed.

According to Gayatri Spivak, through a reading of Gramsci, it is the responsibility of the intellectual to help facilitate the speaking of the subaltern. Ritu Birla suggests that Spivak "asks us to supplement the benevolent intention of 'speaking for' with an ethics of responsibility – in the sense of cultivating a capacity to respond to and be responsive to the other, without demanding resemblance as the basis of recognition" (93). Hamid, Halaby, and Cole take up a nuanced engagement with such an ethics of responsibility in which they do not idealize the transnational "others" who succeed in American business and the professions, but rather, explore the complex ways in which they are both victims and perpetrators of oppressive American policies. This representational strategy challenges readers' recognition of these characters within simple binaries of "resemblance" and difference, and thus stimulates new thought and opens up a "capacity to respond to and be responsive to the other." Under the racist regime of post-9/11 domestic surveillance, these novelists depict how such transnational subjects are awakened to a sense of complicity in exercising American hegemony on the world stage, oftentimes in their countries of origin where the exploitation of subaltern classes is commonplace. Thus, these novelists extend the critique of "falling" American masculinity and "tumbling" American femininity in the context of 9/11 established in the preceding chapters, but with a specific focus on the implications of race and ethnicity on such figures. And while Drew's *The Falling Man* does not speak for the men and women of racial and ethnic minorities who "fell," either literally or figuratively, on 9/11, these novelists attempt to rescue and represent this "other" history of "falling" associated with the events of 9/11 – the racial and ethnic discrimination against (im)migrants of Middle Eastern descent (or of that optic) which leads to the downfall of their American Dreams.

Afterword: "The Function of 9/11 Fiction: Alternative Masculinities?"

In a passage that recalls J. L. Austin's speech act theory, Jean-Paul Sartre suggests that both speaking and writing are "acts," since "anything which one names is already no longer quite the same; it has lost its innocence" (22). Along these lines, Sartre argues that "prose-writers" use a "method of secondary action" which he calls "action by disclosure," and it is the responsibility of the "engaged writer" to "reveal the situation" of his or her contemporary moment (22-23). This action of disclosure can be understood in relation to Terry Eagleton's definition of ideology as "semiotic closure," which suggests that "engaged" writing is an active attempt to disclose the thread and needlework of the "semiotic closure" of sutured ideology ("Ideology" 197). To illustrate his point, Sartre examines how a specific individual or figure within a cultural context – a threaded needle, suturing contextual narrative – can be the subject of such disclosing speech or writing:

> If you name the behaviour of an individual, you reveal it to him; he sees himself. And since you are at the same time naming it to all others, he knows that he is seen at the moment he sees himself. The furtive gesture which he forgot while making it, begins to exist beyond all measure, to exist for everybody; it is integrated into the objective mind; it takes on new dimensions; it is retrieved. After that, how can you expect him to act in the same way? Either he will persist in his behaviour out of obstinacy and with full knowledge of what he is doing, or he will give it up. (22)

Of course, this "either/or" scenario of moral choice deduced here is a simplification of the complex negotiations and varied results of such an act of interpellation, but what is important here is Sartre's basic point that the interpellative moment of "naming the behaviour" is an irreversible action of raising a particular pattern of practice to the consciousness of the individual in question. If the sociocultural network of which this individual is a part comes to hold his or her actions in low esteem, and makes the individual aware of this negative recognition, then the individual is inevitably affected by the censure, regardless of what action proceeds, if any. And even if no apparent choice is

made, or the matter is deferred, the individual has still been affected, since, to borrow a line from Neil Peart, "if you choose not to decide you still have made a choice" in relation to what has been raised in consciousness (Peart "Freewill"). But of course, the nature and content of subsequent actions, made in light of such negative recognition, is of utmost importance here.

This dissertation has taken up as one of its objects of study the figure of the self-made man in American culture and how 9/11 American fiction interrogates the masculinist "behavior" of this individual. But do these novels try to hold such men (or others who undertake such actions) accountable by holding up the mirror? Do these novels stir those who embody American self-made masculinity in any way to become more self-reflective, critical, and aware, in the knowledge gained through the look or point-of-view of others? In the passage above, Sartre establishes an ethical orientation of writing similar to Jameson's conception of cognitive mapping. Sartre focuses on wresting the individual from the immediacy of the behaviours that constitute his allegedly self-made existence and then disclosing the reality of his situation: his fundamental connectedness with others through the underlying social relations of which he is a part – figured here by the connective lines of interpellative vision between self and other, the invisible sinew of society. Like Jameson's insistence that writing should trace cognitive maps of the widespread and thus diffuse social relations of the international division of labor in late capitalism – in which the exploitative labor that supports American consumer culture is increasingly outsourced, out of sight and out of mind – I argue, in line with Sartre, that the "furtive gesture[s]" of hegemonic masculinity in interpersonal relations also need to be fully disclosed. In this sense, the engaged writer of 9/11 fiction has the potential to disclose the oppressive everyday actions of hegemonic masculinity – in both interpersonal and geopolitical relations – from the obscurity of the nation's pathological amnesia, and "integrate" them "into the objective mind," so that such otherwise suppressed "furtive gesture[s] are "retrieved" and articulated in "new dimensions" (Sartre 22). This fusion of centripetal and centrifugal orientations –

and the typological cognitive maps of oppression that such a fusion reveals – is the narrative strategy adopted by many novelists of 9/11 fiction, as I have argued throughout this dissertation.

Along the lines of Sartre above, Liz Burns advocates the therapeutic potential of reading literature, suggesting that it "obliges us to step outside our own thoughts and feelings and engage with the 'other': people, ideas, patterns of experience which are beyond our current repertoire" (11). Do the post-9/11 novels explored in this study give readers access to a suppressed reality of oppressive masculinity that would otherwise go unnoticed in American culture? And more importantly, do these novels bring the point-of-view of the oppressed other into the light? Writing in the first years after 9/11, bell hooks observes that "contemporary books and movies offer clear portraits of the evils of patriarchy without ever offering any direction for change. Ultimately they send the message that male survival demands holding on to some vestige of patriarchy" (133). In retrospect, many 9/11 novels, including most in this study, actively highlight oppressive patterns of masculine practice as manifested in social relations at home and international relations abroad; however, in line with hooks' observation, few offer any significant direction for change. This lack of innovation seems to be a real problem not only for 9/11 fiction, which interrogates the gendered symptoms and pathology of American cultural crisis after 9/11 and the Bush administration's subsequent attempt to recuperate the nation's masculinist exceptionalism, but also for the culture at large. And while several novelists, such as Don DeLillo, Ken Kalfus, and Carolyn See, depict moments in the wake of 9/11 in which their male protagonists have intimations of their own corporal vulnerability and the ideology that has masked it, which causes them to reflect upon their connectedness with others, in the end these characters end up resuming traditional gender roles. Thus, while the novelists explored in this study critique hegemonic business masculinity – though in an implicit way, perhaps in the name of aesthetic subtlety or restraint – by suggesting that the self-made *ethos* should be inverted or at least mitigated by a more communitarian orientation based on interdependence, they ultimately refrain from offering explicit depictions of alternative masculinities

to counter the adverse effects of the former. The depiction of a "fall" – whether of the cosmic proportions of classical tragedy or the more muted, internalized angst of the existential novel – has a long history of romantic fixation in Western culture. And though I have argued throughout that these novelists strategically mobilize the inward turn to domestic gender relations (the centripetal) to launch a critique of the outward influence of American hegemony in geopolitical relations (the centrifugal), their novels tend to focus predominantly on the point of view of masculine crisis, and sometimes, as suggested by Richard Gray, the greater ideological/geopolitical critique is buried in the personal/interpersonal. This runs the risk of perpetuating a myth of brooding masculine crisis, which does very little to challenge the status quo of masculine hegemony. Is this aversion to offering such frank depictions of inclusive masculinity borne out of a reluctance to come off as heavy-handed or sentimental, or does it reflect a more genuine perplexity or even cynicism when it comes to articulating alternative modes of American masculinity, or American existence itself? Post-9/11 American culture exhibits a resistance to any kind of utopian impulse that might lead to significant political/cultural change, however slight. This Afterword reviews how the 9/11 novels in this study engage with the oppressive ideology and patterns of practice that constitute American hegemonic masculinity, with the aim of revealing how these novels, despite their shortcomings, can serve as a springboard for negotiating new articulations of masculinity and foreign policy based on interdependence rather than exceptionalism. Finally, this chapter will attempt to formulate an ethical orientation for post-9/11 America that deviates from the masculinist binaries that Euro-American history has been predicated upon, beginning with the binary of masculine desire established in the Christian cosmological narrative of Adam and Eve.

Holy Fuck: Sublime Violence and "Holy Virility"

If, according to Burns, the act of "literary reading offers the material and imposes the conditions necessary for practicing engagement with the 'other'," then, as a final consideration, to what degree

does the 9/11 literature explored in this study offer such an alternative engagement with the other? (12). I have argued that 9/11 fiction critiques a masculinist ontology and epistemology that has been championed in Western culture since the Enlightenment. This positivist orientation envisions a masculine subject who comes to know the external world through exploratory sensory engagement, an ideology which reifies a perceptual binary that positions a self against an external world as a fundamental ontological relation. The autonomous self as *tabula rasa* becomes inscribed with an accumulation of sensory data, the experiential whole of which develops into unifying selfhood, an identity. However, this "unifying self," which is an idealized subject of empiricism, and the notion that such a self must position itself against the external world, from which it accumulates experience and knowledge towards a greater unification and expansion of consciousness, can be traced back to a theological predecessor in the creation myth of Adam and Eve. The masculinist inflections of the unified self of the Enlightenment can be traced back to the Old Testament narrative of the creation of man (Adam) in opposition to women (Eve), since the creation of latter from one of the former's ribs leaves man forever alienated from a part of himself that has been externalized "out there." Emmanuel Reynaud, in *Holy Virility: The Social Construction of Masculinity* (1983), argues that

> The creation of 'man and woman' appears to be the result of an unequal but complementary mutilation of the human being depending on his or her sex: minus a 'rib' for one of them, minus everything except a 'rib' for the other. The individual with either the smaller or greater part of him or herself thus amputated, is subsequently supposed to retrieve his or her integrity thanks to complementarity: 'That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and the two become one flesh' [...] The text comes the full circle: man severs a part of himself which he calls 'woman' and then appropriates a woman to reconstitute, in the couple, the mutilated human being. (11)

Here, Reynauld exposes the Biblical origins of the patriarchal ideology of coverture, in which a woman's political identity was subsumed within her husband's identity through the Christian rite of

marriage (a topic explored in chapter 3). This binary structures the traditional gender configuration in Western culture in which men are depicted as active pursuers (of prey, wealth, women etc.), and women as passive objects of pursuit to be incorporated into masculine being/identity. Thus, the myth of Adam and Eve is a cornerstone in the edification of masculine desire in Western culture, providing an ontological basis for a subject position that needs to expand into the outside world to find the lost part of himself, to be re-incorporated into the self. Things in the outside world become substitutes for that original lost part of the masculine self, subject to the acquisitive masculine will to incorporate. Likewise, others in the world become reduced to the status of "things" and are pursued as such, to be brought under and/or into the masculine will, including the original object of loss: woman.

This "archetypal heterosexual patriarchal relationship" is constituted in the Old Testament by yet another instance of masculine alienation – original sin: "Man, who is already minus a 'rib', is parted from his sexuality, symbolized by a snake. With the help of deception – call it smooth talk – and with the phallus snake as go-between, 'More crafty than any wild creature that the Lord God hath made' [...] man seduces woman and together they discover 'good and evil'" (Reynaud 11). Here, man's "seduction" which leads to the fall, concerns the allure of transgressive knowledge, of both the carnal and intellectual variety of enlightenment. In this narrative, the snake is aligned with both the individualistic, acquisitive pursuit of intellectual knowledge (his temptation of Eve with the fruit of the tree of knowledge) and male sexuality's acquisitive pursuit of carnal knowledge, and the phallic snake achieves both through the "crafty" "smooth-talk" of "deception." God punishes the snake for this deceptive behaviour – which finds one of its many contemporary manifestations in the "calculated deceit" (DeLillo 97) of the American businessman – but Adam and Eve's susceptibility to the snake's persuasion also leads to their fall from grace and eviction from Eden, and the condemnation of humanity to original sin. Besides the loss of immortality, this condemnation comes with gendered terms: men are condemned to live by the sweat of their brow, while women must

endure the pains of childbirth. To breed further antagonism between the sexes, God says to the phallic snake, the broker of deception and sin: "I will put enmity between you and the woman between your brood and hers. They shall strike at your head and you shall strike at their heel" (11).

In his etymological interpretation, Reynauld reveals that in the Bible the word "foot" is often used as "a euphemism for sexual organ[s]," suggesting that in this context the woman's "heel" can be read symbolically as the woman's genitals, creating the "image of the head of the penis crushing the vulva on its way into the vagina" (12). According to Reynauld, this image is a symbolic predecessor of patriarchal heterosexual relations in Western culture. Later, this domineering relationship is put into clearer terms, when God says to Eve: "You shall be eager for your husband and he shall be your master" (12). Thus, in the Biblical origins of the division of the sexes, man coexists with woman in the sense that he, as master, practices tolerance to her existence as his slave. She is able to exist, but only alongside him, on his terms. Derrida makes the distinction between such a notion of Christian tolerance in Western cultures – an "invitation" to the other to assimilate to the regime of one's homeland – and what he recommends as an alternative: "hospitality," which opens up relations that emphasize "the unique obligation that each of us has to the other" (Borradori 17). Reynaud's deconstruction of "holy virility" as it appears in the Old Testament – a Christian ideology that informs traditional Euro-American gender relations – participates in a similar critique of the origins of tolerance as an ethic, although he places greater emphasis on how this notion of tolerance is inherently gendered – how the sexual binary between man and woman and its attendant gender configuration of domineering master and compliant slave is sanctified in Biblical discourse.

Reynaud's critique of "holy virility" finds a philosophical corollary in Emmanual Levinas' existential ontology. Levinas challenges the virile consciousness of death-transcendence perpetuated by traditional Abrahamic religions, and instead focuses on how the irreducible alterity of the other – the intimation of the disruptive exteriorities of death and the interiority of other people – renders impotent the otherwise masterful masculine subject privileged in Western culture.

Levinas identifies virile consciousness and its engagement with the world as "hypostasis," which is a movement of consciousness: "a departure from self and a return to self" (52). The movement of hypostasis is "the very work of identity," leaving the subject "closed up upon itself," creating a stable identification with the self as the temporal present: "The present is the event of hypostasis. The present leaves itself – better still, its [sic] *is* the departure from self. It is a rip in the infinite beginningless and endless fabric of existing. The present rips apart and joins together again; it begins; it is beginning itself" (52). Thus, hypostasis is a transcendent continuity, the continued identification with the present state of being, a generally uninterrupted flow of departure from and return to self that is not recognized as a departure and return as such – it is self-evident existing. Hypostasis is a mode of "identity as a homogenous and self-enclosed totality" which will come under Jacques Derrida's critique further below (Borradori 147). However, this present sense of self and its assumed position of interiority, is always predicated on its *relation* with exteriority, in the Sartrean sense that consciousness is always consciousness *of* something, or an endless act of differentiation. This "something," the other as objectified in the virile subject's masterful gaze, and subject to his acquisitive tendencies, can be anything that comes into the subject's frame of consciousness (or cross-hairs of consciousness), women included. This is what Levinas identifies as "the virile power of the subject" (54). However, this sense of power, this seemingly transcendent virility, is mostly short-lived, since the subject must inevitably come to terms with the encumbering mortality of embodied existence and the inherent limitations of the self's possibilities in the face of death's unmaking.[74]

Concerning the "subject's materiality" in suffering as it comes to bear on hypostasis, Levinas states that "identity is not an inoffensive relationship with itself, but an enchainment to itself; it is the necessity of being occupied with itself" (55). The virile subject comes to realize the limitations of its masterful being in the experience of pain and suffering, and the attendant intimation of death that

such experience elicits. The materiality of the body is revealed to be vulnerable, susceptible to injury, pain, and death:

> In suffering there is the absence of all refuge. It is the fact of being directly exposed to being. It is made up of the impossibility of fleeing or retreating. The whole acuity of suffering lies in this impossibility of retreat. It is the fact of being backed up against life and being [...] But in suffering there is, at the same time as the call to an impossible nothingness, the proximity of death. There is not only the feeling and the knowledge that suffering can end in death. Pain of itself includes it like a paroxysm. (69)

Levinas' exploration of the inevitable suffering that comes with the materiality of human existence underscores our fundamental vulnerability when "directly exposed to being," in the "absence of all refuge." To be "exposed" is to be without cover, to be in the absence of "refuge," not to be in a position of protection and safety – whether this exposure is literal or figurative. The experience of pain and its intimation of death disrupts the virile subject's hypostatic engagement with the world. The subject is faced with a situation in which it only wants to depart from itself to escape suffering but, in the self's enchainment to the body, it is forced to return. As already explored in relation to Julius' physical suffering in *Open City* (2012), Levinas suggests that in such a situation, when the self can no longer serve as a place of safe refuge, "my mastery, my virility, my heroism as a subject can be neither virility nor heroism in relation to death. There is in the suffering at the heart of which we have grasped this nearness of death – and still at the level of the phenomenon – this reversal of the subject's activity into passivity" (72). Without a stable sense of self to provide refuge for the comings and goings of virile consciousness, the subject's confident activity is reduced to passivity. In this context, Judith Butler's notion of corporeal vulnerability, and its ability to render anyone – regardless of sex, gender, race, ethnicity and/or class – completely passive in the throes of pain and suffering, can be the foundation for an ethics of the other, based on a common experience of vulnerability and the ultimate dissolution of selfhood that comes with death. However, various forms

of death-transcendence (religious, political, consumerist, etc.) attempt to deny the experience of pain and mortality in human existence and thus any ethical imperatives derived therefrom, by creating a position of ideological safety from which to recuperate an active orientation of sublime virility to the outside world.

Clearly, the world is not always acquiescent to the masculine will to master and acquire. The virile masculine subject encounters resistance from external threats in the natural world and from other people, and can experience pain, suffering, and the threat of death as a result. Such challenges can diminish the masculine subject's sense of mastery, heroism, and virility, and render him passive and impotent. It is for this reason that positions of safety – both material and ideological – need to be constructed to protect the masculine self from the external threats that resist his acquisitive project of recuperation from loss, which ultimately ends in the neurotic attempt to transcend the ultimate loss: death itself. In this context, death is the loss of the self, which is a *self of loss*, or, in other words, a self constituted in relation to what is always lost, "out there." Material and ideological positions of safety allow the masculine subject to sustain a sublime engagement with reality, an experience of power in which the fear of external threat is managed by the belief that one exists and operates in a position of safety, resulting in an empowering experience that one is in control of the external world, with the omni*potence* to seek out and take what is rightfully "his."

The British Romantic movement was characterized by a fascination with both the experience and the aesthetic representation of beauty and the sublime in nature. Edmund Burke laid the philosophical groundwork for the Romantic sublime, defining it succinctly as a feeling of "delightful horror" and more expansively in the following terms: "The passions which belong to self-preservation, turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us; they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances; this delight I have not called pleasure, because it turns on pain, and because it is different enough from any idea of positive pleasure. Whatever excites this delight, I call *sublime"*

(97). Of particular interest here is Burke's association of the sublime with the pain and danger involved in self-preservation, though he qualifies that the sublime ultimately depends on a sense of security. The subject of sublime experience needs to be at a safe remove from immediate danger, so that one is not "actually in such circumstances" where injury or death is possible. Immanuel Kant provides a more empowering conception of sublime experiences in the presence of nature (mountains, volcanoes, natural disasters), which elevates human consciousness above the overwhelming features of nature: "provided our own position is secure, their aspect is all the more attractive for its fearfulness; and we readily call these objects sublime, because they raise the forces of the soul above the height of vulgar commonplace, and discover within us a power of resistance of quite another kind, which gives us courage to be able to measure ourselves against the seeming omnipotence of nature" (111). Despite Kant's rescuing of human potency in the emasculating presence of nature's "omnipotence," he also admits that such an experience is only possible "provided our own position is secure." Both Burke and Kant agree that an experience of the sublime can be achieved – an empowering sense of delight in the face of terror or adversity – only if the subject can proceed from a position of safety. In this sense, one can encounter annihilating forces and even death itself as a sublime experience, as long as one's own self-preservation is not jeopardized.

The sublime always depends on a position of safety, from which to view potentially annihilating phenomenon. But as I suggest above, this position of safety can also be a figurative or ideological position. And actual positions of safety – structures that serve as "home" – usually allow for figurative positions of safety to develop and reify into the secure structures of the mind that provide a sense of existential protection, which affords a death-transcending worldview that allows for a sublime engagement with reality. Whether a religious belief that one has God on his or her side, or a belief in the exceptionalism of one's nation (the two are often closely aligned, as in the case of American exceptionalism), such beliefs can support a masculinist orientation of selfhood that firmly imposes distance between self and other, which establishes the self as a unified identity that exists

independently of the other. At its worst, this orientation reduces the other to a mere object in the crosshairs of the self's sublime consciousness and its rapacious will.

Sublime consciousness thus results when a given ideology, which frames a particular worldview, provides a position of ontological safety from which a subject can engage with the outside world. Ensconced within this subject position, the distance between self and other (the contingencies of exteriority, other people included) firmly established, the outside world eventually takes on the quality of mere representation rather than a material reality that poses any threat to self, ideologically or materially. This is empowering to the masculine subject of sublime consciousness, since he or she comes to believe that he or she is impervious to the material hazards and contingencies of the world "out there." American exceptionalism provides the ideological cover for such a sublime engagement with others, giving cover to the masculinist ideology of American individualism and its *ethos* of self-making as practiced in interpersonal gender relations, which, in dialectical fashion, always permeates beyond the domestic to characterize national institutions and foreign policy. 9/11 was an instance of the other breaking though the protective barrier of American exceptionalism. The attacks disrupted the nation's sublime consciousness by collapsing the structured distance between self and other and reintroducing the immediacy and hazards of materiality, which resulted in a heightened sense of corporeal vulnerability and death. Along the lines of Slavoj Zizek, as explored in the first chapter, 9/11 was an instance when the spectacular representations of Hollywood – whose pervasive influence shaped the nation's sense of "reality," buttressing its heroic sense of exceptionalism – were disrupted by a material act of terrorism that took on the very appearance of such representations (in a sense hijacking them). This resulted in an uncanny effect, a confused sublimity of amplified fear and an ever-diminishing sense of awe. The second plane resolved any remaining confusion. The intentions of the other were now clear: this was a concerted attack against the United States and it was still underway, with the worst perhaps yet to come. This left the nation without a position of safety to seek refuge from the mysterious wrath of the other,

exposed and vulnerable to what could be the next attack in an unfolding series. This anxiety was confirmed by subsequent horrors: the bodies falling from the towers; the collapse of the towers themselves; the attack on the Pentagon – an edifice that symbolized national security and protection itself; and finally the crashing of the final plane into a field in Pennsylvania. Giovanna Borradori, in an interview with Jacques Derrida on 9/11, paraphrased the latter's take on this new sense of national vulnerability:

> By reciting 9/11 as a litany, we repeat to ourselves what needs to remain silent: the unconditional sorrow for the loss of human life and the vulnerability of the system that was supposed to protect us. This system is embodied by a paternal figure: the United States of America, which is both the site of the attacks and the repository of the world order. The United States, in its role as the greatest technoscientific, capitalist, and military power, symbolizes the world order, the legitimacy of international law and diplomacy, and the power of the media. The world order, said Derrida, is based on the solidity, reliability, and credibility of American power. Exposing the fragility of the superpower means exposing the fragility of the world order. (150)

On 9/11 there was no question that national security – the ideological roof over the nation's head – had been irreparably damaged, at least for the time being. As Derrida suggests, for much of the neoliberal Western world, the United States serves as a "paternal figure" whose "technoscientific, capitalist, and military power, symbolizes the world order, the legitimacy of international law and diplomacy," all of which provides Western culture (or American allies) with a sense of safety under the protective auspices of American diplomacy and foreign policy (150). In the sense that the United States was the Western world's paternal policeman – Gary Cooper in *High Noon*, upholding the rule of law on the frontier of lawlessness, in the name of American justice – 9/11 disrupted the world order that resulted from the sense of safety provided by American exceptionalism and the sublime engagement with the world it provided to those under its protective cover: "The world order, said

Derrida, is based on the solidity, reliability, and credibility of American power. Exposing the fragility of the superpower means exposing the fragility of the world order" (150). Of course, as this dissertation has revealed throughout, the United States has never actually been a benevolent policeman, but rather, because of its sublime exceptionalism, has exercised a rapacious virility on the world stage to benefit its economic self-interest. Accordingly, shortly after 9/11, the Bush administration repaired the ideological structures needed to re-frame a sublime engagement with the outside world, and to reassert American exceptionalism.

I have argued that the 9/11 novels in this study provide counternarratives to the Bush administration's aggressive recuperation of the nation's exceptionalism by foregrounding the trope of the falling man as a sort of *memento mori* to offset post-9/11 triumphalism and to reconsider what the nation lost on that day, and what can be learned from that loss. Jacques Derrida observed that the world media coverage of the collapse of the "unmistakably phallic objects" of the World Trade Center "conjured up the feelings that" they had traditionally "elicited in the collective imagination: love and hate, admiration and envy, sublimity and shame" (148). This ambivalence originates from the immense geopolitical and economic power for which they stood: their dominance of the New York City skyline being the architectural expression of American dominance in the world economy. In this sense, the recuperation of American vitality shortly after 9/11 evaded the emasculating *memento mori* of Drew's "falling man" and Spiegelman's "shadow of no towers," which could have served as admonitions to "remember that you must die." Rather, in my own reworking of the Latinate above, the Bush administration put forward a *memento vitalis*, a battle cry to "remember that you still live." Or better yet, a *memento virilis*, in which the fallen nation is told to "remember that you still fuck." In her discussion of "male sexual being," bell hooks quotes Robert Jensen's definition of patriarchal sex as "sex as fucking," and his elaboration of the connotations behind that term: "'To fuck a woman is to have sex with her. To fuck someone in another context... means to hurt or cheat a person. And when hurled as a simple insult ('fuck you') the intent is denigration and the

remark is often a prelude to violence or the threat of violence'" (85). In this sense, rather than an ominous harbinger of cultural decline and the onset of American impotence, 9/11 is reconfigured as a cowardly act that has led to the opposite: a newfound national tumescence, a swelling of masculinist national pride towards finding and "fucking over" those responsible.[75] The flaccid vulnerability of the falling man becomes the erect hard body (to echo Jeffords) of heroic masculine rescue and military intervention, which enables the continuous rise of jet-set business acquisition. Such a triumphalist reassertion of American power echoes the triumphalism of American exceptionalism throughout the nation's history, from the Western frontier to the post-WWII *Pax Americana* and beyond, as explored in the first two chapters.

A key example of the Bush administration's attempt to man(i)fest this newfound sense of death-transcendence as a *memento virilis* was the spectacular invasion of Baghdad in 2003, a display of American military might that was dubbed, quite prominently in media outlets such as *CNN*, "Shock and Awe." Though "Shock and Awe" was a military offensive strategy that preceded 9/11, it seemed a fitting response to a spectacular attack against the nation that was decidedly emasculating, and on a sublime register. "Shock and Awe" attacks are used to elicit immobilizing fear in the enemy, to disable the active mobility of masculine heroism. According to Ullman and Wade, the original theorists of "Shock and Awe" offensive strategy, the aim of the doctrine of "Overwhelming Force" is to "apply massive or overwhelming force as quickly as possible on an adversary in order to disarm, incapacitate, or render the enemy militarily impotent" (21). "Shock and Awe" is a strategy of dominance and submission, and one that characterizes this process in the gendered language of (im)potency. Terry Eagleton, in the *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1989), analyzes Burke's theory of the sublime, noting its masculinist tendencies:

> The sublime is on the side of enterprise, rivalry, and individuation: it is a phallic "swelling"
> rising from our confrontation of danger, although a danger we encounter figuratively,
> vicariously, in the pleasurable knowledge that we cannot actually be harmed… It is as though

those traditionalist patrician virtues of daring, reverence and free-booting ambition must be at once cancelled and preserved within middle-class life. As actual qualities, they must be outlawed by a state devoted to peace: but to avoid spiritual emasculation they must still be fostered within it in the displaced form of aesthetic experience. (54)

Here, Eagleton points to the tendency in Western cultures to use the sublimated violence of the media – entertainment and news (the latter often subsumed in the former) – as a cultural Viagra, since peaceful modern societies must suppress violent impulses that pose a threat to social order. However, a *real* problem occurs when the *actual* violence of American foreign policy is framed through the media in a way that sublimates its *materiality* into a more palatable "aesthetic experience." This is precisely the danger that Paul Crowther identifies in his critique of postmodern culture and the aesthetic experience of sublimity provided by the proliferation of media coverage of global events. Crowther suggests that "Burke's insistence that the sublime can only be experienced from a position of safety is, in effect, to emphasize how distance from the threatening object acts as a kind of psychological *framing* device" (123). Visual mass media forms are able to frame threatening objects within the confines of a lens, creating photo realistic visual representations of distant, potentially threatening events. In this way, such media forms serve as psychological framing devices that permit a view of danger from afar, a "distance [which] momentarily invests the object with the character of *representation* rather than that of real physical existence" (123 emphasis added). The psychological framing device of a position of safety, which requires enough distance from atrocity to reduce the perceived threat of actual violence, allows for a sublime engagement with reality, and contemporary media culture allows for an even better view from the safety of your living room.

The deliberate use of sublime aesthetics in war is not a new idea. Kant himself suggested that "war itself, provided it is conducted with order and a sacred respect for the rights of civilians, has something of the sublime about it, and gives nations that carry it on in such a manner a stamp of mind only the more sublime the more numerous the *dangers* to which they are exposed, and which

they are able to be meet with fortitude" (113). Thus, to avoid what Eagleton refers to as "spiritual emasculation" – whether the result of postindustrial innervation or foreign attacks such as 9/11 – nations can heighten virility through a sublime orientation to war. However, Kant's claim that war can only be sublime under the proper conditions evades the reality of war on the ground following 9/11, namely that "order" and a "sacred respect for the rights of civilians" is usually only secured by the most powerful side, and only in regards to its own civilians. As the novels in this study remind readers, the United States conducted war away from the protected order of the homefront and its citizenry, although the ubiquity of visual media provided a sublime view thereof. The framing of the dangers of contemporary warfare in the camera's eye makes armchair soldiers of us all. Western audiences can feel engaged with wartime spectacle from afar, from the comforts of their recliners, rooting for their side. We can vicariously participate in the mediated dangers of war, which in our reality are not dangers at all, and are thus not met with Kantian "fortitude" but rather with voyeuristic cowardice, or what Roger Waters, in a satirical song on the mediation of the Persian Gulf War, calls "the bravery of being out of range" (Waters "Amused to Death"). However, it must also be emphasized that not all images of war are fit for publication and broadcast: if too offensive for public sensibilities, representations of atrocity might elicit more fear than awe, which undermines the pleasures of sublime viewing. Such offence might actually produce the opposite ideological effect, such as it did during the Vietnam War: the loss of popular support for the war.

Susan Sontag discusses how the American military promoted sublime imagery of the "techno war" fought in the Persian Gulf. Such imagery – in its absence of injured and dead bodies – proved to be palatable to prime-time audiences: "the sky above the dying, filled with light-traces of missiles and shells" were the type of "images that illustrated America's absolute military superiority over its enemy" (66). Such an aerial perspective put the viewer at a sublime remove from the harrowing atrocity that actually occurred on the ground. Film footage from the ground was in existence, but NBC decided not to broadcast it. Sontag describes the reality of what was withheld from public view,

of what American "superiority could wreak: the fate of thousands of Iraqi conscripts who, having fled Kuwait City at the end of the war [...] were carpet bombed with explosives, napalm, radioactive DU (depleted uranium) rounds, and cluster bombs as they headed north, in convoys and on foot [...] a slaughter notoriously described by one American officer as a 'turkey shoot'" (66). That such an offensive can be described as a "turkey shoot" should be *offensive* to public taste, as it is a testament to the overwhelming power differential between American and Iraqi sides, the result of a technological gulf that not only provided American audiences with sublime viewing pleasure, but also allowed American soldiers to fight what was in many ways a virtual war, often out of range of enemy gunfire. This, the hypermediated nature of the Golf War, led to Jean Baudrillard's polemical argument that the Golf War did not take place (of course it *did* take place as a material event, but to Western audiences its virtualization rendered it more an aesthetic experience than a reality). Sontag calls this the "American way of war making," which I have aligned with the sublime, since it is a type of postmodern warfare that is "waged as much as possible from a distance, through bombing, whose targets can be chosen, on the basis of instantly relayed information and visualizing technology, from continents away: the daily bombing operations in Afghanistan in late 2001 and early 2002 were directed from U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Florida (67). Likewise, the "Shock and Awe" attack on Baghdad was a sublime display of technological prowess, the barrage of missile tracers across the night sky resembling triumphant fireworks, meant to instill a sense of reverence in the face of the *mysterium tremendum* of America's exceptional military might.[76] In this sense, the Enlightenment has shifted the hubristic power of God to humanity, or to the United States, whose exceptional technology allows for such spectacular acts of godlike revenge – for smiting the unfaithful Old Testament style. The "enlightened" secularism of Western culture remains as faithful as ever, and since 9/11 it is even more inclined to display its fundamentalism through sublime masculine warfare.

Falling Men as *Memento Mori*

As an alternative to Enlightenment conceptions of historical progress, Mary A. Favret explores how Romanticism was a cultural and aesthetic movement positioned against the increasingly abstract ways in which Enlightenment discourse and technology mediated violence and death, suggesting a deep collusion between the development of finance capital and the increasing dehumanization of casualties in slavery and wartime. Abstractions allow human casualty to be beheld at a distance, through figures and statistics. Favret cites Ian Baucom as an advocate of "melancholy" or "romantic historicism," which offers, in its repeated return to the sense of loss that accompanies a lost object or worldview, "a haunted awareness that calls up powerful feelings of loss and sorrow so that they are never put to rest" (34). Such a history performs the work of a *memento mori*, reminding the reader of moments of suppressed death and loss that underlie the historical record. In this study, I have been conducting a re-historicization of 9/11 through my analysis of the trope of the falling man as a *memento mori*, in opposition to the recuperative historical project undertaken by the Bush administration, which quickly did away with the fallen and took masculine action by waging a "War on Terror," a costly *memento virilis*.[77] The falling man was not a heroic "fallen figure," such as the glorified soldier whose death on the battlefield is deemed a worthy sacrifice for the progress of the war effort. There is no "rescuing" the falling man: he can only signify a desperate loss of control toward certain death, an irredeemable plunge into the abyss. Baucom juxtaposes his romantic or melancholy history against the Enlightenment history of progress, which sees its signal moment in the French Revolution. As an alternative signal moment to mark the beginning of romantic history, Baucom isolates a key incident during the Atlantic slave trade, involving a slave ship named *Zong* in which "133 slaves considered sick and unmarketable were thrown overboard in 1791 by order of the captain and drowned. The owners of the ship subsequently collected insurance money to compensate for their 'lost' merchandise" (34). Recalling Derrida's exploration of the influence of Enlightenment

concepts of economic exchange on notions of responsibility, for Baucom, this moment exemplifies the beginning of romantic history, which occurred

> in reaction to a specific historical situation: the increased role of speculative finance (in enabling the long-distance transactions of the slave trade) and correlative modes of thought: those which attempt to account for human experience 'in the aggregate' or average (as 'common tales'), and those which redeem an event by assigning it a compensatory meaning or value (as 'interest' or a satisfactory return on your investment). (34)

In this instance, insurance against risk works on two levels: primarily, the risk associated with encountering the alterity of the other is mitigated by enforced slavery, which denies the other any sacred value, and confines the other to merely exist in the culture of their captivity (not a relation of invitation or visitation); and secondarily (though no less important), a further sublimated violence is inflicted upon the other, since, after they have been effaced of sacred value, they are then inscribed with foreign value, as a mere commodity whose risk of loss can only be formulated in abstract, disembodied terms of economic exchange. Baucom draws attention to the increasing effacement of "fallen bodies" and corporeal vulnerability during the Enlightenment and beyond, exemplified here in the dehumanization of the slave trade, but Favret reveals how such tendencies also began to characterize the statistical way in which war was mediated in reporting: "the impulse to understand the enormity of these wars through enumeration was supported by new scientific methods for calculating war fatalities and casualties" (36). That the "enormity of these wars" was made intelligible by advanced statistics means that the massive loss of human life during wartime was rendered more palatable through the sublimated view afforded by enumeration, the count and numbers of which denote – in clear abstraction, with embodied death nowhere in sight – the sheer size and enormity of modern warfare. Favret argues that the increase in such Malthusian tendencies to measure and calculate human experience *en masse* gave rise to the romantic critique of the conversion of "human bodies to the abstraction and speculation promoted by numbers" (36).

Along with Favret and Baucom's advocacy of a melancholy or romantic history which aims to reintroduce a sense of loss, rather than recuperating the lost object itself or pursuing a symbolic recuperation through a compensatory project that seeks reparation through masculine revenge, I have attempted to reveal the ways in which 9/11 fiction participates in writing an alternative history that challenges the masculine subject of Enlightenment humanism and classical liberalism as it exists today, by critiquing the ideal of the self-made businessman in the context of 9/11 and transnational American capitalism. The novels analyzed in this study work to destabilize the allegedly "self-made" autonomy of this ideal by revealing the sense of loss and corporeal vulnerability embodied in the figurative falling men foregrounded therein, a fragility that often exposes these men to the order of interdependence of which they are a part. In this sense, this fiction attempts to reintroduce the suppressed falling man (as image and concept) back into the context of 9/11 as a *memento mori*, a figure forever suspended at the free falling brink of death. It is instructive to read the fatalism of this image alongside Terry Eagleton's commentary on death and non-being in the wake of 9/11:

> To accept the unfoundedness of our own existence is among other things to live in the shadow of death. Nothing more graphically illustrates how unnecessary we are than our mortality [...] By acknowledging that our lives are provisional, we can slacken our neurotic grip on them and thus come to relish them all the more [...] Besides, if we really could keep death in mind, we would almost certainly behave a good deal more virtuously than we do. If we lived permanently at the point of death, it would presumably be easier to forgive our enemies, repair our relationships [...] It is partly the illusion that we will live forever which prevents us from doing these things. Immortality and immorality are closely allied. (211)

In this light, the novelistic treatment of the falling man in 9/11 fiction attempts to refocus attention from the "immoral" death-transcendence of self-made masculinity and American exceptionalism (symbolic "immortality") to the humbling mortality of 9/11. In line with Sartre's literary imperative established at the beginning of this chapter, that writers should raise consciousness to the causes and

effects of detrimental actions undertaken by individuals and/or cultures, the 9/11 writers in this study attempt to keep the fallen of 9/11 "in mind" in opposition to the militant triumphalism of the War on Terror, so as to raise American cultural consciousness not only to the nation's exceptional success, but also to its shared (though repressed) failure. Such consciousness raising through the trope of the falling man leads readers to reflect upon the issues it brings to mind, with the hope that it might impel Americans to act "more virtuously" in interpersonal and international relationships.

But is regarding the falling man as a *memento mori* "to keep death in mind" for moral purposes in itself immoral? Only if it is viewed with an air of sublime triumph and pleasure, including the ostensibly more humble reasoning that "by the grace of God goes another man" (a disingenuous tribute to the fallen, with its thinly veiled self-congratulation that one is still among the living of God's elect, in "His" good graces). It is difficult to view this image without being at least mildly *unsettled*. In fact, in its free falling suspension, in its very groundlessness, there is no *terra firma* upon which settlement is possible. Nonetheless, the very absence of ground within the frame plunges the viewer into the dreadful contiguity of the image with its surrounding event, of the hardness of the asphalt against which the comparatively soft male body eventually collided. In this sense it is an image of "unfoundedness" par excellence: a symbol of imminent and immanent death, of a man out his element (in the air rather than on the earth), with the absence of the ground itself – the *terra firma* upon which a stable home/identity is founded – denoting total instability. But again, the strength of contiguity in this shot strongly suggests the futural presence of the ground, though not the comforting stability of solid "grounds" associated with the firm footed stride of progress. Rather, the absent presence of the unyielding pavement below marks the unalterable endpoint of life (his, ours): the parabolic rise and fall, from and back to Ground Zero.

This image of fatal suspension, a paradoxical position captured by photography, can serve as a *memento mori* to give the viewer an aesthetic experience of "living permanently at the point of death," since the photograph permanently captures this true moment of terror, as long as the

photograph stays in existence (Eagleton 211). The photograph is unsettling because of its verisimilitude. As a photo-realistic representation of an actual death in progress, it reminds the viewer that they too are headed in the same direction, toward the same certain end, albeit by different circumstances (one would hope) and in a different time frame. Of course, it is always possible to experience something of the sublime in such an image, to feel a mastery over the fated subject within the frame, a vicarious window onto (an)other's death that fills one with fear and awe, the latter of which is felt in light of the knowledge that for the time being one is safe from such spectacular harm. Nevertheless, the images of falling on 9/11 – men, women and towers – are hard to reconcile with American upward mobility and optimism, making it difficult to recover such imagery in a way that is triumphant or redemptive. This difficulty is captured by Jonathan Safran Foer in the poignant conclusion to *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2006). In the final pages of the novel (226-241), all typography is abandoned for a potent series of images that make up Oskar's flip book. Each page is a photographic image of a falling man in reverse sequence, so that as the reader literally flips through the last pages of the novel, they painfully see the desperation of such recuperative work through the eyes of a child, who only wants his father back – an idealized love for a masculine figure, an innocence untarnished. Foer's powerful demonstration that the falling man can only be redeemed by an impossible inversion, depicts the difficulties of mourning the loss of paternal figures in the wake of 9/11. Oskar's attempt to resurrect his father through the ritualistic flipping of his *memento vitalis* displays both his struggle to properly mourn the loss of his father on the narrative level, and also, on a formal level, the novel's interrogation of the potential for art to resurrect within us an understanding of our interconnectedness through Oskar's longing to find meaning and closure in death.

The falling man serves as a reminder of American vulnerability on 9/11, a moment of fate without transcendence. The image denotes a radical susceptibility to physical injury and death – the figure therein is not exceptional in this regard, neither as an American or a man – while its symbolic

resonances connote downward mobility or cultural death. Thus, the falling man can serve as a more general reminder that everyone is always already enmeshed in a world of potentially fatal contingencies, over which we have little control. Aneurisms, aortic dissections, heart attacks, strokes, car accidents, natural disasters, planes into towers – these are just a small sample of mishaps (from within and without) that can take our lives at any time, unannounced. While symbolic death-transcendence – in its more personalized, innocuous forms of religion and spirituality – can help to assuage existential anxiety, it is often tough to reconcile such endeavors with the knowledge that "we are only immortal for a limited time" (Peart "Dreamline"). But the knowledge that this fate is something that we all share can provide the basis for a more ethical relation with others, since, as suggested by Levinas, "the approach to death" is often "one of the modalities of the relationship with the Other" (75). Eagleton also draws a parallel between these modes of alterity: "Death is both alien and intimate to us, neither wholly strange nor purely one's own. To this extent, one's relationship to it resembles one's relationship to other people, who are likewise both fellows and strangers" (211). Thus, among other factors, the tenacious will to transcend death can be a major impediment to ethical relations with others. But how can one live a meaningful life if it is always negated in the end? Is it possible to transcend death-transcendence itself? (And not in a way that promises yet more life in an afterlife, which is ostensibly an affirmation of life, but only through the transcendence of corporeal/biological death).

As a variation on Eagleton's claim that "immortality and immorality are closely allied" – separated by a mere "t," the cross of which aptly marks their difference and yet intersection – death-transcendence and the transcendence of others is intimately related. If alterity is that which always remains transcendent to human consciousness, then alterity is transcendence itself, an impossibility of non-being that cannot be brought into the being of consciousness: one can never experience or *be* death. In the frustration of death being a transcendence that can never be transcended, one can fall into a neurotic or psychotic obsession to gain some kind of control over it, by harnessing its power

and becoming its agent. Robert J. Oppenheimer felt this in the annihilating presence of the first atomic bomb, which evoked within him the words of the Bhagavad Gita, "Now I become Death, the destroyer of worlds," an event which led to the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and would incite the Cold War arms race that would be the greatest existential threat to humanity. And Nazi doctor Josef Mengele was dubbed the "Angel of Death" in Auschwitz for his selection of prisoners for either his tortuous and often fatal experiments, or for certain death in the gas chambers. Both, figures of the "enlightened" progress of science (physicist and medical doctor) recognized the sense of power behind the technoscientific means to mass extermination – the former recoiling in sublime horror, the latter progressing in the perverse, muted awe of the banality of evil permitted by the Third Reich.

As established above, death is the ultimate transcendence and the interiority of the other is another mode thereof. The human other always remains beyond the subject – both in isolation of each other, two solitudes. Despite all attempts to ascertain the other's experience, one can only ever reach an approximation through communication: one can never directly experience or *be* the other. And just as one can try to harness and control death to make it more conducive to one's life, one can do the same to the other, figuratively through ideological and physical coercion, or literally through murder. Sartre articulated the other as a transcendence, as something always beyond the existential subject's grasp, the predicate of existential desire. But when the subject attempts to transcend the other, to close in, violate and deprive it of its alterity, then the other becomes a transcendence-transcended. This is the damaging aspect of death-transcendence.

So is it possible to transcend death-transcendence itself? Seemingly it is. Transcending death-transcendence requires an acceptance of alterity. An acceptance of the inevitability of death as something that is totally beyond one's control, which literally unmakes the "self-made" identity of the ideal subject of neoliberal capitalism. And this process of unmaking exposes the dependence of this subject on others – from that subject's material success, which is actually the collective making

of others (both the capital generated and the manufacture of commodities of conspicuous consumption which denote such success), but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, the figurative success that is attributed to the subject through the recognition of others. This recognition is a look of high regard or esteem that secures the ontologically elevated status of the capitalist to the producer and laborer, the master to the slave – the recognition that secures the hegemony of business masculinity. This greater sense of dependency or interdependence need not be understood as weakness, but rather as a fundamental part of being human. Eagleton emphasizes that

> To have a body is to be dependent. Human bodies are not self-sufficient: there is a gaping hole in their makeup known as desire, which makes them eccentric to themselves. It is this desire which makes us non-animal: wayward, errant, unfulfilled [...] We are able to become self-determining, but only on the basis of a deeper dependency. This dependency is the condition of our freedom, not the infringement of it. Only those who feel supported can be secure enough to be free. Our identity and well-being are always in the keeping of the Other. (189)

There are parallels here between Eagleton's notion of the inherent dependency of embodiment and Judith Butler's notion of corporeal vulnerability. Both speak of an underlying need for safety, protection, and hospitality due to the fragility of human nature. Eagleton suggests that desire – that need to fill with balm the gaping wound in our being – needs to be negotiated with others, who can provide the recognition or positive regard to fill our alienated being, our sense of existential lack. Likewise, on a more physical level, Butler argues that all bodies are vulnerable from birth to death – men, women, and children, and regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, and/or class. Thus, Butler offers this commonality as the ground for an ethical orientation to others, rather than as a distancing of ourselves from fundamental human vulnerability and lack. This latter is a masculinist tendency reasserted after 9/11 which "seeks to restore and maintain its mastery," the American nation doing so "through the systematic destruction of […] its ties to the inter-national community [and] by denying

its own vulnerability" while exploiting this feature "in others, thereby making [it] 'other to' itself" (41). Here, Butler addresses the distanced engagement with vulnerability and death that characterizes the sublime recuperation of post-9/11 American foreign policy: from afar, it inflicts death upon others and watches, exploiting vulnerability in others in order to externalize it, to establish it at a safe distance once again, to distract from the smoldering pit of Ground Zero which signifies America's own vulnerability. The spectacular wrath of "Shock and Awe" filled the nation's screens with the holy virility to prove America's exceptionalism once again, as the world trembled in sublime recognition of its economic, technological and military dominance.

But neither desire, pain or death can ever actually be transcended – beyond temporary fulfilments, alleviations, and distractions. If we choose instead to recognize and accept our vulnerability – that we need each other's recognition to be figuratively satisfied, so that we "feel supported" by the structure of relations around us to be "secure enough to be free" – we can work together to alleviate each other's shared pain. Additionally, we can hope that such an orientation will help us establish a new relation to death, which sees it not only as the ultimate limit that disables life, but also as an ultimate limit that enables us to value the life that we have while also respecting the lives of others, in light of a common fragility. Understanding that we all share these fundamental human deficiencies, we can work towards alleviating their symptoms, which seem to be exacerbated by tenacious forms of death-transcendence.

This study has attempted to reveal the contradictions of American hegemonic masculinity. Its mystique of self-making, an identity based on the belief of the self-sufficiency of masculine achievement – of both the material and self-esteem varieties – is actually the result of the collective practice of homosociality – a paradoxical, *self*-congratulatory collective of men, patting each other on the suited back. One cannot help but think of Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (1979), when Brian shouts from his window to the gathered masses, his congregants whom he's trying to shed: "You're all individuals!" to which they all respond in booming unison: "Yes! We are all individuals!" The

men in positions of power who sustain masculine hegemony bask in the pride that comes with the recognition of personal achievement, while taking this recognition for granted. Or perhaps below the surface of this entitlement exists a dissonance in the knowledge that their grasp of glory is tenuous, since, despite homosocial recognition, other neoliberal subjects will continue to compete for that recognition. Further dissonance might stem from the more repressed knowledge that their masculine pride is not entirely of their making: the work and recognition of wives and partners buttress the myth of self-making of which many men (and increasingly women) in business are so fond. Men who perpetuate hegemonic masculinity need to realize that others need recognition as well, that there is a reciprocal obligation in relationships to provide the necessary support (beyond masculine breadwinning) to enable the other's freedom – not for ulterior motives, or in expectation of further returns. This is not to be an economic exchange of neoliberal self-interest in which relationships are held to the impersonal measure of cost-benefit analysis. Moreover, it is not a simple matter of showing paternalistic tolerance for the other's desire, with its continued power disparity and tinge of reluctance, "in which the other is not accepted as an equal partner but subordinated, perhaps assimilated, and certainly misinterpreted in its difference" (Borradori 16). Rather, it is about putting oneself out there and taking risks for the other, a certain self-abnegation, a sacrificing, a putting to *death* of a measure of personal gain – of one's time, effort, money, whatever. Eagleton suggests that the "absolute self-abandonment which death demands of us is only tolerable if we have rehearsed for it somewhat in life. The self-giving of friendship is a kind of *petit mort*, an act with the inner structure of dying [...] In this sense, death is one of the inner structures of social existence itself" (211). For a nation that champions freedom and democracy, the upholding of this sacrificial, other-oriented freedom should start in the domestic space, between domestic partners and the example they set for their children or peers, and then from the domestic family it can move outwards as a centrifugal influence that extends support and freedom to others within the nation; and if this national project sees success at home, then perhaps it can permeate American foreign policy and

influence genuine change in geopolitical relations, which would see the diminishing of unilateral action and the pursuit of economic self-interest behind a veil of neoliberal diplomacy.

This study has attempted to synthesize an alternative literary history of 9/11 that rescues the lost significance of the falling man as a *memento mor*i, with the aim of destabilizing the perch (the eagle's aerie, the city upon a hill) of American exceptionalism and the sublime death-transcending worldview it affords. I have explored how these 9/11 novels foreground the mortality of the falling man to counteract the immortalizing tendencies of the Bush administration after the attacks, which involved recuperating and mobilizing the nation's "holy virility," its ability to smite others with its overwhelming military power while watching the sublime effects from afar. The reintroduction of mortality collapses the protective distance imposed between self and other, and/or self and death, which allows for a more empathetic relation with others in which the suffering of others is no longer "over there," other to the impervious self, but recognized as always within, in the other within oneself.

Favret likens such a process of rescuing "fallen bodies" from sublimated and disembodied abstraction – from the "sublime abstraction" of national "sacrificial metaphors" where fallen bodies signify "undaunted purpose" (115), to the cold body-counts that can be "quickly exchanged as promissory notes for nation, culture, and religion" (36), or finally, to the sublimation of the violence of fallen bodies altogether in the enumeration of economic exchange – as a counter-Enlightenment strategy that redirects light onto the "crucial situations and systems" that the Enlightenment "throws into shadow." (38). These situations and systems include "finance capital with the increasingly speculative traffic in fallen bodies" and the "unbounded awfulness of modern warfare, paid for by finance capital and legitimized by the discourse of revolutionary freedom" (38). The 9/11 fiction discussed in this study engages in a similar process of rescuing "fallen bodies" by foregrounding a polyvalent trope of "falling" masculinity: the domestic falling man is on the receiving end of violence inflicted by geopolitical others, but he is also revealed to be a wounding agent of

interpersonal violence responsible for the "fall" of others. The centripetal orientation reveals the centrifugal impact of domestic masculine violence on the nation's foreign policy, which results in more fallen bodies – both actual wartime fatalities and the figuratively fallen subjects who come under neoliberal economic exploitation. In this way, these novels tend to focus less on the tit-for-tat "events" of sublime violence surrounding 9/11 (the terrorist attacks and the "Shock and Awe" response to them), which are the overt displays of geopolitical conflict, and more on the sublimated violence that permeates American society, which sees an intensification during the prolonged period of time that encompasses wartime. Favret suggests that wartime "translates war from the realm of sublime event to an underlying situation or condition of modernity" which articulates "war as an absent presence that infiltrates political and cultural institutions and moves through everyday life" (38). In this light, it is now necessary to return to the discussion that opened this study, on the synthesis of centripetal and centrifugal orientations in 9/11 fiction. The dialectic between these orientations sees the drawing of cognitive maps that trace and thus render in stark relief the absent presence of sublimated violence in domestic gender relations, as initiated by the "self-made" masculine subject of modernity, which are then traced outward to make connections between these domestic patterns of violence and their implementation in other countries through transnational American capitalism. Such cognitive mapping renders the absent presence of sublimated violence in stark relief, revealing the ways in which such quotidian practices perpetuate oppression both at home and abroad. This defamiliarizing of familiar everyday practices opens up a space for critical reflection on how Western subjects are often complicit in maintaining hegemonic masculinity in their daily lives.

Transcending Death-Transcendence: Moving Beyond 9/11

In *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11* (2011), Richard Gray argues that 9/11 novels which take up the "centrifugal tendency" measure the "asymmetrical power of America to influence

world events, to infiltrate, shape, and be shaped by other national cultures" (123-24). Gray suggests

that "centrifugal" novels such as Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2008) and Mohsin Hamid's *The*

Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007)

> relocate and reorient our notion of 'home' and 'abroad' by situating the stories they tell in an
> internationalized America and in an international space that, if not entirely Americanized, is
> nevertheless within America's orbit – which is to say, within the reach of, and affected by,
> American economic, political, and cultural power. Other books, however, take the
> transnational turn by moving out of the territory of the American nation-state altogether.
> They pivot away from the American homeland and direct all our attention to America's
> extraterritorial expansion through trade, tourism, war, cultural or political or even military
> invasion. (124)

Mohsin Hamid's latest novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013), fully embraces the

"transnational turn" of the centrifugal tendency, with Hamid staging his "American" narrative

entirely abroad in an undisclosed Asian nation. Hamid's latest is in many ways a companion piece to

The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), both formally and thematically, with one of the chapter titles,

"Focus on the Fundamentals," being a deliberate refrain of the latter novel's critical engagement with

that titular mantra of American capitalism: the "focus on the fundamentals" as preached by Jim,

Changez's all-American mentor. But where *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* explores the centrifugal

influence of transnational American capitalism in the context of post-9/11 America – the first variety

of centrifugal critique identified by Gray above – Hamid's latest explores this influence in "rising

Asia," with 9/11 being an absent presence silhouetted by symptomatic traces of the transnational

economic causes (capitalist exploitation) and effects (terrorism/increased surveillance and security)

that led to the attacks. And though I will refrain from a full literary analysis here for brevity's sake (I

have reserved this for a standalone article), I will integrate a brief critical review of Hamid's latest

novel as a gesture towards where 9/11 fiction is headed as the actual historical event of 9/11 recedes into the past.

How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia is self-consciously "American" in both form and content, and in deliberate contrast to its setting. This contrast highlights, often satirically, the pervasiveness of American cultural hegemony in the form of the socioeconomic values of neoliberal American capitalism that are taking hold in a communist region. In terms of form, the novel is a satire of the self-help genre and the rags-to-riches *bildungsroman*, both of which trace their modern forms to the rise of entrepreneurialism during the American industrial revolution, developing in tandem with capitalism as an edifying force in American culture. Figures such as Benjamin Franklin and Horatio Alger imparted to young men the values and know-how of self-made masculinity to succeed in American business. It is likely that Hamid's "how-to" title is a parody of what is perhaps the most famous "how-to" self-help book, Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936), which is more or less an instruction manual for calculated deceit in American business, though wrapped in the paternal warmth of Carnegie's all-American sermonizing. In terms of content, the novel traces the "self-made" rise and fall of an Asian entrepreneur, from rural rags to urban/suburban riches, echoing the narratives of American success which it satirizes, while also featuring significant departures from the classic trajectory. Rather than ending on a triumphalist note of can-do optimism, the novel ends in failure. However, Hamid does not depict his falling man as a tragic figure. Instead, he offers an alternative mode of masculinity based on a recognition of interdependence in place of the failure of self-made success. Thus, I end this study of 9/11 fiction with a nod to a work of *post*-9/11 fiction. Here, "post-9/11" designates a novel that was written after 9/11, or maybe within and/or against the context of 9/11, but which is no longer about the terrorist attacks and the immediate aftermath. Such fiction is still engaged with the residual disturbances in discourse that were precipitated by the attacks, including questions on the continued relevance of American power in the world, as American hegemony has inevitably given rise to competing

capitalist nations, such as China, India, and Brazil. While these nations have taken a capitalist turn, they also remain sovereign, despite the best attempts of neoliberal foreign policymakers to keep other nations porous and receptive to American self-interest. *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* traces the influence of American style capitalism on the economic "rise" of its undisclosed Asian nation and its unnamed protagonist as capitalist agent, while also charting divergences that defamiliarize what is otherwise a familiar narrative of American self-made success. Finally, of all the novels in this study that depict the "fall" of a businessman, Hamid's text moves beyond the irresolution of such crisis narratives and offers an alternative lifestyle to Americanized "self-made" men based on the self-abnegation of love, respect, and hospitality toward others.

Hamid uses second person point of view to achieve a destabilizing effect: his protagonist's fate becomes "your" fate, which unsettles the traditional reading structure of first and third person narrative, the latter of which more clearly separates the reader's self from the imagined other(s) depicted in the narrative. Hamid's use of second person point of view directly interpellates and thus implicates the reader in the protagonist's/"your" actions. He is "you," and "you" are him. However, for clarity's sake, I will refer to the protagonist in this brief analysis in the third person, except in direct quotations in which the original "you" in the text will be preserved. The protagonist's fate – the loss of his business and good health – finally allows him to see beyond himself, and live differently. He reconciles with his estranged ex-wife; settles his remaining business affairs; and devotes himself to the love of his life, the "pretty girl" with whom he has reconnected after decades of pursuing wealth. But this is not a traditional happy ending of American success. Instead, Hamid makes sure his protagonist is humbled by corporeal vulnerability, which is revealed in a near-death experience. His newfound humility allows him to appreciate the elusive significant other in his life, who always seemed to haunt his vacuous pursuit of business success and wealth. In his acceptance of mortality, he begins to learn the value of self-abnegation as a way of reconciling self-interest with alterity, that which resists and eventually dissolves selfhood. The centripetal vacuity of self-help

becomes a centrifugal force of "other"-help, of hospitality. And while direct references to 9/11 are absent in this novel, the causal factors behind the terror and death of 9/11 are present. Throughout the novel, there are several references to terrorist attacks and the increasing segregation of privileged Western contingents of society from the terroristic hordes (read disenfranchised locals) at the periphery. These attacks, and the protagonist's brushes with injury and death in their wake, see the continuities of the geopolitical strife of 9/11 (Western capitalist exploitation/Middle Eastern terrorism) transposed to (an)other domestic space: an Asian nation that is also subject to terrorism mobilized by radical Muslims as a critique of the rise of Western capitalism therein.

It is the end of Hamid's latest novel that deserves special attention here. After the prolonged but robust rise of the protagonist's bottled water enterprise, he begins to experience a decline. As market competition intensifies through consolidation and hostile takeover, his deputy begins to harass him to take on more debt, speaking with a newfound "aggression" that the protagonist attributes to his deputy's increasing sense of confidence as a young man pitted against his own increasing age (181). In light of his conversation with his deputy, debt is revealed to be a sort of death-transcendence: a form of leverage that allows continued "flight," leverage being "a way for small to be big and big to be huge, a glorious abstraction, the promise of tomorrow today, yes, a liberation from time, the resounding triumph of human will over dreary, chronology-shackled physical reality. To leverage is to be immortal" (180). In contrast to such incantatory triumphalism, the protagonist's deputy states with the bluntness of mortality: "If we don't borrow [...] we'll die" (180). Although the protagonist decides to stave off the death of his business by wrapping it in debt, he is soon more preoccupied with his own actual fate, when "an invisible girder slams into your chest, surely flattening it" – which is how he perceives the suddenness of the heart attack that sends him to the hospital (184). This architectural metaphor of collapse used to describe a health-related brush with death, while not necessarily a direct reference to 9/11, is certainly evocative of Toni Morrison's commemorative poem on those who died in the collapse of the World Trade Center, in

which she articulates, in a second person address, that there are "no words / stronger than the steel that pressed you into itself; no scripture / older or more elegant than the ancient atoms that you / have become." Both articulations of death or near-death trace a symbolic connection between the material collapse of the architecture of capitalist modernity and the fragility of human life in relation to such a fall: that life can be crushed beneath and reduced to the same inert atomic matter suggests a fatal (in)compatibility. Such figurative conflations of architectural collapse with personal collapse or falling have been prevalent throughout this study – though more explicitly in the context of the World Trade Center on 9/11, most notably in DeLillo's *Falling Man*, O'Neill's *Netherland*, and Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*.

Yet, in the intensive care unit, the protagonist is also saved by the technology of modern medicine, becoming a "kind of cyborg, part man, part machine," which is decidedly not an inaccurate description of what he has become as an unfeeling industrialist (185). He is reduced to the complete opposite of the autonomous self-made man, hooked into the machinery of life support, which control his vital flows of blood and oxygen: "You panic and start to flail, but your limbs barely move and you are gently restrained. A nurse speaks. You have difficulty following her words. You understand, though, that for the moment this apparatus and you are inseparable" (185). The gentleness with which the protagonist's will is so easily restrained shows that he has little fight left in him, that he is succumbing to the body's materiality. This scene reveals his fundamental dependence on what is an inherently vulnerable and mortal body, which is now failing him, which *becomes* him in its failure, reeling him in by his lifeline and pressing him into itself. The transcendent *heimlich* of expansive neoliberal consciousness collapses into the *unheimlich* of fatal embodiment, ending its virile hypostasis. The failure of his body, which leaves him in the hands of others, reveals that it is no longer possible for him to be responsible for himself – to be a self-sufficient success. It is during this time of corporeal vulnerability that he comes to remember his fundamental dependence on others: on the body, on the material infrastructure of modern medicine, and on the goodwill of others. This

dependency or interdependency comes in a revelation that echoes other such epiphanies experienced by several male characters analyzed in previous chapters:

> To be a man whose life requires being plugged into machines, multiple machines, in your case interfaces electrical, gaseous, and liquid, is to experience the shock of an unseen network suddenly made physical, as a fly experiences a cobweb. The inanimate strands that cling to your precariously still-animate form themselves connect to other strands, to the hospital's power system, its backup generator, its information technology infrastructure, the unit that produces oxygen, the people who refill and circulate the tanks, the department that replenishes medications, the trucks that deliver them, the factories at which they are manufactured, the mines where requisite raw materials emerge, and on and on, from your body, into your room, across the building, and out the doors to the world beyond, mirroring in stark exterior reality preexisting and mercifully unconsidered systems within, the veins and nerves and sinews and lymph nodes without which there is no you. It is good you sleep. (186)

The protagonist's sudden realization of the vast "unseen networks" that undergird modern medicine, only one of many vistas of modernity itself, which mirror the "mercifully unconsidered systems" within – both of which provide the foundation for the life which he has assumed to be of his self-making – comes as a "shock" to his otherwise self-focused, death-transcending worldview. A part of this is the limited nature of consciousness itself, which makes it difficult to hold the enormous breadth and width of the total view of interdependent relations that constitute the increasingly globalized yet "unseen networks" of transnational capitalism.

This is precisely Jameson's reason for advancing a theory of cognitive mapping: to bring such disparate and yet intimately connected elements together into a cohesive whole, to somehow make the "unseen networks" seen, to render them visible in the light of day before they come crushing down as an "invisible girder" during the dark night of the soul. It is in literary works such as Hamid's that such a cognitive map can be traced, through the imaginary interpolation of the "invisible

girders" of global capitalism that structure the modern world, which span the gulf between "here" and "there," "us" and "them," between capital and the international division of labour. Hamid does this – both here and in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* – in a way that destabilizes such easy binaries, by suggesting that Western/American capitalism is not simply a centrifugal force imposed on other countries, in Asia for example, but is also an increasingly transnational force that is perpetuated from within – though still largely influenced by colonial history and Western cultural hegemony. But the question remains, in both Hamid's novels and this study as a whole: is there another way to connect with others that does not involve the cold, rigid materiality of such girders? What alternative "sinew" can bind us together? It is important to begin with our own organic materiality, the "veins and nerves and sinews and lymph nodes" that form the mortal coil "without which there is no you," and the recognition of its inherent vulnerability, despite whatever cyborg extensions of human agency and consciousness that modern technology can provide. The virile will of the self-making subject cannot transcend death, since the will is inextricably bound to the mortal body. Thus, "death announces an event over which the subject is not master, an event in relation to which the subject is no longer a subject," which Levinas calls the "end of virility" (72-73). Eagleton also discusses the struggles of the "independent" will against the body's dependence, but extends this notion beyond materiality into the ideal realm of desire and recognition:

> The cult of the will disowns the truth of our dependency, which springs from our fleshy existence. To have a body is to live dependently. Human bodies are not self-sufficient: there is a gaping hole in their make-up known as desire which makes them eccentric to themselves. It is this desire which makes us non-animal: wayward, errant, unfulfilled [...] We are able to become self-determining, but only on the basis of a deeper dependency. This dependency is the condition of our freedom, not the infringement of it. Only those who feel supported can be secure enough to be free. Our identity and well-being are always in the keeping of the Other. (189)

In this light, as much as the protagonist's enterprise was a project of self-making with the end goal of getting "filthy rich," the latter was only a means to a greater end: to win the affection of the "pretty girl" he desires, to gain her recognition. In a way, the protagonist, as a neoliberal "self" who is paradoxically helped into self-made existence by the self-help guru who narrates his story, is an allegorical figure in the tradition of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), embodying the vacuous pursuit of the ever-elusive American Dream, which is conditioned by an underlying, figurative desire for the recognition of a "pretty girl" who always remains "out there." What is the majority of self-help literature if not the offering – by someone else – of an ideal subject position of self-making in a tale of recognized success? And in the sense that self-help is given by someone else, and in the form of a narrative driven by a desire for an ever-elusive "Other," such notions of self-made "identity and well-being are always in the keeping the Other" (Eagleton 189).

When the protagonist is finally released from the hospital, he faces a cold reality: his deputy has fled with his company's assets, leaving him near bankrupt. He accepts his "fate" and almost welcomes "being humbled," reducing himself to a hotel room "with few possessions" (190-91). Accordingly, he adopts a new principle of frugality: "Having less means having less to anesthetize you to your life," which reflects Eagleton's observation that the commodity prefigures death – its transient materiality, hastened by obsolescence, only provides distraction from the ultimate return to materiality that is death, the knowledge of which can reawaken you to life (191). The protagonist becomes wary of the bottled water industry from which he has "profited," hearing reports that rampant water extraction for the market is leading to "a noticeable desiccation of the soil" (205). This results in a related "dessicat[ion]" of "society itself," which, it is suggested, is led by Islamic prohibition, including "restrictions on festivals and the public pursuit of fun" (205). He sees this cultural desiccation as a counter-rising against the rise of exploitative capitalism in Asia: "what is unmistakable, is a rising tide of frustration and anger and violence, born partly of the greater familiarity the poor today have with the rich, their faces pressed to that clear window on wealth

afforded by ubiquitous television [...] At times, watching the stares that follow a luxury SUV as it muscles its way down a narrow road, you are nearly relieved to have been already separated from your fortune" (206). The cultural influences of American capitalism on the protagonist's Asian nation include growing class division and class consciousness, as well as an attendant class-based consumer identity that breeds envy through conspicuous consumption – all elements of the encroaching capitalist lifestyle against which the 9/11 attacks were orchestrated as a symbolic critique. In his brush with death, the protagonist has moved beyond such crass materialism.

Shortly thereafter the protagonist ends up back in the hospital, on his deathbed. And it is at the moment of his death that he finds peace, and through which Hamid offers his most powerful and incantatory summation of "self"-help advice, which tellingly occurs at the moment of the self's dissolution. On the edge of a drug-induced and/or near-death psychosis, the protagonist has a deathbed epiphany that allows him to experience a last moment of redemption – though not of triumphalist variety. Standing at the foot of his bed is the "pretty girl," an impossible presence because she is dead, but this matters little to him, for she brings him comfort:

> […] she takes your hand, and you ready yourself to die, eyes open, aware this is all an illusion, a last aroma cast up by the chemical stew that is your brain, which will soon cease to function, and there will be nothing, and you are ready, ready to die well, ready to die like a man, like a woman, like a human, for despite all else you have loved, you have loved your father and your mother and your brother and your sister and your son and, yes, your ex-wife, and you have loved the pretty girl, you have been beyond yourself, and so you have courage, and you have dignity, and you have calmness in the face of terror, and awe, and the pretty girl holds your hand, and you contain her, and this book, and me writing it, and I too contain you, who may not even yet be born, you inside me inside you, though not in a creepy way, and so may you, may I, may we, so may all of us confront the end. (228)

The book ends on this note, with his death. Hamid's description of this death, idealistic as it is, offers a profound imaginary deathbed scenario in which "you," the reader, are narrated into a moment of dissolution, which stimulates vicarious thought on the finitude of death. If death is the ultimate unmaking of the self, and if the possibility of death-transcendence is no longer an option, then how do we approach death in the best way possible?

If a sense of self – personal agency, will, autonomy – is all that we have left to hold on to, the very foundation of our identity, then death will always be *personal*: an attack on the self, a murder, a homicide, your being "killed" (which is why Death is personified in anthropomorphic form, rendered intelligible as an adversary, brandishing his scythe). To avoid such feelings of victimization – that one is being "killed" – one must take up a position of self-abnegation which requires an acceptance of death as a part of life, an inherent part of you, and a recognition that you were always already dying. You must think not of the self, but of the other: how you treated others throughout your life, with the hope that you were able to love, which is to allow others to be themselves while living with the personal loss that they will never be you, that a part of them will always be "over there," eluding your grasp. Despite this elusiveness (or because of it), you continue to love the other because the other sees you and you see the other, and in this exchange of looks can arise a moment of mutual recognition and respect that occurs interdependently, a moment of existential affirmation. In the hospitality required in such an encounter with alterity, which regards such a moment as a visitation rather than one of tolerance, stable distinctions between self and other begin to dissolve, as does the sense of antagonism inherent in the insistence that such distinctions are natural, an axiom that becomes institutionalized and reified in such figures as *homo economicus*, which perpetuates hegemonic masculinity in not only the business world but also in private interpersonal relationships.[78] In loosening one's grip on the Enlightenment notion of the autonomy of the unified self, and living the rest of life accordingly, one can prepare to be "ready to die well, ready to die like a man, like a woman, like a human, for despite all else you have loved." Death comes to us all – regardless of sex,

gender, race, ethnicity, class, or age – and to die well as a human being, we must learn to eschew the exceptionalism that leads us to assume that we are unique and superior in the eyes of others. Rather, we must come to realize what we all share in common: a struggle with desire, a sense of lack which we hope the other can fill with their positive recognition; and a struggle with corporeal vulnerability and the inevitability of death. This recognition – that the "other" faces the same fate as my "self" – allows me to move beyond myself as an exceptional being facing death (Heidegger's authentic being towards death), and rather, see myself as one with the collective human experience of loss and death.

Hamid ends *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* with an ultimate statement (quoted above) that forms the grounds for an ethical position based on death. The way in which he would see "all of us confront the end" first involves a transcendence of self in order to live more for others, which prepares one to transcend the need for death-transcendence itself, since, having already transcended the fixation on self, one would no longer dread its dissolution. This recalls Terry Eagleton's suggestion that the self-sacrifice in our relations with others can prepare us for our relation to death: the "absolute self-abandonment which death demands of us is only tolerable if we have rehearsed for it somewhat in life. The self-giving of friendship is a kind of *petit mort*, an act with the inner structure of dying [...] In this sense, death is one of the inner structures of social existence itself" (211). Thus, how we "confront the end" is influenced by how we treat others, and vice versa, and the degree to which a culture focuses on death-transcendence – the denial of death through avenues of control, whether ideological or material – will often be reflected in the degree of control exercised by the governing political structure over social relations. By eschewing the capitalist drive for personal power and becoming a hospitable friend, we can become less attached to the "self" and its loss of accumulative capital, both economic and social. In this newfound sense of loss, we can come to realize that though

> death may not exactly be a friend, [...] neither is it entirely an enemy. Like a friend, it can
> enlighten me about myself, though like an enemy it does so in ways that I would on the

whole rather not hear. It can remind me of my creatureliness and finitude, of the fragile,
ephemeral nature of existence, of my neediness and the vulnerability of others. By learning
from this, we can turn facts into values. By being woven into our lives in this way, death can
become less daunting, less of a baleful force which is simply out to tear us apart. It is indeed
out to tear us apart; but in the process it can intimate to us something of how to live. And this
is the kind of behaviour appropriate to a friend. (211)

It is the desire to "turn such facts" of corporeal vulnerability and mortality into values that motivates
Hamid's novel. Although *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* is a satire of the self-help genre, in
his deconstruction Hamid offers a genuine though seemingly paradoxical tenet of "self-help" in light
of death: if you're going to help yourself, you must first help others. Since all "self-help" is
ultimately "help," Hamid, as faux self-help guru, lulls the reader into a traditional rags-to-riches
narrative, though defamiliarized in its recontextualization in Asia. But ultimately he offers a
narrative that ends in failure, both of "your" self and the business enterprise that was an extension of
that self. And Hamid narrates "your" fate as a friend, self-reflexively addressing the reader
throughout, apologizing for his own use of calculated deceit in his deliberate sleight-of-hand, his
taking away of the ground beneath your feet. Hamid takes the reader through corporeal vulnerability
and to the very moment of death to *help* the reader lose their attachment to self, to bridge the gap
between the safety of now and the inevitable moment of death in the future, between the comforts of
home, the *heimlich*, to that undiscovered country whose absent presence haunts the everyday and
influences (often negatively) our relations with others. This process is the drawing of a cognitive
map of the existential variety. Jameson's suggestion that we need to trace the connections between
the everyday experience of Western privilege and the inequitable conditions of dependency it creates
abroad through cultural hegemony, is fundamentally a need to bridge the distance between a limited
horizon of privileged experience and another limited horizon of abjection that is exploited to sustain

the privilege of the former, between homeland and faraway lands, between self and other, and ultimately between self and death.

To return to the discussion of didacticism in 9/11 fiction that opened this chapter, Elizabeth Burns suggests that literature can help us step "beyond our current repertoire" and engage with the other:

> Transcendence of the status quo is at the heart of the matter, enabling readers to construct new realities on their own, because they are always interacting with what is being read, or in conversation with others. Each reading is a fresh version of what is written, deeply and inevitably affected by the relationships, systems both greater and smaller, of which the reader is a part. It is something which the reader does with the text, prompted by what comes from within, by circumstances of the reading, and by what the writer has set down. (11)

The status quo is death-transcendence itself, in its myriad forms, and in the specific context of 9/11, it is American exceptionalism and its cultural hegemony, which has led to the spread of neoliberal capitalism throughout the world. So at the heart of this dissertation is a call to transcend death-transcendence, especially in its masculinist neoliberal forms, which have characterized American domestic and foreign policy since the early 1970s, leading up to the backlash of 9/11 and continuing in the War on Terror. And even though the face of domestic capitalism has changed, including in its fold a broader diversity of people differing in sex, gender, race, ethnicity and class, American culture – which is in many ways a business culture – still champions an essentially self-centered and masculinist subject position that traces its history back to the self-made man of industrial capitalism. The recent veneration of "self-made" IT entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg are a testament to this fact (Jobs had a notorious track record for fiscal retrenchment, including massive cuts in charity work, while Gates' philanthropy makes him an arguably more "selfless" figure).

In contrast to the continuities of American exceptionalism and its exceptional self-made man, the novels explored in this dissertation attempt to recuperate the loss of the fallen bodies of 9/11, with a specific focus on the trope of the falling man as emblematic of the destabilization of the self-made man and all that he represents. This focus opens up a critical line of thought on American masculinity in each reader, which then creates further dialogue between readers, and so on, the cumulative impact of which encourages the construction of "new realities," the transcendence of the status quo. The majority of the novels in this study offer open-ended narratives of masculine crisis, which refrain from depicting alternative modes of American masculinity (*Falling Man, Once in a Promised Land, The Emperor's Children, The Submission*), while others simply end on a satirical note of redemption (*A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*, *There Will Never Be Another You*, *Netherland*). The former group tends to depict the fatalism or cynicism of the falling man, and oftentimes in ways that echo bell hooks' observation that the

> men who endorse[d] patriarchy discovered along the way that the patriarchal promise of power and dominion is not easy to fulfill, and in those rare cases where it is fulfilled, men find themselves emotionally bereft. The patriarchal manhood that was supposed to satisfy does not. And by the time this awareness emerges, most patriarchal men are isolated and alienated; they cannot go back and reclaim a past happiness or joy, nor can they go forward. To go forward they would need to repudiate the patriarchal thinking that their identity has been based on. Rage is the easy way back to feeling. It can serve as the perfect cover, masking feelings of fear and failure. (72-73)

The crisis of masculinity precipitated by 9/11 only exacerbated such feelings of isolation and alienation, and these novels explore the subsequent outbursts of rage, misogynistic and otherwise, that arise from and fall back into a more prolonged state of simmering resentment. In contrast, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* depicts the isolation and alienation of the *homo economicus* of American capitalism but, instead of leaving the reader with masculine rage, brooding resentment, and/or the

cynical resumption of past roles, it depicts a Pakistani migrant's repudiation of the self-made businessman ideal in post-9/11 transnational American capitalism. Hamid's transnational orientation provides a centrifugal critique of the outward influence of American capitalism after 9/11. *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, which in many ways is an extension T*he Reluctant Fundamentalist*, is set in Asia, which allows for a centrifugal/centripetal critique of the domestic gender relations perpetuated by American capitalism in other countries. Hamid's novel offers a glimpse into the alternative mode of being I have been theorizing in this chapter, one in which corporeal vulnerability both undermines the self-made ethos, but also points to a reconciliation with the other. Hamid achieves this – and this is his twist – by relocating and transposing this domestic space abroad, depicting the growth of American style suburbia along with the rise of urban industry and commerce in Asia. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* Changez embodies the pluralistic "changes" in domestic American capitalism, though after 9/11 he defects back to his native Pakistan due to increasing discrimination, while in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* the protagonist represents the changes in transnational American capitalism insofar as American cultural hegemony has influenced the rise of American style capitalism from within certain Asian nations. Although the transplanted, homegrown version of American capitalism flourishes for some, including the protagonist, it is also met with hostility from radical Islamic groups (including one led by his wife), and eventually he and his business succumb to the ruthlessness of capitalist ideology, its material effects, and, finally, to the material decline of his aging body, becoming just one of many fallen men at the foot of the rise.

So as a friend, Hamid offers a form of literary help to the reader. And it can only be considered *self*-help insofar as it allows the reader to see beyond him- or herself, by not only helping us imagine the alterity of the other by directly assigning us the identity of the Asian self-made man, but also, while occupying this imagined position of otherness, subjecting us to an imagined experience of corporeal vulnerability and finally to death itself. But again, Hamid ushers us toward the alterity of the other and death as a friend. He puts us on our deathbed so that we might try to

imagine and reflect upon what will be our own last moments, to give us a cognitive map of the material difference between our privileged "selves" now, full of life, and what we will all inevitably become at the edge of death, the dissolution of self. Hamid's closing deathbed scene is a *memento mori* that affirms life, causing us to reflect upon how we can change our "selves" now, before it is too late. Conceiving of such an encounter with death as a disruptive catalyst, Hamid shares with hooks a belief in the ability for men to change their dominating ways:

> It is not true that men are unwilling to change. It is true that many men are afraid to change. It is true that masses of men have not even begun to look at the ways that patriarchy keeps them from knowing themselves, from being in touch with their feelings, from loving. To know love, men must be able to let go of the will to dominate. They must be able to chose life over death. They must be willing to change. (hooks *xvii*)

In choosing to foreground the falling man as a *memento mori*, writers of 9/11 fiction attempt to rescue the fallen of 9/11 in a way that allows us to confront the end, so that we recognize a common corporeal vulnerability that even the strongest masculine will cannot dominate or transcend, with the hope that such a recognition will ultimately help us change and choose life over death.

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[1] Certain novelists in this study, such as Ken Kalfus and Carolyn See, also take up a satirical critique of the overbearing modes of sub-hegemonic masculinity in American culture after the attacks. Perhaps the most effective (and hilarious) satire of such (over)protective masculinity is found in Jess Walter's *The Zero* (2006), a novel that is not included in this study for brevity's sake, but is highly recommended.

[2] In his analysis of American hegemony in contemporary "globalization," Ronald Wright argues that the rapacious "deregulation" of neoliberal capitalism traces its lineage to the formation of American character at the frontier: "[...] it is hardly surprising that the delusion of endless growth and the denial of natural limits have taken their most virulent form in the United States – in the culture forged at the frontier. 'The very essence of the frontier experience,' writes the naturalist Tim Flannery, 'is to exploit [resources] as quickly as possible, then move on.'" (207).

[3] It should be noted that – beyond the historical specificity of early-American Puritanism – the Abrahamic tradition as a whole, as established in the Old Testament, is often cited as the ideological origin of Western patriarchy or hegemonic masculinity. In *Holy Virility: The Social Construction of Masculinity* (1983), Emmanuel Reynaud analyzes the creation myth in Genesis and the "patriarchal logic which, from the division of the sexes, develops into the appropriation of women and the struggle for power among men" (9). Male dominance has been sanctioned by the divisive gender relations prescribed in the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), tracing its origins specifically to the narrative of Adam and Eve and the antagonistic gender binary established therein. In *The American Man* (1980), a groundbreaking study of American masculinities, Elizabeth and Joseph H. Pleck argue: "the Biblical view of Eve as the temptress, responsible for the fall of Adam, had helped shape the religious-minded colonists' views of the proper relations between the sexes. From the ribs of man had come woman and from woman, sin. The judgement of God was that Adam was to rule over Eve, as every subsequent husband should command every wife" (7). With this religiously sanctioned gender binary already firmly in place upon their arrival in the New World, the hardships at the frontier served as yet another proving ground for male dominance in materialist practice, which further reified the ideal gender binary established in the Old Testament.

[4] However, despite this general trend in frontier-era gender relations, it should be emphasized that not all men and women adhered to such a rigid gender binary. Amy Greenberg in *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (2005) claims that by the 1830s "Republican motherhood posited that maternal influence would emanate outside the family home to the frontier, uplifting the values of new Americans and supporting male-initiated attempts to expand westward" (7). Greenberg's analysis reveals that frontier-era woman had more agency than originally believed, functioning as a domestic moral/religious influence behind the frontier, which, rather than directly affecting the struggle at the front lines to "protect" and expand the border, served to buttress the ideology of manifest destiny behind-the-scenes in order to further legitimize westward expansion. See also Amy Kaplan's "Manifest Domesticity" (1998) in Vol. 70 of *American Literature*.

[5] My use of "sublimated" here refers to the psychological process of sublimation in which potentially destructive behavior is channeled into more politically sanctioned forms, such as how the expansionistic violence of the frontier has been transposed to the more subtle devices of capitalistic exploitation at economic frontiers. In such instances, the violence and slave labor that secures American profiteering is increasingly conducted at a remove from the professional business world which administrates such activity and the consumer society that luxuriates in its products. In the Afterward of this study, I will explore how such processes of sublimation are related to the sublime, an experience of fear and awe in presence of overwhelming, potentially annihilating realities beyond the subject's control – an experience whose "awe" is dependent on the subject being in a position of safety in relation to the dangerous object/phenomenon that would normally only elicit fear. In this sense, both the *sublimation* of the inherent violence of capitalism and the *sublime* experience of American capitalist and consumer are intimately related in their need to mediate and thus be insulated from the dangerous conditions of oppression that capitalism imposes upon others. Sublimation imposes a mediating distance between capital and labor (spatial, ideological, bureaucratic) while the sublime is the experience of awe afforded by the success, power, and thus safety of the exceptional American worldview, which looks onto a fallen or humble world "out there."

[6] Of course, the secular nature of capitalism is highly debatable. Lingering religiosity is inscribed onto the nation's currency itself: "In God we Trust."

[7] In *State of Exception* (2005), Giorgio Agamben explores the history of states of exception, up to "Guantanamo Bay and the 'exceptionality' of the US Patriot Act" (Hegarty 24). States of exception occur during times of crisis when sovereign power suspends the normal functioning of everyday law in order to address extenuating political circumstances. Agamben explores how "exceptionality […] is the essence of Law" and how it is a political situation particular to democracy, since "individual sovereigns simply wielded power without recourse to breaking free of law in a way that required consulting other legally constituted bodies. As the French and American revolutions spread the idea of democratic legitimacy, they also spread the idea of the moment outside of that legitimacy. This moment can be the founding instance, or when the 'system' needs to protect itself as a matter of urgency" (24). As a founding moment of revolutionary violence that sees the instantiation of the law, or as a protective measure to secure the system of law during times of crisis, states of exception are a reversion back to an atavistic founding moment of violence that creates and upholds the law. In the context of 9/11, such a reversion is deemed necessary to protect the nation, which legitimizes more traditional modes of sub- and supra-hegemonic masculine dominance.

[8] Furthermore, in times of crisis, hegemonic masculinity is oftentimes leveraged against the domestic masculinity of the preceding era of relative peace, which is often criticized as having been too "soft" or "feminized." In post-9/11 America, Bush was portrayed in the media as a rough-and-ready cowboy Republican, in direct opposition to Clinton, the soft-spoken and compassionate Democrat who preceded him: "Democrats such as Bill Clinton nurtured; they felt our pain. George W. Bush offered a harsher, punitive style but promised safety and security under his wing" (Kimmel "Manhood" 252). Of course, this gendered polemic is also part of a larger right-wing discourse that pejoratively characterizes all Democrats as generally "soft" or feminized.

[9] Terror management theory (TMT) is established on the existentialist principles set out in Ernest Becker's Pulitzer Prize winning *The Denial of Death* (1973). Becker argues that an underlying fear of death motivates human behavior, resulting in the construction of protective narratives (religious and political) that mitigate existential terror by imbuing bare material human existence with death-transcending meaning and cosmic significance. Along with Becker's influential text, TMT is also influenced by the work of existential psychotherapist Irvin D. Yalom. In *Existential Pyschotherapy* (1980), Yalom addresses the pervasive cultural influence of "death transcendence," citing it as a "major motif in human experience – from the most deeply personal internal phenomenon, our defenses, our motivations, our dreams and nightmares, to the most public macro-societal structures, our monuments, theologies, ideologies, […] our stretch into space, indeed our entire way of life – our filling time, our addiction to diversions, our unfaltering belief in the myth of progress, our drive to 'get ahead,' our yearning for lasting fame" (41). However, crisis situations can threaten the sense of ontological security that such death-transcending narratives are intended to provide. According to Yalom, there are "certain unalterable, irremediable conditions, certain 'urgent experiences' that jolt one […] from the first, everyday, state of existence to the state of mindfulness of being […] *death is the condition that makes it possible for us to live life in an authentic fashion*" (31). 9/11 was just that: an experience that jolted Americans out of their everyday domestic routines and those larger cultural narratives of transcendent American "progress" – of the nation's drive to "get ahead" – leaving a sense of death (both literal and figurative) in its wake. Unfortunately, 9/11 failed to initiate a move towards a more "authentic" ethical relation with others: despite the initial sense of solidarity after the attacks, the nation would mobilize this solidarity against others, with increases in racial and ethnic discrimination at home, and more martial foreign relations abroad.

[10] It is important to note that although I argue within a critical paradigm which suggests that 9/11 precipitated a retrenchment of masculinity in American culture, other critics have observed that despite such setbacks, the general trend in American masculinity is progressive and moving away from traditional hegemonic ideals. Masculinities critic Eric Anderson argues, in *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities* (2009), that contemporary university-attending men are increasingly reluctant to embrace hegemonic masculinity, and instead display a reorientation to gender that he calls "inclusive masculinity," in which masculine identity is no longer defined violently against difference, but rather alongside it in an inclusive way that emphasizes underlying similarity. Anderson suggests that this reorientation in gender outlook is less likely to perpetuate homophobia and misogyny in American culture.

[11] Slotkin first articulated this notion of "regeneration through violence" in the first book of his trilogy on the American frontier, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (1973). Slotkin argues that American pioneers championed myths that portrayed frontiersman as the beleaguered rescuers and protectors of domestic victims from foreign intruders (all through the reluctant though necessary use of "defensive" violent force), a narrative dynamic that not only regenerated the colonizing mission and its legitimizing ideology of manifest destiny, but also, as I argue in this paper, regenerated a sense of the necessity of a protective mode of hegemonic masculinity in times of crisis.

[12] The implications of 9/11 on transnational business masculinity will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter, "Falling Men in Post-9/11 American Fiction."

[13] It should be noted – beyond the political posturing of the Bush administration – that the radical Islamic terrorists did present a real threat to American lives, as was clearly evident on 9/11. And it should be emphasized that the many men and women rescue workers who helped save lives on that day did act with commendable bravery. However, like the frontier-era Native Americans before them, the terrorists had reasons for staging their attacks, reasons that the Bush administration would suppress. And though their political-religious motivations in no way excuse their devastating attacks, the hijackers were adamantly opposed to globalization, which in many ways secured American cultural and economic hegemony in the Middle East. Finally, and most important in terms of this study, many Islamic fundamentalists perceive their geopolitical subordination to the United States in gendered terms. To repeat Kimmel's observation above: "central to their political ideology is the recovery of manhood from the devastatingly emasculating politics of globalization" (*Misframing Men* 158). Thus, masculinity was leveraged on *both* fronts – American and Middle Eastern – in order to mobilize greater geopolitical acts of war. However, it should be noted that although both use gendered ideology, gender is still culturally inflected in either case, so that the source of terrorist masculinity springs from origins other than the frontier myth that justifies masculinist (and sometimes terroristic) American imperialism.

[14] Clearly, Mansfield sees the American government in times of crisis as just that: a man's field. And his reference to such governance as "business" in the quote above – a phrase most likely used in passing – is telling, as my exploration of the increasingly blurred line between business and government in neoliberal capitalism will attest in subsequent chapters.

[15] In an extended take on Flight 93, Faludi suggests that the media's veneration of the male "heroes" in that situation helped to counter the charges against the contemporary "feminization" of American men (see Coulter and Mansfield above). In a way, the mythologizing of Flight 93 served to remasculinize the "softened" supra-hegemonic masculinity of the jet-set businessmen who overtook the hijackers: "It was as though the medals handed out for Flight 93 were only secondarily about honoring a fight against foreign antagonists. The primary contest was a war against the wasting disease suspected to have overtaken the male professional class. Tribute was being paid to men who were corporate functionaries, who represented all those coffee-clutching, wrinkle-suited middle managers who sat in airport lounges, wielding their cell phones and speaking louder than was strictly necessary about quarterly sales composites. By taking on the terrorists, the white-collar men of Flight 93 were assuring their brethren that the 'feminized society' wasn't irreversible after all" (61).

[16] Despite Radstone's criticism, trauma discourse is not so easily dismissed as disempowering or "feminized." In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), Cathy Caruth defines trauma as a crisis of meaning; a disruption of the culturally prescribed narratives that give existential meaning to human life. Trauma thus calls for the forging of new narratives: "The crisis at the core of many traumatic narratives… often emerges… as an urgent question: Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it? At the core of these stories… is thus a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival" (7). Here, in language which does not betray a gender bias, Caruth presents a narrative approach to trauma as a process of constructing a coherent story across the abyss of meaning between trauma's initial *crisis of death* and its subsequent *crisis of life*. In other words, trauma can only be resolved through the forging of narrative, which can just as easily be construed as a state that fosters narrative agency, rather than helpless passivity. In this light, perhaps it is Radstone who is projecting an essentialized notion of "passive" femininity upon trauma discourse rather than the other way around. To further destabilize this binary, Juliana Schiesari examines the gendered history of melancholia in Western cultures, contrasting the "heroic suffering" of "*homo melancholicus*," an "elite 'illness' that afflicted *men* precisely as the *sign* of their exceptionality" against the pathologized "hysteria" and "devalued cultural form of women's mourning" (7-13). Schiesari indicates that even the generally devalued experiences of depression, melancholia and trauma can be recuperated by masculinist ideology, if necessary. The depictions of post-9/11 existential crisis in the novels explored in this study sometimes skirt the border of such romanticized figurations.

[17] While Butler's proposal that a shared sense of "corporeal vulnerability" should be the axiom for a new ethical paradigm of American foreign policy is certainly idealistic, this does not discredit its potential to serve as a springboard for non-aggressive alternatives to current U.S. foreign policy. One of the central tenets of Levinas' existential philosophy helps to strengthen Butler's thesis: a brush with death, or a sudden realization of the fragility of the human body – of life itself – brings one into a closer relation with one's own mortality, and since death is inevitable and totally "other" to human experience, the alterity of death serves as "one of the modalities of the relation with the Other" (*Totality and Infinity* 234). Irreducible alterity – as intimated in a brush with death (the total erasure of a subject's interiority) and in the enigmatic encounter with the interiority of the "Other" – challenges one's solipsistic, exceptional sense of interiority, or what Levinas calls one's "hypostatic" engagement with the world, causing one to reflect upon that which is "other" than oneself. However, it must be remembered that this process toward a heightened and more ethical existential consciousness is never guaranteed and is always influenced by the ideological and historical context in which a subject is situated.

[18] Furthermore, critics such as Slavoj Zizek in *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (2002) and Jean Baudrillard in *The Spirit of Terrorism* (2002) argue that the terrorist attacks, rather than being an unprecedented and incommensurable event, was in fact already part of a well-established cultural fantasy that sensationalized the cataclysmic destruction of the United States, evident in the countless Hollywood disaster films before 9/11 (and after the immediate aftermath) depicting apocalyptic scenarios.

[19] Here, "elsewhere" can refer to the literal relocation of oppressive labor practices to other spaces (outsourcing), where it can remain "out of sight, out of mind," but also to a state of habituated mind in which such oppression is "hidden in plain sight," as in the case of domestic slavery and servitude.

[20] "Postmodern" is used here to designate an era of post-industrial or late capitalism in which a consumer culture has largely replaced the producer culture that preceded it (the result of neoliberal market expansion throughout the world and outsourcing). "Postmodernism" will be understood in the Jamesonian sense as the cultural logic of this era, in which citizens are increasingly led to fashion their identities (individualized, self-made) through the products of the capitalist marketplace so as to diminish any collective sense of sociopolitical responsibility or solidarity beyond capitalist consumer culture. This disarticulating logic of late capitalism promotes isolationism, but one that creates a paradoxical collective of individuals. Each consumer is interpellated as an exceptional individual against/among others, all of whom are nonetheless bound by their collective practice of individualized consumption, the products of which are manufactured in slavish conditions beyond their everyday frame of reference. Thus, individualized subjects of consumer culture are given a death-transcending worldview and a set of consumptive practices which assure that they are exceptional and self-made (though sociality still exists through the monadic, competitive lenses fashioned by the market). Thus, the logic of postmodernism protects capitalist interests: all consumers are ostensibly pandered to, created as individuals with freedoms in a market inflected democracy in which everyone is marketed to equally (a co-optive niche for every race, gender, ethnicity or class), all of

which prevents any meaningful solidarity or sense of identity outside of capitalism. Furthermore, this logic obscures the "truth" of this postmodern era: the oppressive sources of labor and production that sustain the American lifestyle and its freedoms and values (the "free market" glut of consumerism and the rampant generation of capital). The truth of this situation is that real, material equality still eludes many demographics in the United States and in nations abroad, a disparity which is systemic and conducive to capitalism and those mostly masculine (and male) subjects who capitalize from it.

[21] It is worth noting the historical associations that such images of businessmen jumping from towers of high finance evoke in the American cultural consciousness – the last time such a tragic impulse led men to similar actions was the stock market crash of 1929, which was, in opposition to 9/11 as an explosive foreign attack on American finance, a major implosion of laissez-faire American capitalism from within.

[22] Though this paper is focused predominantly on the "falling man" trope established here, I do not wish to replicate the general ignorance in the American media of the plurality of victims that died on that day. The World Trade Center was a plural working environment constituted by individuals varying in sex, gender, class, race and ethnicity. The cultural obsession with this particular image – both in terms of its initial controversial presence and suppressed absence – is indicative of a masculine bias in the American media when it comes to framing culturally iconic images, especially those which depict the American business world. The image of *The Falling Man* will be subjected to a more extensive critique in chapters 3 and 4, in which this cultural bias will be deconstructed.

[23] It should be noted that this socially dominant, collective mode of managerial masculinity would generate a counter-discourse that lamented the conformity of the corporate ethos that secured masculine hegemony, at the expense of what was perceived to be a lost individualism. This counter-discourse, which often foregrounded a "crisis of masculinity" in the midst of vacuous suburban life and its attendant mass-consumerism, developed out of the post-WWII period and is exemplified in such critical novels as Wilson's aforementioned The *Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* (1955), and also John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960), and Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* (1961).

[24] Of course, this was not the first time corporate interests have co-opted and benefited from civil rights discourses. After the Civil War, and during the height of the industrial revolution in America, the 14th Amendment was established to grant African Americans equal rights, which protected them from the unlawful deprivation of life, liberty and/or property. At the time, corporate lawyers managed to overturn legal constraints that had been put into place to limit corporate action by making an appeal to the 14th Amendment, which resulted in corporations being legally recognized as entities or "persons" with equal rights and freedoms.

[25] If there ever was a shining "city upon a hill" in the United States, it was New York City. With its mythic skyline, the first to feature modern skyscrapers at the turn of the 20th century, it has stood as a beacon of economic freedom and redemption for millions of immigrants. Apart from New York City being considered the industrial and financial (and arguably cultural) capital of the United States, the state of New York was also commonly referred to in the past as the "Empire State," whose grandeur was architecturally embodied in The Empire State Building which dominated the New York skyline for over forty years, and still remains one of the tallest buildings in the U.S. and the world (it was overtaken by The World Trade Center and The Sears Tower, both in 1973).

[26] The hypothetical pre-political context or "state of nature" against which the social contract has been theorized ranges from Hobbes' anarchistic "state of war" which the social contract serves to mitigate, to John Rawls idealistic conception of an "original position." The Hobbesian state of nature as a state of war would seem to privilege an originary condition of male dominance, in which biological advantages in brute strength would be advantageous to securing self-preservation against competition that arises out of conditions of scarcity, leading to potentially coercive gender relations. On the other hand, Rawls' conceptualization is a "thought experiment" in which potential political subjects choose an ideal sociopolitical order behind a "veil of ignorance," which prevents them (ideally) from being influenced by any prior knowledge of current disparities based on differences in gender, race, class, and ethnicity, differences which would otherwise lead to biased decision-making. Neither Hobbes pessimism or Rawls' naïve optimism offer much hope for gender equality, as neither offer concrete solutions that actually disrupt the status quo.

[27] Of course, since the economic crisis of 2008, the United States' reputation as the global economic hegemon has been tainted. Furthermore, the growing economies of China, India, and Brazil also indicate that American economic hegemony is not as secure as it was during the post-WWII period.

[28] This is not meant to suggest that all corporations are totally conservative in this regard, but rather indicates a general trend in corporate culture that continues to see the predominance of men in the upper echelons of employment.

[29] The image of transnational businessmen as jet-set, globetrotting suits soaring above the land figuratively reflects this increasing distance – both materially and ideologically – between these executives and the forces of production.

[30] Though Connell and Wood's ethnographic study is limited to Australian transnational businessmen, these men can be said to embody a Western ideal that is conditioned by American cultural hegemony and its representations, along with actual American business models and practices that have become hegemonic in the globalized business world.

[31] Susan Faludi recounts how, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, American men began to stock up on arms and ammunition so as to compensate for their inability to protect the home front. As a result of fear and shame after 9/11, "suburbia" began an "arming frenzy: commuter dads were filling their 'clothes closets' with assault rifles and machine guns; wives were gift

wrapping ammunition 'for their husbands as a Christmas stocking stuffer.' Gun manufacturers hoping to capitalize on the new 'home protection' trend issued 9/11 themed weaponry. The Ithaca Gun Company offered its new 'Homeland Security model' for 'our current time of national need,' and Beretta rushed its 'United We Stand' guns to stores; wholesalers put in two thousand order in one day for the 9-millimeter pistol, which came with a holographic American flag" (154). However, this patriotic fervor for firearms was short-lived, and within a month of the attacks gun sales returned to normal.

[32] Schuck goes on to recount the celebrated "rags-to-riches" story of Chris Moneymaker, the 2003 World Series of Poker champion who paid $40 dollars to enter the tournament and ended up winning $2.5 million on a bluff.

[33] Keith's patterns of practice evoke an iconic trope of the American Western: the taciturn, poker-playing, itinerant cowboy. This suggests that despite his inability to truly connect with the ideological narratives that had previously structured his life, he still partakes in patterns of practice that are unconsciously structured by these cultural narratives.

[34] The nationalities of these two men are also historically significant. The 17th century Dutch empire included parts of modern-day New York City, and more importantly in terms of Hans' relationship with Chuck, it also occupied territory in what is now Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, Jeffrey Hill suggests that O'Neill's choice of Trinidad as Ramkissoon's home country has further symbolic meaning which accentuates the author's critique of Euro-American imperialism: "Trinidad, moreover, was the home of one of the Caribbean's leading radical thinkers, C.L.R. James—'one of the truly decisive Marxist theorists of [the twentieth] century.' In recent years James's writings on the intersection of politics and cricket have made a major contribution to the discourse of postcolonialism. The cricket ground to James was, at the very least, a site that stimulated the 'imaginary resolution' of colonial antagonisms. More than this, however, he regarded cricket as a means to racial liberation, a form through which to challenge the class and race hierarchies of his native Trinidad and thus a spur to both sporting and political achievement. In this way James's thinking fused with that of the Civil Rights movement in the U.S., where James himself lived as a political activist for some twenty years from the late 1930s. To have the character of Ramkissoon fictionally connected to this intellectual tradition carries powerful cultural connotations." (224-225). In this way, Ramkissoon's background aligns him with the American Civil Rights movement, though as a more recently landed immigrant whose potentially subversive American Dream finds agency through cricket – a game with origins in European colonialism – through which Chuck attempts to level the American playing field. Chuck articulates his symbolically laden project to Hans, who, as a Euro-American transnational businessman whose sex, gender, class, and cultural heritage evokes Euro-American empire, displays admiration for Chuck's ambition while remaining mostly aloof.

[35] Elizabeth S. Anker, in "Allegories of Falling and the Post-9/11 Novel" (2011), draws a parallel between this disturbing scene and the American mistreatment of prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison. Anker suggests that the "act of racialized sexual predation […] eerily replays the Abu Ghraib torture photos. An underage black male at the otherwise near exclusively white party is hooded not coincidentally with a Bloomingdale's shopping bag while being compelled to submit to fellatio performed by Miss Naomi, all of which is photographed—thereby locating America's post-9/11 crimes within an intimately familiar space. Although Marshall fruitlessly protests, he resigns himself to passive and, moreover, aroused spectatorship, recreating a scene that equally impugns American inaction and highlights the disavowed erotics of torture cum terror in post-9/11 geopolitics." (467). Here, Anker effectively argues that domestic/centrifugal scenes such as this can function as a centripetal critique of post-9/11 American foreign policy by dramatizing topical events such as the torture at Abu Ghraib in a way that suggests parallels between such sexualized and racialized violence and the treatment of domestic "others."

[36] This uneven trajectory recalls O'Neill's symbolic take in *Netherland* on Chuck's Ramkissoon's fastidious attempt to create a "level playing field" in his own business enterprise: he goes to great lengths to tend to his grassy cricket field, raking and smoothing it out so as to create a surface that ensures predictable fair rolls and bounces of the ball. Ramkissoon's own life is played out on a far less level field than the one he idealizes in cricket, and his American Dream is thwarted by systemic impediments and his fatal immersion in crime to increase his clout. The struggle towards overcoming white hegemonic masculinity in American capitalism is often a measure of skillful play mixed with an ability to roll with the punches – misogynistic, classist, racist, or all three.

[37] This takes the self-made man's denial of dependence, articulated above in the gendered context of women's labor, a step further by rooting it in a masculinist ontology. This masculinist death-transcending worldview recalls "Sartre's basic ontology of consciousness, as explicated in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), which can be divided into three modes of being: "being-in-itself," "being-for-itself," and "being-for-others." Being-in-itself refers to the inert material existence of objects in the world. Being-for-itself refers to human consciousness and its ability to negate the inert materiality of its embodied existence (it's being-in-itself) by projecting itself towards external objects and events, into a future state of being. Finally, being-for-others is a mode of being-for-itself in which a consciousness comes to understand itself as also *being* an object in the eyes of others, meaning that one's existential being is constituted by the validating look of Others. But one can never guarantee this validating look, or more importantly, its figurative counterpart: the Other's validating esteem. In this sense, being-for-itself, once conditioned by the greater awareness of being-for-others, is a mode of desire predicated on an existential lack" (Shaw 47-48).

[38] It is worth noting that during the Great Depression women emerged from the domestic space to work, "maximizing the family budget" to compensate for men's struggle to maintain their breadwinner role during the economic downturn

(Gates 53). In her study of female detectives in 1930s Hollywood film, Philippa Gates suggests that Depression-era gender politics took a turn in which women could be viewed as successful in both public and private spheres, managing an independent career and a romantic relationship (if desired at all), destabilizing the "assumption that masculinity and femininity are fixed categories aligned with opposite sexes" (6). Changes in the forces of production opened the public sphere to American women, and wider than ever before: "In a decade when the Great Depression was undermining men's assumed natural place at the top of the patriarchal order through unemployment, these working women embodied an active defiance of their socially prescribed passive position and, in effect, pursued the American Dream as self-made women" (6). However, by the beginning of World War II, a more traditional gender binary had been reestablished in American culture – a remasculinization of American culture during wartime – a familiar trend in this study – despite women's involvement in the work force to compensate for male laborers fighting abroad. And along with the triumphalist *Pax Americana* celebrated into the late 1940s and early 1950s, a patriotic reassertion of the exceptional sovereignty of the nation – the *patr-* in "patriot," it is worth noting, is the Greek stem for "father," thus making it patriarchal – an attendant patriarchal gender binary constituted by the traditional gender roles of male breadwinner and female homemaker was firmly reestablished.

[39] Of course, as argued throughout, the tacit consent that secures masculine hegemony over an increasingly undemocratic citizenry is also strongly influenced by the gendered logic of protection enacted by the Bush administration. Regarding the USA PATRIOT Act, Mary Hawkesworth argues that the "citizenry is reduced to a subordinate position of dependence and obedience. Rather than enacting their democratic rights through protests against such constitutional violations, citizens of the national security state are expected to be grateful for the protection provided. Some preliminary evidence suggests that this fear-induced feminization of the citizenry is generating the desired effects. Indeed, so grateful are the docile citizens to the valor of their self-sacrificing protectors that they willingly overlook rape within the military and against women in occupied areas and exponential increases in domestic violence on military bases by soldiers returning from war zones. Inured to the demands of homeland security, the feminized citizenry grow increasingly insensitive to heightened control tactics that secure gendered subordination" (177).

[40] The critically acclaimed *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), directed by Kathryn Bigelow, is perhaps the most blatant mainstream cultural product to mobilize neoliberal postfeminist posturing to legitimatize unilateral American action in the Middle East. And though the film was initially criticized by journalists such as Glenn Greenwald and Jane Mayer for its thinly veiled consequentialism, which ultimately condones torture as a sometimes necessary evil to achieve a desirable political end, there is an underlying historical amnesia at work in the film that obfuscates geopolitical contextualization of 9/11 and the aftermath (it begins conveniently/manipulatively on 9/11, emphasizing that moment as a decisive break in history). This lack of historical breadth and complexity creates a more palatable Hollywood narrative that will fill theaters and sell popcorn and other concessions – of both the food and moral variety. Marouf Hasian Jr. argues that "the character of Maya in *Zero Dark Thirty* serves as a neoliberal, populist feminist character who is deployed to create the allusion [*sic*] of gendered equality within the CIA, while erasing or obfuscating the structural barriers that are still in play" (323). However, Hasian Jr.'s critique of the film's ideological obfuscation of such domestic feminist concerns ("structural barriers" of the workplace) does not sufficiently address the American imperialism that he suggests lies behind the film's postfeminist posturing. Since one of the film's main problems is its featuring of a rousing postfeminist success story that deflects attention from the troubling historical context of Western/American imperialism from which 9/11 emerged – performing the opposite work of the *Tumbling Woman* by instead depicting the sure-footed rebound of its heroine – Hasian Jr.'s lack of concrete historical analysis commits, however inadvertently, a similar ahistoricism. This critical blind spot, along with the rapturous praise of mainstream film critics and audiences, betrays a widespread cultural ignorance and/or suppression of the geopolitical history of American imperialism of which 9/11 and the War on Terror are a continuation rather than a decisive break (323). *Zero Dark Thirty* perpetuates this historical amnesia by deploying what Zillah Eisenstein identifies as a "sexual decoy": the framing of audience identification within a triumphalist postfeminist narrative of an *exceptional* woman's recognition by the CIA for her tireless manhunt for Bin Laden has the ideological effect of legitimizing the American *exceptionalism* and unilateral action behind not only the assassination in 2011, but also the post-9/11 War on Terror. The populist, emancipatory optics of this postfeminist sexual decoy – "an awful stereotype: a driven, obsessive woman, alone with no friends [...] no depth [...] all surface" – deflects attention from the systemic, exploitative practices of hegemonic masculinity (which Maya replicates/embodies) that generate and secure neoliberal American capitalism, while also co-opting and negating alternative feminisms that champion a more fundamental reorientation of social relations and foreign policy (Eisenstein, "Dark, Zero-Feminism). Thus, *Zero Dark Thirty* problematically mobilizes postfeminist tropes of American female empowerment in the professional workplace to justify and celebrate the continuities of US imperialism (or what Eisenstein sees as "imperial feminism" in service to "imperial democracy"). Here, Maya is used as an extreme example of a neoliberal postfeminist hero, which I mention here as an introduction to the ruthless ambition of governor Geraldine Bitman in Waldman's *The Submission* (2011), which more fully explores this postfeminist subject. Bitman's "driven" and "obsessive" character fights a war on the home front, promoting her own self-interest as a white politician in New York by appealing to populist warmongering as a response to 9/11, at the expense of the democratic rights of Americans of Middle Eastern descent.

[41] In a related controversy, commentators such as Newt Gingrich decried the planned building of a thirteen story mosque near Ground Zero. Gingrich's voice was one in a chorus of knee-jerk reactions to this proposal, which he construed as an act

of "conquest and thus an assertion of Islamist triumphalism which we should not tolerate" (76).

[42] The extent to which Bitman's political success can be considered "self-made" is certainly debatable, which is another reflection of the contradictory nature of the self-made ethos. Though Bitman achieved political success through her own actions, Waldman also reveals that, as the inheritor of her husband's fortune, Bitman was able to launch her political career with a considerable financial advantage (102). This further reinforces criticism against the neoliberal notion that free markets create a level playing field in the marketplace, political or otherwise, since one's financial situation inevitably influences the amount of time and money one can invest in politics or any other career. In this sense, Bitman would come under the third-wave critique of white feminist privilege, in which her success would be partially read as the continuation of her husband's past masculine hegemony.

[43] The ideal of the exceptional self-made man and the ideology of American exceptionalism are motivated by the same philosophy: a brand of individualism that, in the former, sanctifies the sociopolitical autonomy of American men on the domestic plane, and, in the latter, sanctifies the unilateral political actions of the American state on the international plane. Proponents of individualism such as Ralph Waldo Emerson – despite his general opposition to war – "held an expansive vision of America's Manifest Destiny," particularly when he states in "The Young American" that when the government fails to produce results "America must rely on 'the increasing disposition of private adventurers to assume its fallen functions'" (*Manifest Manhood* 28).

[44] In many ways these men are not "self-made" at all, but in fact rely on a hegemonic social structure that entitles certain men to achieve socioeconomic dominance in the public sphere, at the expense of "others." Furthermore, this "self-made" masculine identity is contingent upon the validating recognition of those "others" it positions and defines itself against. This does not only include hetero- and homosexual men and woman of different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, but also the "other" men within their hegemonic playing field, all of whom are simultaneously antagonistic to one another as self-serving opportunistic individuals, while also sharing and maintaining a collective homosocial bond that encourages the competitive patterns of practice that secure their masculine dominance.

[45] This contradiction in Seeley's character gestures to the analogous self-serving actions at the core of American capitalism and its contemporary globalized incarnation. Seeley ostensibly envisions a revolution in consciousness a la Jameson's cognitive mapping, in which Americans would see the harsh material reality (economic disparity at home and abroad) behind their false consciousness (American exceptionalism). However, he seems more concerned with his own ability to capitalize on this Marxist rhetorical posturing. Thus, Seeley's character represents the nihilistic ideological extreme of capitalism as an economic system: it will attempt to consume and co-opt all, even its political opposite (Marxist revolution) in order to profit – an insatiability which leads to ouroboric self-consumption.

[46] This sublimated frontiersman masculinity, motivated by utilitarian individualism, is the spirit of the self-made man, the entrepreneur, the businessman at the vanguard who is always on the cusp of new territories of innovation, forging forward into the unknown to establish and capitalize on the next trend, all at the expense of others. At this frontier of American capitalism, Seeley commits to the same contradictory "defensive/offensive" ideological stance that justified early American expansionism at the western frontier: on the surface he champions a Marxist revolutionary ideology in "defense" of a truth that would expose American hypocrisy, while simultaneously undertaking a covert "offensive" against those he has befriended in America (through his moralistic call to revolution) – all in order to secure his own masculine dominance, and personal profit.

[47] The al-Qaeda terrorists were opposed to America both religiously and politically – the two being closely aligned. According to John Gray in *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* (2007), al-Qaeda had very clear political objectives: they wanted to see "the withdrawal of US forces from Saudi Arabia and the destruction of the House of Saud," and would later (after 9/11) take a vested interest in the occupations of Iraq and Palestine, all of which they believed was the result of an neo-liberal campaign to spread American hegemony in the Middle East under the utopian guise of free market values, individual liberties, and democracy (177). Bruce Lincoln, in *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion After September 11* (2006), weighs in on how al-Qaeda mobilized their radical politics through revolutionary Islam. In the mid-1960s Sayyid Qutb, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, revived the term *jahiliyyah*, which traditionally "designates the age of spiritual ignorance characterizing the pre-Islamic period of barbarism" (3). However, Qutb expanded this notion to include "the modern world's malaise," or more specifically, the secularization of the Middle East by modern Western powers. This anti-Enlightenment concept has since influenced the political tenor of al-Qaeda, whose enemies in their attempt to restore Islam in the Middle East include, first, "the Western powers, who are not only non-Muslims, but non-, even anti-religious ('infidels'); second, postcolonial state elites, whose Islamic commitments have been egregiously compromised ('hypocrites'); third, that part of the Enlightenment project committed to religious minimalism and ascendancy of the secular state" (75).

[48] It is true that the majority of the casualties in the World Trade Center were male. One of the planes crashed into a portion of the North Tower which housed "Marsh & McLennan, the insurance company [and] the offices of Cantor Fitzgerald, the bond-trading company" (Junod 2009). These two American corporations – both in the business of capitalizing on contingency – sustained the highest number of casualties in the attacks, many of whom were businessmen who were among the falling. According to government research, the basic breakdown of the casualties at the World Trade Center on 9/11,

based on race and sex, is as follows: "Of these 2,726 decedents, 1,659 (61%) were non-Hispanic white males, 407 (15%) were non-Hispanic white females, 177 (6%) were Hispanic males, 81 (3%) were Hispanic females, 136 (5%) were non-Hispanic black males, 79 (3%) non-Hispanic black females, 122 (4%) were Asian/Pacific Islander (API) males, and 54 (2%) were API females" (Schwartz). So although the majority of the casualties on 9/11 were white males (non-Hispanic), a large number of whom worked for Cantor Fitzgerald (presumedly as businessman of the bond-trader variety), a significant number of casualties (15%) were non-white males. The "falling man" identified in Drew's photograph was one of the 136 (5%) non-Hispanic black males who died on that day. And rather than being a businessman, Jonathan Briley was a sound engineer who worked at Windows on the World, an establishment in the service industry that, along with "Forte Food, a catering service that fed the traders at Cantor Fitzgerald," provided the businesspeople in the World Trade Center with the exceptional hospitality and service expected in such a lucrative setting (Junod 2009). To further highlight the compounded differences of class and race that separate the symbolic falling "businessman" from the actual falling man of the service industry, Junod reveals that of the 100+ food and beverage/service sector employees who lost their lives while working at Windows on the World and Forte Food, "many of the dead were Latino, or light-skinned black men, or Indian, or Arab" (Junod 2009).

[49] Briley's sister Gwendolyn comments on the relevance of the truth of the "falling man," suggesting that its cultural and symbolic resonance has transcended the individual identity of her brother, and has taken on a more universal significance, perhaps symbolizing the fragility of all Americans in relation to a more fundamental sense of human corporeal vulnerability: "He's everybody. We're so stuck on who he was that we can't see what's right there in front of us. The photo's so much bigger than any man [...]" (Junod 2011). Furthermore, in her observation on memorialization in the context of 9/11 and in general, she again suggests that such efforts should tap into the universal, stating that memorials are "the way the world deals with *its* loss. They're not for us [the family members]. They're for the rest of the country, and they're for history" (Junod 2011). Gwendolyn's humility in light of her brother's death is commendable, but the revelation of the falling man's racial identity as African American should not be taken lightly or dismissed. The problem here is that the "universal" that emerges from such memorialization tends to be "white," the ontological given. The history of African Americans should be considered in stark contrast to the predominantly white history of American capitalism, which was reified in the towering white concrete of the World Trade Center, against which the falling Jonathan Briley was foregrounded.

[50] William E. Scheuerman examines how the USA Patriot Act "has functioned to hand over substantial but poorly defined authority to the intelligence and security apparatus. An immediate consequence is that millions of resident aliens are now denied many basic legal protections and find themselves directly subservient to federal agencies long known for their inefficiency and incompetence" (214). Policies enacted by the USA Patriot Act also affect other Americans who may be taken to resemble such "resident aliens" through racial profiling – both of the official variety conducted by the government and public institutions, and also the unofficial profiling that results from the internalization of these policies by the general population.

[51] It should be clarified that though the American Dream – the idea that with "hard work and business acumen," mixed with a measure of "good luck," one could become wealthy and successful – has been used to mobilize immigrants to the United States since the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Shaanan 35), it was most often used to secure industrial labor positions that were far less lucrative than advertised. Discriminating factors of gender, race, ethnicity, and class also impacted the accessibility to the mythic American lifestyle.

[52] Hardt and Negri's conception of the "multitude" (which is occasionally utopian in its strategies to recuperate Western democracy) as a corrective to neoliberal globalization is distinguished from "traditional trade unions" which tend to "defend the economic interests of a limited category of workers" (often men, traditionally white), by instead focusing on the creation of "labor organizations that can represent the entire network of singularities that collaboratively produce social wealth" (137).

[53] However, it must be emphasized that these authors occupy a privileged social position, as they are well-educated and financially stable. Their narratives tend to focus on the struggles of immigrants and migrants who have found success in their pursuit of the American Dream, but who struggle against the regressive civil rights regime in the United States after 9/11. Thus, while these novels originate from privileged class positions, they are critical of such privilege. Their privilege can be partially attributed to the recent history of American immigration policies: since 1965, the "United States focused on selectively bringing professionals to the country," which has resulted in a more educated and wealthier demographic of immigrants over the past fifty years (Grewal 67).

[54] This legislation by the British government to prevent free competition in the workforce is an early example of the institutionalization of racism in the development of American liberalism and capitalism. Such discriminations of race would contradict the American nation's embracing of liberal ideology and its attendant freedoms throughout the eighteenth century, promulgated by the Founding Fathers and distilled into a nationalist creed by Thomas Jefferson in "The Declaration of Independence" (1776). Jefferson championed the oft-cited "self-evident" truths that "all men were created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness," and he furthermore assured that it should be the role of the United States government to secure these rights, "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed" (134). However, Jefferson's own ambivalent position

on slavery (he was a slave owner) contradicted such idealism, as did material practices on the American ground in general. Classical American liberalism was rendered more palatable in popular representations of the iconic self-made man, who seized upon the opportunities to succeed afforded by the exceptional freedom promised to all Americans. Of course, the proclaimed universality of American freedom was undermined by the fact that the self-made man was always a man (of course) and presumed to be white. The racist seeds for this discriminatory ideal of self-made freedom were sown in the institutionalization of slavery in eighteenth century Manhattan, the strength of which is exemplified in the dominant culture's reaction to the "Negro Plot" of 1741.

[55] Quotes from "Self-Made Men" do not have cited page numbers due to the source being electronic. See Works Cited.

[56] In "Self-Reliance" (1841), Emerson champions an individualism that for the most part eschews any sense of social obligation, and which he explicitly aligns with manhood: "do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, though foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong […] though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar which by and by I shall have the *manhood* to withhold" (356 emphasis added). On the other hand, Benjamin Franklin attempts to mitigate what he sees as the impediments of excessive "Pride" by including "Humility" as one of his thirteen virtues and precepts. But in the end, Franklin's endorsement of humility is decidedly utilitarian in that he sees it as a way to gain an "Advantage" over others, prefiguring the manipulative principles of business conduct (no doubt influenced by Franklin) in Dale Carnegie's *How To Win Friends and Influence People* (1936). In terms of humility, Franklin states: "I cannot boast much Success in acquiring the *Reality* of this Virtue; but I had a good deal with regard to the *Appearance* of it [and ...] I soon found the Advantage of this Change in my Manners. The Conversations I engag'd in went on more pleasantly. The modest way in which I propos'd my Opinions, procur'd them a readier Reception and less Contradiction; I had less Mortification when I was found to be in the wrong, and I more easily prevail'd with others to give up their Mistakes and join with me when I hapen'd to be in the right" (109). In this sense, Franklin's virtue of humility is a mode of "calculated deceit" under the guise of modesty, which is mobilized to win the sociopolitical and economic upper hand.

[57] Douglass makes an indirect appeal to the universal equality championed by Jefferson's declaration, which ideally creates a level playing field: "I have said 'Give the negro fair play and let him alone.' […] It is not fair play to start the negro out in life, from nothing and with nothing, while others start with the advantage of a thousand years behind them. He should be measured, not by the heights others have obtained, but from the depths from which he has come."

[58] Frederick Douglass' rendition of self-made manhood is instructive. While he is one of the most nuanced philosophers on the topic (especially among his contemporaries), his overall endorsement of self-made manhood reveals the pervasiveness of individualistic ideals in American culture and the difficulty of reconciling American individualism with a greater sense of the social good, without recourse to a transcendental ideal – Calvinistic divine election, Smith's "invisible hand," or Douglass' more secular faith in the good of humanity – which, it is hoped, will intervene on behalf of those less privileged.

[59] Such "harmless daydreaming" led to the harmful nightmare of the experience of exclusion depicted in Richard Wright's vitriolic writing, such as his autobiographical *Black Boy* (1945) and his novel *Native Son* (1940). Wright's naturalistic perspective is a fierce critique of the "bad luck" of being born black in the United States in the early twentieth century, a harsh social environment for African Americans which predisposed them to poverty, violence, and crime. However, Wright's provocative work incited criticism from contemporaries such as James Baldwin, whose more pragmatic approach to racial equality sought to work within the system of American capitalism rather than rail against it, aligning himself with Ralph Ellison, who, in *Invisible Man* (1952) deliberately sought to subvert what he saw as the fatalistic "despair" that characterizes the "narrow" representational strategy of American naturalism (Charney 75).

[60] While this shift in perception facilitated a better understanding of the increasingly plural ethnic landscape of the United States, the "attempt to reconceptualize a racial classification as an ethnic classification to somehow 'equalize' the assessment of entrepreneurship across African Americans and other ethnic groups, fails to appreciate the unique historical and contemporary conditions of systemic racism and structural exclusion experienced by non-White racial groups in America" (31). This tendency to subsume race into ethnicity and class is justified by academics of the "ethnic entrepreneurship paradigm," who argue that African Americans constitute an ethnic group whose identity stems from the migration (from 1910-1930) of 4.1 million African Americans from the South to the North in search of greater economic opportunities, which "parallels the migration experience of foreign-born immigrants, thus allowing for a comparison of entrepreneurship across these ethnic groups" (30). Here, the founding of a baseline measure for American entrepreneurship (self-made success) based on socioeconomic migration, establishes ethnic identity in the United States in economic terms of a common experience of immigration to the American capitalist market (especially the northeastern seaboard, or New York City) in order to penetrate an economic frontier guarded by white hegemonic masculinity. Thus, while it is always important to recognize the unique history of African American racial oppression in the rise of American capitalism – as this chapter establishes – along with the contextual prejudices experienced by other racial groups in the United States, the ethnic entrepreneurship paradigm allows for a broader analysis of racial/ethnic oppression in American capitalism.

[61] Cook and Martin's broader argument suggests that, rather than liberalism being the antidote to exclusionary practice, it is actually often conducive to it: "Racially exclusionary laws are the norms that control which ascriptive categories of people

may enter and belong to particular nation-states. Liberal states have had more racialized policies partly *because of* their liberalism. In liberal regimes, policy formation is more open to a plurality of concerns — including workers advocating the protection of domestic labor markets from despised foreign competition and/or nativists clamoring for the enclosure of a treasured identity" (9).

[62] This paradox recalls George Carlin's inimitable critique of the inherently contradictory notion behind the self-help industry: "If you're looking for self help, why would you read a book, written by somebody else?! That's not self help, that's help!" (*George Carlin: Complaints and Grievances*).

[63] Also, without reference to any film in particular, Hamid conveys the more general influence of American film on Changez's consciousness when he first visits New York City's affluent Upper East Side: "The area – with its charming bistros, exclusive shops, and attractive women in short skirts walking tiny dogs – felt surprisingly familiar, although I had never been there before; I realized later that I owed my sense of familiarity to the many films that had used it as a setting" (49).

[64] Of course, Changez's assumption that the locals are entirely docile and obsequious reveals much about his own flattening of their experience, not taking into consideration their greater depth of character and the possibility that such practices are dissimulation. Either way, Changez will soon encounter a local who does not display such subservience – genuine or dissimulated – but rather, shows his open disgust with Changez's "American" arrogance.

[65] Such a focus on "the fundamentals" of American capitalism also involved the ramping up of domestic consumerism, with George W. Bush rallying the nation to go out and shop, so as to not let the terrorists "win" by impeding the American way of life, which in this context is aligned with the exercising of neoliberal freedom in the public ritual of consumer spending.

[66] Randall goes on to conclude that "Changez sees that aggressive American capitalism is a direct ideological corollary with the religious and political movements in the Middle East" (138), a parallel which further destabilizes the assumed binary between secular Western "civilization" and Islamic Middle Eastern "barbarism."

[67] Jonathan Hart recounts how Christopher Columbus was co-opted by political interests during the revolution and turned into an icon. In light of a speech made by Jeremy Belknap in 1792, in which Columbus is lauded as a "champion of reason, commerce, and science," Hart suggests that "Columbus becomes a figure of the American Revolution. His relations with the Natives are not represented here or how his 'discoveries' challenged England, but instead he is a figure of modernity and reason that becomes part of the mythology of the birth of a nation and a new world for the Anglo-American colonies that have declared their independence. Motives and ends, a kind of instrumentality, can appropriate other cultures and occlude others in the ideology of the moment" (73).

[68] Is Hamid simply reproducing the gendered logic of the "'dominant fiction' of U.S. origins" which "equat[es] national origins with male sexual conquest," which establishes "woman" as the "space that men conquer and transform"? (Carden 35). Hamid's representation is a more complex reworking of this gendered trope than mere reproduction, depicting it as a lost cultural fantasy never to be recovered, with an emphasis on Changez's inability to adopt and perform the nostalgic ideal of American masculinity (read "white") Erica craves. In this way, their failed sexual relations can be read as a critique of the American desire for immigrants to sacrifice their cultural differences in order to more clearly resemble and subscribe to traditional and thus familiar images of white America, especially after 9/11. But in the end, this demand for assimilation is oftentimes simply racist and impossible: others inevitably fail because they are not white, despite their otherwise comparable performance of successful business masculinity.

[69] If Underwood Sampson's fundamental "creed" values "maximum productivity" above all else, this involves exploiting the most surplus value from productive labor, which generates the products consumed in the market, which generates capital, the fundamental distribution of which is always already preset to be inequitable, since capital is always determined in advance by an abstract financial measure that dictates that the cost of one's labor must always be less than the cost of the product. This ensures that a significant profit will be made by the owners/managers of the means of production. And in the realm of maximum productivity, the less a laborer earns in relation to the cost of the product the better.

[70] Georgiana Banita argues that Jack Franks uses the masculinist cultural milieu of 9/11 to redeem his masculinity: "a former U.S. marine (with a personal grudge against Jordanians)," he "seeks to make himself useful to his country again through hyper-vigilance and racial profiling" (247).

[71] In a productive engagement with Steven Salaita, Banita suggests that initially Salwa's "profession as a real estate agent" makes her "complicit in the image of the United States as an agent of territorial infringement and occupation. As Salaita contentiously argues, rather than regard anti-Arab racism as a function of the geopolitical interaction between the Arab and the American worlds, 'we are better served looking at that racism as being on a continuum with America's roots in settler colonialism. A correlative settler colonialism in the West Bank, after all, accounts for much of the tension among the United States and Arab nations—and, by extension, Arab Americans.' As soon as Salwa exceeds the limits allowed by her position —she sleeps with her young American lover in the pristine bedroom of one of the properties she has been assigned to sell— the metaphor is reversed: the Palestinian woman has entered territory she had been excluded from and betrayed her status as tolerated guest, both in her native Jordan and in the U.S." (247). In this sense, Banita, through Salaita, argues that Salwa's profession evokes the American frontiersman – ever pushing into new territory for the settlement of a homeland – albeit in the modern, sublimated, cosmopolitan context of the economic frontier in which a woman of Middle Eastern descent can

adopt such a role. However, after 9/11 such inversions have seen a reversion back to the traditional binary, which configures the white "American" against a racialized other at the economic frontier.

[72] Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner suggest that the "idea of 'the truth about the past, uncontaminated by present perspectives or concerns' is like the idea of 'real essence, uncontaminated by the preconceptions and concerns built into any human language.' It is a romantic ideal of purity which has no relation to any actual inquiry which human beings have undertaken or could undertake" (8).

[73] In his examination of Cole's destabilization of literary cosmopolitanism in *Open City*, Pieter Vermeulen argues that the author invokes not only the *flâneur* and its "cosmopolitan ethos that thrives on intercultural curiosity and the virtues of the aesthetic," but also the "more sinister, and mostly forgotten, nineteenth-century figure of restless mobility: the *fugueur*" (41-42). Vermeulen recounts how "*Fugueurs* emerged in urban areas in France at the end of the nineteenth century; they were "mad travelers" who unaccountably walked away from their lives and, when found, were unable to remember what had happened on these trips, let alone what had motivated them to set out on them in the first place […] *Open City* subtly evokes this dark counterpart of the cosmopolitan *flâneur* in order to indicate the limits of the cosmopolitan imagination. The novel carefully constructs a panorama of cultural and historical difference, yet it filters it through a perspective that remains strangely unaffected by it" (42).

[74] Phillip Tolliday suggests that Maurice Blanchot's philosophy shares a similar orientation to suffering as epiphanic. For Blanchot, suffering reveals that the origins of corporeal existence and the consciousness housed therein is – contra to Heidegger's empowering conception of the existential *possibilities* that arise from the internal grappling with one's *own* death – always external to consciousness and the self's will and is thus indebted to the other rather than the self. Tolliday argues that "for both Levinas and Blanchot, suffering, which reveals the powerlessness of the subject and the subject's essential passivity, may also thereby reveal what Blanchot terms 'the excess of its affirmation' [...] Suffering is paradoxical. By revealing through the trial of experience, the dispossession of the self, it convinces us of the truth of Levinas' and Blanchot's intuitions that the self is impossible and by so doing it opens out onto a version of the self which is essentially related – albeit through an impossible relationship with the other" (206). In this way, though the subject is rendered powerless and passive in suffering, which reveals the self as "impossible" in the sense that the self's identity was/is never self-made or self-sufficient, such an experience also puts the subject in a relationship with the other, upon whose recognition the subject's existential being was always already dependent. This is what Blanchot means by "the excess of affirmation" – that the self's sense of affirmative being was always in "excess of" or beyond the self's will and identity as a self-made subject.

[75] This instance of recuperation from emasculation was prefigured in a pop cultural example from the early 1990s, when Lorena Bobbitt severed John Wayne Bobbitt's penis with a knife. This (dis)connection is more relevant than its ostensible tastelessness would suggest. The media fixation on this story indicates a cultural preoccupation with gender norms and biological markers of hegemonic masculinity. However, the phallocentrism of American media culture was exposed when the sensational loss of John Wayne's penis overshadowed the underlying reason for Lorena's actions: she was reacting to John Wayne's repeated sexual aggression towards her. Rather than focusing on condemning his misogyny, the media focused on the lurid details of John Wayne's emasculation, and later, the triumphalist "happy ending" in which his penis was reattached (thanks to tireless white coated ingenuity) so that he could pursue a career in the porn industry. Only in America can emasculation be so thoroughly reversed to its triumphalist opposite: virile heroism.

[76] Though not a theorist of the sublime proper, Rudolph Otto's conception of the *mysterium tremendum* shares many similarities to sublime experience. Otto proposes that the *mysterium tremendum* is a profound religious experience of dread and awe that accompanies a sense of inadequacy in the face of the ineffable and overwhelming – that which always remains beyond and "other" to human understanding (Livingston 56).

[77] Karen Engle also makes a reference to Drew's *The Falling Man* as a *memento mori*, suggesting that "as a photographic tomb to an unknown jumper, the image becomes iconic for all who jumped on that day" (39).

[78] In an etymological genealogy of the word "religion," Derrida reveals that the two most common Latinate forms and definitions focus on two basic parts of "Western religious experience: sacredness and indebtedness," with the latter taking on greater significance with the institutional expansion of Christianity, and later, the advent of capitalism in light of Enlightenment ideals and lawmaking (tithing and penance being early instances of the confluence between the two) (Borradori 155). As a corollary, Derrida also explores the etymology of the word "responsibility," and he discovers that "response and responsibility share with religion a concern with economic exchange whereby promises are made in return for offerings and securities are deposited in return for gifts" (157). It is at this point that Derrida suggests an alternative conception of responsibility: "To understand response and responsibility only in the context of economic exchange, which usually goes together with the juridical guarantee that the exchange has been fair, does not address [...] the core of responsibility: responsibility in the face of the incalculable" (157). Here, Derrida envisions responsibility and justice in relation to the incalculable alterity of the other, in the presence of the enigma that is the specificity and contingency of the other's interior experience, that which remains beyond our control and knowledge, beyond all assurances and calculable *insurances* for our own safety.

Derrida wishes to break the "circle of obligation and deliverance" which he says characterizes notions of religion and responsibility, especially since the Enlightenment. Instead of holding the other at arm's length, imposing distance between self and other in a way that maintains a suspicious appraisal of character that assumes "calculated deceit," Derrida recommends a position of openness to the other, an "unconditional forgiveness" in advance, since one is able to see oneself in the other, and the other in oneself, and the fallibility between. Again, Derrida recognizes the difficulty of such an orientation, since "unconditional forgiveness [...] would entail taking risks, for the other can be the best as well as the worst – we can be greeted by the other or we can be killed by the other" (156). Such an unconditional forgiveness is an orientation to the other that does not automatically assume the worst – the antagonistic "calculated deceit" of neoliberal thought – but rather hopes for the best, even if this openness leaves one exposed and vulnerable to possible altercation. It is a recognition of the other in oneself and oneself in the other, and a realization that we all are capable of both the best and worst, given the contingencies of circumstance. Rather than practicing "tolerance" towards the other – a notion of Christian charity that has transformed since the Enlightenment into more secular liberal and neoliberal forms, in which others are invited to coexist with plural Western cultures so long as the invited party is properly acquiescent – Derrida recommends "hospitality" as an alternative (16). In a direct quotation from Borradori's interview, Derrida suggests that "unconditional hospitality, hospitality *itself*, opens or is in advance open to someone who is neither expected nor invited, to whomever arrives as an absolutely foreign visitor, as a new arrival, nonidentifiable and unforeseeable, in short, wholly other" (17). As an alternative to tolerance and its conditional invitation to the other (that the other conforms to the home, the *heimlich*) Derrida promotes hospitality and its unconditional openness to the other's visitation, even as an unannounced *unheimlich* presence.