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FACULTY OF ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY

Laura Herrová

Trauma in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely  
Loud and Incredibly Close*

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## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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Jméno a příjmení: **Laura Herrová**  
Osobní číslo: **H13093**  
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
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### Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Závěrečná bakalářská práce se bude věnovat problému literárního zpracování traumatu souvisejícího s teroristickými útoky na Světové obchodní centrum v září 2001.

V úvodu práce studentka stručně zasadí obě zvolená díla do historického kontextu a bude charakterizovat tvorbu obou autorů. Dále bude definovat pojmy, s nimiž bude ve svých analýzách pracovat, především trauma, historical trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, 9/11 novel, apod. Pojedná také o tzv. trauma studies a jejich aplikaci v literární teorii kritice.

Jádrem práce bude analýza vybraných děl, v níž se studentka soustředí na způsoby zachycení historických událostí, jejich dopadu na postavy románů, způsob zachycení traumatu, využití narativních technik k zachycení traumatizované mysli, atd. Své analýzy opře o relevantní kritické a teoretické zdroje a doloží odkazy na primární díla.

Závěrem studentka své analýzy shrne a způsoby zachycení traumatu ve zvolených románech porovná.

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**doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.**

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

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prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc.  
děkan



doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.  
vedoucí katedry

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## Příloha zadání bakalářské práce

### Seznam odborné literatury:

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Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využila, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury. Byla jsem seznámena s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., autorský zákon, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

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Laura Herrová

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## ANNOTATION

This paper focuses on experiencing and dealing with trauma and Post-traumatic stress disorder, caused by the November 2001 terrorist attacks in New York. The theoretical part deals with the term trauma, the explanation of Post-traumatic stress disorder and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. This also briefly mentions occurrence of trauma and Post-traumatic stress disorder in American literature and authors of the 9/11 genre. The second part of the paper contains analyses main characters in *Falling Man* and *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* and describes their process in dealing with trauma and Post-traumatic stress disorder.

## KEYWORDS

Terrorism, 9/11 novel, trauma, Post-traumatic stress disorder

## NÁZEV

Trauma v románech *Padající muž* Dona DeLilla a Jonathana Safrana Foera *Neuvěřitelně hlasitě a k nevíře blízko*

## ANOTACE

Tato práce se zabývá prožíváním a vyrovnáváním se s traumatem a posttraumatickou stresovou poruchou, způsobené teroristickými útoky na New York v září roku 2001. Teoretická část práce se věnuje traumatu, objasnění posttraumatické stresové poruchy a teroristickým útokům v Americe 11.září 2001 a také se krátce věnuje výskytu traumatu a posttraumatické stresové poruchy v Americké literatuře a autorům, kteří se zabývají tématem 11 září. Druhá část práce analyzuje hlavní postavy v knihách *Padající muž* a *Neuvěřitelně hlasitě a nesmírně blízko* a popisuje jejich proces při vyrovnáváním se s traumatem a posttraumatickou stresovou poruchou.

## KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Terorismus, romány o 11 září, trauma, posttraumatická stresová porucha

## Table of contents

Introduction.....	9
1. The definition of trauma .....	11
1.1 Origin of trauma .....	11
1.2 Symptoms .....	12
2. Post-traumatic stress disorder .....	14
2.1 Symptoms of PTSD .....	15
3. Coping strategies and therapy of PTSD and trauma.....	17
4. Trauma in American literature.....	20
4.1. Authors of the genre 9/11 .....	20
5. Terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2001.....	22
5.1 Al-Qaeda.....	23
5.2. Muhammad Atta .....	23
6. The analysis of characters in <i>Falling Man</i> .....	25
6.1 Neudecker family .....	26
6.1.1 Analysis of Keith Neudecker .....	26
6.1.1 Analysis of Justin and Lianne Neudecker .....	31
6.2 The analysis of Florence Givens .....	36
7. The analysis of characters in <i>Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close</i> .....	38
7.1 Schell family.....	39
7.1.1 Analysis of Oskar Schell and his relationships with his family.....	39
Conclusion .....	25
Resumé.....	47
Bibliography .....	52

## Introduction

This paper focuses on two books, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. The main aim of this thesis is to study how characters experience trauma and Post-traumatic stress disorder caused by the 9/11 attacks on America. Both books are prototypical representatives of the 9/11 novel, which is a relatively new genre, originating few years after the attacks took place.

The work is divided into two main parts and seven chapters in total. The first part includes five chapters, devoted to definition and explanation the terms used in the paper in order to clarify the terminology and all the issues connected to the individual disorders. The first chapter introduces the term trauma, its definition, origin, and most importantly, its symptoms.

The second chapter focuses on Post-traumatic stress disorder, which is very common after experiencing a traumatic event. The second half of this chapter describes its symptoms.

Coping strategies, therapy of Post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma is explained in the third chapter. These disorders share the same features, which is why the coping strategies and therapy share the same essential points of the treatment.

The fourth chapter focuses on the occurrence of the term trauma in the American literature. This chapter includes most important moments of American history where trauma occurs. It also includes further explanation of the origin, features and authors of the 9/11 novel. It also provides a short biography of Jonathan Safran Foer and Don DeLillo, and stating only the essential parts of their biography.

The fifth chapter focuses on the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York. It includes a short timeline of that day and also provides information about the background of the attacks. The background information is essential for the second part of the paper and for analysis of one of the characters in *Falling Man*.

The second part of the paper introduces analyses of characters in *Falling Man* and *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. All the characteristics are based on the information provided in the first part of this paper. The analysis describes the process of coping with trauma using the main

characters of the books. The first chapter of the second part, which is the sixth chapter in total, deals with description and analysis of characters in *Falling Man*. The seventh chapter in total and second for the second part analyses characters in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*.

# 1. The definition of trauma

Firstly, for the purpose of this bachelor paper, it is essential to start with the explanation of the term trauma - its definition, origin and symptoms. There are two different concepts of trauma existing in medicine - one concerning a physical, real injury. The second one - the one which this paper deals with - is a psychological injury. According to Van der Kolk, trauma is a type of damage to people's mind, caused by a powerful shock with long-lasting consequences. The psychological damage results from uncontrollable, terrifying life events.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 The origins of trauma

Concerning the development of the term trauma, Beata Piątek briefly describes the history of the term in her book *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction*. According to Piątek, "the term was initially used to describe belated symptoms in passengers who had survived some of the first railway accidents and complained of internal pains even though they did not display any physical signs of injury."<sup>2</sup> In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was studied by Jean-Martin Charcot. He firstly used the term trauma in his study of hysteria. Trauma, as a term, was also used by Sigmund Freud, who observed the symptoms on World War I soldiers and wrote numerous studies and essays focusing on trauma.<sup>3</sup>

Modern psychology claims that mental diseases, including psychological trauma, are usually caused by extremely stressful events. Those events can be divided into two main groups, the first one being: disorders caused by natural disasters, for example earthquakes, floods or volcanic eruptions. The second group includes catastrophes caused by mankind, such as: wars, torture, concentration camps or terrorism. Both groups are traumatizing for people. The second group deals with cruelty and brutality caused by people, therefore it has a greater impact on mental health.

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<sup>1</sup> Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *Psychological Trauma* (American Psychiatric Pub, 2003), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Beata Piątek, *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2014), 34.

<sup>3</sup> Piątek, *History, Memory, Trauma*, 34-38.

According to Daniela Vizínová and Marek Preiss, “The trauma emerges from experiencing one extremely stressful event or long-term stressful situation. Those situations/events have four different characteristics:

1. the cause is external for the individual,
2. it is extremely terrifying,
3. it causes imminent threat to life,
4. it creates the feeling of helplessness.”<sup>4</sup>

Traumatic reaction originates from facing terrifying event and without the possibility to escape or make a counter attack. As is explained in *Psychické trauma a jeho terapie* by D. Vizínová and M. Preiss, trauma triggers disorganization of individual components in cognitive schemes, which are used for orientation in life and are formed from gained experiences. A person exposed to a terrifying incident is unable to understand the reality, because the incident can not be perceived as a usual life experience. The incomprehensible situation is usually not assimilated and experienced repeatedly and threatens conception of reality. The inner conflict between basic conception of reality and the tragic reality results in inner chaos. That can lead to dissociation, disturbance of interpersonal relationships and a sense of guilt.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 Symptoms

Most of the symptoms that occur after tragic events in people’s past can be divided into two main groups according to Van der Kolk, specifically hyperarousal and constriction.<sup>6</sup> Or into three main groups, described and explained in *Psychické trauma a jeho terapie* written by Vizínová and Preiss as follows:

1. Hyperarousal - is the result of constant danger expectations. The organism is trying to face the trauma by being able to fight or escape from the dangerous situation. An individual is

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<sup>4</sup> Daniela Vizínová and Marek Preiss, *Psychické trauma a jeho terapie (Praha: Portál)*, 17. My translation.

<sup>5</sup> Daniela Vizínová and Marek Preiss, *Psychické trauma a jeho terapie (Praha: Portál)*, 11-16. My translation.

<sup>6</sup> Kolk, *Trauma*, 63-88.

easily startled and suffers from insomnia, also anxiety attacks are very common to the individuals suffering from hyperarousal. Their nervous system reacts to impulses, that reminds them stressful events, by hyperventilation, sweating, shaking or feeling dizzy.

2. Intrusions - A person experiences the traumatic event over and over again through obsessive feelings. He suffers from, so called flashbacks, memories that occur through day and also at night in the form of nightmares. The flashback can be brought back by a relatively insignificant situation, but emotions and liveliness of the current situation are the same. Traumatic dreams (nightmares, night flashbacks), typical for intrusions, are different from the others. Those dreams occur in stages of sleep cycles for which dreaming is not typical. The dreams are always identical and the individual can not remember them.
3. Constriction - The feeling of being clenched as the result of situations in which a person was exposed to the state of being hopeless, could not escaped or being paralyzed. The person affected thinks that the event was just a bad dream or something that happened outside his state of being.<sup>7</sup>

Hyperarousal, intrusions and constriction are described as symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in numerous literary publications. For example in *Coping with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Dealing with Tragedy* by Carolyn and Dwain Simpson.<sup>8</sup> The boundary among these two terms is very thin, but PTSD, further described in next chapter, usually comes after experiencing trauma.

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<sup>7</sup> Vizinová and Preiss, *Psychické trauma*, 18-22. My translation.

<sup>8</sup> Carolyn Simpson and Dwain Simpson, *Coping with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): dealing with tragedy* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2002), 7-8.

## 2. Post-traumatic stress disorder

Experiencing a traumatic event usually leads to a disorder known as Post-traumatic stress disorder, which is classified amongst anxiety disorders. A brief history of the Post-traumatic stress disorder is described in *The International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. Certain symptoms of PTSD, short for Post-traumatic stress disorder, were firstly observed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on a group of soldiers. PTSD was originally named soldier's heart syndrome, later renamed after Jacob Mendez Da Costa, who was the first doctor to describe some of the PTSD symptoms. Constellation of symptoms, not only typical to soldiers, but also with Hiroshima bombing survivors, was coined in the 1900s as PTSD,<sup>9</sup> but introduced as a diagnosis and codified by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, mentioned by John Hunsley in *A guide to assessments that work*.<sup>10</sup>

In most cases, trauma serves as a trigger to the PTSD and the traumatic event functions as a stressor, as explained by Piątek.<sup>11</sup> Experiencing trauma does not necessarily mean that the individual would also suffer from this condition. As explained in *Coping with post-traumatic stress disorder: a guide for families*:

PTSD might be simply defined as difficulty in coping with everyday life after experiencing or witnessing a significant, life-threatening event...the individual must experience a real or perceived threat to his/her life, or witness an event that threatens the life of another. In addition, the person's response must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, the traumatic event overwhelms his/her ability to cope with the situation which results in PTSD.

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<sup>9</sup> H. Javidi and M. Yadollahie, "Post-traumatic stress disorder," *The International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 3 (2012): 2, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://theijoem.com/ijoem/index.php/ijoem/article/view/127/247>.

<sup>10</sup> John Hunsley and Eric J. Mash, *A guide to assessments that work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 293.

<sup>11</sup> Piątek, *History, Memory, Trauma*, 39.

<sup>12</sup> Cheryl A. Roberts, *Coping with post-traumatic stress disorder: a guide for families* (McFarland, 2011), 17.

PTSD-prone individuals are in most cases people who experienced interpersonal trauma, such as sexual abuse. Those being emotionally unstable, psychologically vulnerable and suffering from mental issues rank among another vulnerable group.<sup>13</sup>

People suffering from PTSD are usually war veterans, holocaust survivors, survivors of natural disasters or those who survived terrorist attacks. After the 9/11 attacks in 2001 nearly 50% adults in the USA suffered from significant stress symptoms. Patients not exactly suffered from PTSD, but because of the number of people who suffered from at least one symptom of PTSD, they are included in surveys and researches, as Roberts argues in her book *Coping with post-traumatic stress disorder: a guide for families*.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.1 Symptoms of PTSD

Trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder share some symptoms, such as hyperarousal, intrusions and constriction, as previously mentioned and described. PTSD symptoms are also further divided into three main groups: intrusive, avoidant and physical. The patient can suffer from symptoms that belong to one of each the aforementioned groups, but taken in any combination, they cause major disturbance in the patient's life. If not being threatened, the symptoms can last for the rest of the patient's life.<sup>15</sup> Those symptoms must be perceived as a completely normal reaction or a response of a patient's organism to a tragic event. Six criterion were established for a clearer and easier diagnosis of PTSD, as stated in the book *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Invisible Injury* written by David Kinichin as follows:

1. Trauma: The person must be exposed to a traumatic event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, or threat to the physical integrity of self or others.
2. Intrusive: The event must be persistently relived by the person.
3. Avoidant: The person must persistently avoid stimuli associated with the trauma.
4. Physical: The person must experience persistent symptoms of increased arousal, or 'over-awareness'.
5. Social: The disturbance must cause significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning important to the person.
6. Time: Symptoms, linked to 2, 3 and 4 above, must have lasted at least a month.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Stanley Krippner, Daniel B. Pitchford, and Jeannine Davies. *Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* (ABC-CLIO, 2012), 14.

<sup>14</sup> Roberts, *A Guide*, 16.

<sup>15</sup> David Kinichin, *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Invisible Injury* (Wantage: Success Unlimited, 2005), 4-6.

<sup>16</sup> Kinichin, *Disorder*, 5.

Every criterion includes different symptoms, the intrusive group includes flashbacks, phobias about daily routine and nightmares. Detachment from others or avoiding thoughts and feelings from the event, belongs to the avoidant group. Sleep problems, fear or nervousness are included in the physical group. Low self-esteem and/or impulsive behaviour belong to the social group. Anxiety belongs to the last group, which is the time group. Another very common symptom is the patient being emotionally inaccessible and not being able to communicate and has no sign of empathy, which belong to the social group.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Kinchin, *Disorder*, 4-6.

### 3. Coping strategies and therapy of PTSD and trauma

The treatment is difficult due to the wide range of symptoms. Every individual has his/her own coping strategies and has a different approach to traumatic events. A secondary victim is someone from the victim's family who experienced trauma or PTSD directly. They may share the same symptoms but different coping strategies. When patients try to deal with psychological problems without the help of professionals, they do so using so called coping strategies. Those strategies may vary and may depend on the age of the patient. According to Stanley Krippner, Daniel B. Pitchford, and Jeannine Davies, it is typical for children to transfer their feelings into a game or an act of escaping. In other words, they try to escape by using an individual and imaginary world, created by using some moments from experienced event transferred into something not so terrifying or into something they know.<sup>18</sup> A creation of game can be seen in Jonathan Safran Foer's book *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. The main character, Oskar Schell, is not able to let his deceased father go and after finding an unknown key, he creates a treasure hunt game so that they can still be together.<sup>19</sup> In Don DeLillo's book *Falling Man*, a son of main character, who is a secondary victim, created a game in which he watches the sky and searches for a plane piloted by a fictional character Bill Lawton.<sup>20</sup>

As explained in *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Invisible Injury* written by Krippner and col., coping strategies of adults can be classified into two groups: positive and negative. Latter come after realizing and accepting that the individual has a problem. The positive ones may help individuals to reduce the symptoms and they help to gain control over their reactions and emotions again.<sup>21</sup> As further explained by Krippner, to the positive coping strategies belong the process of learning about trauma and PTSD, a distraction with a new hobby, spending more time with their family and friends, realizing that the problem will not disappear without a help of a professional psychiatrist. The positive ones also include, finding a person who experienced the same traumatic event. That person would understand the patient in a way that no other is able to. The strategy can be applied only in case of a mass traumatic event.<sup>22</sup> The second group, negative coping strategies, is not helpful for the victim. Moreover, negative strategies can make

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<sup>18</sup> Krippner et al., *Post-traumatic*, 49-64.

<sup>19</sup> Johnatan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (London: Penguin, 2006), 37.

<sup>20</sup> Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (London: Picador, 2011), 64-67.

<sup>21</sup> Krippner et al., *Post-traumatic*, 49-64.

<sup>22</sup> Kinchin, *Disorder*, 4-6.

the victim's anxiety much deeper, in some cases may even lead to suicidal thoughts. Negative coping strategies involves abusing psycho-active drugs, aggressive behaviour and thinking about the traumatic event repeatedly. Another very common strategy is avoiding families or finding a new partner. Infidelity may have freeing effect, as the victim is in different environment and does not have to talk or think about the event.<sup>23</sup> In most of the cases, coping strategies may suppress memories, but cannot make them disappear. A professional therapy led by a professional therapist or a doctor is required for a complete recovery.

People suffering from any kind of mental illness find admitting they have problem and need help very difficult. These patients tend to create their own helping techniques hoping they will help them with their psychological problem. It might be helpful, however the percentage of patients able to solve their psychological problem themselves and recover completely is very low. A traumatic event, the so called stressor, cannot be easily forgotten and any kind of professional help is needed to ensure patients full recovery. Even one session with a psychologist or a psychiatrist may be helpful. The role of the therapist during the therapy is to be an objective person. Owing to that, the patient would open and share his/her inner feelings with the doctor without being afraid. Such therapy eliminates fear of judgement.

Many forms of therapy have been developed, including Cognitive behavioural therapy and Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing. As Claudia Zayfert and Carolyn Black Becker argue in their book *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for PTSD: A Case Formulation Approach*, through a cognitive behavioural therapy, CBT for short, a role of a scientist is given to the patient and the therapist is there only to assist the patient by asking the right questions that should guide the client through the process of finding answers.<sup>24</sup> CBT also tries to change the way the patient feels about the trauma, and by the time the therapy ends the patient should be able to replace stressful thoughts for less distressing ones. CBT is used with mental diseases like schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, but is considered to be the standard PTSD therapy.<sup>25</sup>

As explained in *Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing: basic principles, protocols, and procedures* written by Francine Shapiro, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing –

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<sup>23</sup> Krippner et al., *Post-traumatic*, 49-64.

<sup>24</sup> Donna M. Sudak, *Cognitive behavioral therapy for clinicians* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2006), 32-45.

<sup>25</sup> Claudia Zayfert and Carolyn Black Becker, *Cognitive-behavioral therapy for PTSD: a case formulation approach* (New York: Guilford, 2008), 1-3.

EMDR - originally began as a therapy only used for PTSD. EMDR stimulates hemispheres by using eyes movement, aiming with help with processing the traumatic event. The therapy works on the assumption that under normal circumstances, people are able to naturally cope with negative feelings and unpleasant memories. However, after being exposed to the traumatic event, the ability fades and memories come back once in a while. Mental disorders originate due to these memories.<sup>26</sup>

Cognitive behavioural therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing are used for children and for adults alike, but the therapy is more difficult for children, usually the patient is too young to understand the problem. Because of that, children therapies are made in a form of a game, which is easier for children.

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<sup>26</sup> Francine Shapiro, *Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing: basic principles, protocols, and procedures* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), chapter 3.

## 4. Trauma in American literature

Numerous events in American history would function as trigger for trauma and PTSD. Trauma and PTSD can have historical or personal origin, the difference between those terms is that the personal trauma is caused by a violent attack on an individual or a loss of someone related. In other words, it is something that effects the person directly. The historical trauma has roots in events that effected the country as a whole. Holocaust, slavery and Civil war are among those significant ones. Holocaust and trauma can be seen in William Styron's book *Sophie's Choice*. PTSD coping strategies can be also seen in Jonathan S. Foer's novel *Everything is Illuminated*. Another event, which is deeply rooted in American culture and history is the Vietnam War. The last, and also one of the most recent and terrifying events are the 9/11 attacks, further clarified in paragraphs below. All of those events had a tremendous impact on American society, the events had to be recorded for future generations. Due to this fact, all of those events found its way into American literature. Native Americans, according to Kathleen Brown-Rice from the University of South Dakota, also have trauma deeply rooted in their history. Indians experienced wars, loss of land, population and culture. But despite having those problems, their literature lacks books in which trauma or PTSD is the leitmotif.<sup>27</sup>

### 4.1. Authors of the genre 9/11

American people needed some time to cope with the horrors of the 9/ 11 2001. As described on a website *americkaliteraturadnes.cz*, even American authors needed some time to come to terms with the new reality in order to transform it into a new genre. Yet 9/11 novel already shown a great potential. On the other hand, authors carefulness was logical at that time. Authors risked losing their popularity by writing about such an unpleasant event, which was still painful for all Americans. But after a while a lot of writers built up courage and successfully depicted the events of 9/11 in their books. A Ewa Kowal claims in her article:

The individual lives portrayed in post-9/11 novels can thus be seen as close-ups from a much larger picture that is brought under a kind of literary microscope. The various voices of narrators and/or characters – among them mainly ordinary citizens facing a

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<sup>27</sup> Kathleen Brown-Rice, "Examining the Theory of Historical Trauma Among Native Americans," *The Professional Counselor* 3, no. 3 (2013): 117-30, doi:10.15241/kbr.3.3.117.

newly altered reality, but also several victims and a few terrorists – can serve as a small-scale models for the psychological condition of the whole societies.<sup>28</sup>

9/11 authors include, Jonathan Safran Foer, Paul Auster, Ken Kalfus, Don DeLillo, Benjamin Kunkel or Claire Messud.<sup>29</sup>

This paper deals with two aforementioned authors. The first being Jonathan Safran Foer, born in Washington, D.C in 1977. He was raised in a Jewish family and his mother is a daughter of Polish Holocaust survivors. The family background set the course for his first published book, *Everything Is Illuminated*, an autobiographical novel, that originally served as his thesis. The thesis was later expanded and edited into a book, winning several literary awards. His second novel, titled *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* belongs to 9/11 novels and will be further described in the second part of this paper. Later on, Foer published a book called *Eating Animals*, a New York Times bestseller. He is criticized for using modern literary devices, such as useless illustrations, as can be seen in an article written by Harry Siegel, for New York Press.<sup>30</sup>

The second examined author is Don DeLillo, born in New York in 1936 and author of 15 novels.<sup>31</sup> With great similarity to Jonathan Safran Foer, DeLillo is interested in topics concerning issues of 20th and 21st centuries and stated that his fiction as being concerned with “living in dangerous times”.<sup>32</sup> His novels portray Americans consumed by materialism and mass media. Amongst his numerous-awards winning books belong *White Noise*, *Mao II*, *Underworld*, *Cosmopolis*, and *Falling Man*. *Falling Man* is a book concerning the events of 9/11, will be further used in the second part of this paper.

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<sup>28</sup> Ewa Kowal, “Texts Like Fractals: ‘Memory Spaces’ and the ‘Black Carnival’ of 9/11,” *Confronting the Burden of History: Literary Representations of the Past* (2012): 207-221.

<sup>29</sup> “11. září 2001 v současném americkém románu,” last modified February 27, 2014, accessed March 3, 2017, <http://americkaliteraturadnes.cz/11-zari-2001-v-soucasnem-americkem-romanu/>. My translation.

<sup>30</sup> “Extremely Cloying & Incredibly False,” last modified April 20, 2005, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.nypress.com/extremely-cloying-incredibly-false/>.

<sup>31</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 1.

<sup>32</sup> “Don DeLillo talks about writing,” last modified October 12, 2012, accessed March 1, 2017, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-10-12/features/ct-prj-1014-don-delillo-20121012\\_1\\_mao-ii-angel-esmeralda-printers-row](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-10-12/features/ct-prj-1014-don-delillo-20121012_1_mao-ii-angel-esmeralda-printers-row).

## 5. Terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2001

Together with the term trauma and PTSD, events from September 11, 2001 are essential for the purpose of this paper. On this date four planes were kidnapped by members of al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization lead by Osama by Laden. On the early Tuesday morning of September 11, 2001, Muhammad Atta, accompanied by his fellow hijacker, boarded a flight from Portland to Boston, with the third hijacker waiting to join them in Boston. After layover in Boston, all of them boarded the American Airlines Flight 11 from Boston to Los Angeles. After 15 minutes into the flight crew members were attacked and the plane was taken by force by the group. The initial plan was to attack the North Tower of the World Trade Centre in New York. During the flight, Atta spoke to passengers in order to calm them down, but few times, he accidentally pressed a wrong button and also spoke to workers in the Air Navigation Services. At approximately 8:45 AM the plane hit the North Tower of the World Trade Centre.<sup>33</sup> The second kidnapped plane, the American Airlines Flight 175 from Boston to Los Angeles, was kidnapped by five members of al-Qaeda and piloted by Marwan al-Shehhi. The hijackers took over the cockpit 30 minutes into the flight. The plane crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Centre approximately at 9:00 AM.<sup>34</sup>

For people in the towers, especially for those who worked above the crash epicentre, it meant a death sentence. Many of them tried to save their lives by jumping out of windows, but not a single survived. People trapped under the epicentre still had a small chance to escape, thanks to the help of firefighters. Both towers collapsed approximately one hour after being hit by the hijacked planes. The number of casualties of the 9/11 attacks in New York is estimated to be 2800 people.<sup>35</sup> Among the victims were policemen, firefighters, people who worked in the World Trade Centre and people present around the centre, who were hit by dust and parts from the collapsed towers.

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<sup>33</sup> "9/11 Timeline," last modified September 9, 2002, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.911timeline.net>.

<sup>34</sup> "9/11 Attacks," accessed January 28, 2017, <http://www.history.com/topics/9-11-attacks>.

<sup>35</sup> Scott Sigmund Gartner, "Ties to the Dead: Connections to Iraq War and 9/11 Casualties and Disapproval of the President," *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 4 (2008): 693.

## 5.1 Al-Qaeda

An Arabic word al-Qaeda has different spellings (al-Qaida, al-Qa'ida) and also a few different meanings, but it basically means The Foundation. It is a militant Sunni Islamist organization, founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden and other Arab volunteers who fought against the Soviet Union in the 80's in the Afghan war. It is a multi-national terrorist organization and it formed basis for other terrorist organizations in the world. Their ideology is based on jihad, its main idea is defending and spreading Islam through the world. Their main goals are to establish pure Islamic states on the Arabian Peninsula and also spreading their faith into other countries. The members are trying to enforce the Sharia religious law and in order to do so, they are willing to execute all non-believers. Their enemy is the United States, being blamed for exploiting the Arabian oil wealth. Everyone with a business contract based on good relations with the USA is considered to be an al-Qaeda's enemy.<sup>36</sup> Al-Qaeda was involved in many attacks against Europe, Africa and the USA. After bin Laden's death, the organization withdraw from public life, however a lot of modern organizations like the Islamic State share the same ideology and ideas about the future events and world status.

## 5.2. Muhammad Atta

The planning of terrorist attacks begun in Hamburg, Germany. One of the main leaders, Muhammad Atta, who was born in Egypt and graduated from the Cairo University, moved to Hamburg in order to widen his knowledge at the Technical University of Hamburg. During his studies, he used to visit a local mosque and became involved in forming of the Hamburg cell with several other Muslims who shared the same anti-American and anti-Israeli beliefs. The apartment they lived in was monitored by the German intelligence, but no suspicious activity was recorded. Later on, Atta and others were recruited by bin Laden for the so called 'planes operation' in the US, and for the purpose of the operation Atta spent some time in Afghanistan to strengthen his beliefs. Atta knew that it will be a suicidal mission focused on the USA, but he and his fellow-Muslims were willing to do anything in the name of Islam.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> "Al-Qaida/Al-Qaeda (The Base)," last modified August 7, 2016, accessed January 28, 2017, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/al-qaida.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> "Atta's Odyssey," last modified September 30, 2001, accessed January 30, 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1101011008-176917,00.html>.

He came back to Germany in 2000 with specific instructions and after a while, he applied for several flying schools in the USA, in order to get the professional pilot license. He and his friend were accepted to a school in Venice, Florida. The training included a Boeing 767 simulator, the same aircraft that was later kidnapped by Atta. After obtaining the pilot certificate, he left to Spain where he met a man who worked as a liaison between Muhammad Atta and al-Qaeda. Together they coordinated the details of the attacks. Atta was able to gather 19 people for the execution of the attack, all of them willing to die in the name of Islam and in order to hurt the Americans.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> “A Perfect Soldier,” last modified January 27, 2002, accessed January 30, 2017, <http://articles.latimes.com/2002/jan/27/news/mn-25005>.

## 6. The analysis of characters in *Falling Man*

*Falling Man* is a book written by Don DeLillo. As written on the book cover, *Falling Man* opens up on September 11, 2001, in the smoke and ash of the burning towers. Chris Cumming in *The Paris Review* writes: “DeLillo’s work preserved the atmosphere of that time, and so seemed to foreshadow a later period of pervasive menace.”<sup>39</sup> The novel follows the life of a fictional Neudecker family after the attacks on the World Trade Centre. The book has also chapters dedicated to the character of Hammad, a young Muslim. Those chapters describe Hammad’s everyday life and the way he got into involved with members of Al-Qaeda. Later on readers learn that Hammad is one of the hijackers who kidnaped the planes and flew into the towers in order to serve his country and religion. However, his character will not be analysed in this paper, as he is not experiencing trauma and PTSD. The analyses of the characters will provide information about the origin of trauma and issues connected to it, jointly with their route to recovery.

The plot of the *Falling Man* is not chronological, but rather circular. In other words, as explained in *Computational and Cognitive Approaches to Narratology*, the story begins and ends at the same place, jumps from one event in the past to present, from one character to another.<sup>40</sup> It is a complex; not intended to be read in order to relax, but to forces people to think and visualize the events owing to a detailed description. DeLillo made the description of the falling towers very realistic, as seen in the opening chapters of *Falling Man*:

It was not a street anymore but a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night. He was walking north through rubble and mud and there were people walking running past holding towels to their faces or jackets over their heads. They had handkerchiefs pressed to their mouths. They had shoes in their hands, a woman with a shoe in each hand, running past him. They ran and fell, some of them, confused and ungainly, with debris coming down around them, and there were people taking shelter under cars. The roar was still in the air, the buckling rumble of the fall. This was the world now. Smoke and ash came rolling down streets and turning corners, busting around corners, seismic tides of smoke, with office paper flashing past, standard sheets with cutting edge, skimming, whipping past, otherworldly things in the morning pall.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Chris Cumming, “Falling Men: On Don DeLillo and Terror,” review of *Don DeLillo’s work*, *The Paris Review*, April 30 2013, accessed June 8, 2017, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2013/04/30/falling-men-on-don-delillo-and-terror/>.

<sup>40</sup> Takashi Ogata, *Computational and cognitive approaches to narratology* (Hershey: Information Science Reference, an imprint of IGI Global 2016), 31.

<sup>41</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 3.

According to reviews published in renowned magazines, such as *The Guardian*, *The Paris Review* or *The New York Times*, *Falling Man* is worth reading mainly due to its emotional effect on people and its intellectual level and seriousness.

## 6.1 The Neudecker family

From the very beginning, the reader knows that the main protagonist of the novel is a man who survived the New York terrorist attacks. DeLillo presents to readers a New York resident, Keith Neudecker. The protagonist is a university graduate, a lawyer, who used to work for a company with headquarters in the North Tower of the World Trade Centre. Keith is married to a character named Lianne Glenn, who is a freelancer and a book editor. Together, they have a son named Justin. Their marriage was no longer functional before the attacks. They lived separately, and Keith even found a new apartment near his work place. Lianne's mother Nina and Nina's lover Martin are other members of the fictional Neudecker family. The family is described by Frank Rich in his review for *The New York Times* as an extended family of middle-class Manhattanites which DeLillo keeps the focus on.<sup>42</sup> Nina and Martin are characters not suffering from trauma caused by 9/11 thus not suitable for further analysis. There are just slight indications and short sentences about them being upset about the 9/11.

### 6.1.1 Analysis of Keith Neudecker

This chapter focuses on the main character of the book *Falling Man*. The name of the protagonist is Keith Neudecker. By the time of the attacks, Keith was present at his office the moment one of the planes flew into the North tower. The initial trigger of Keith's trauma is a death of his close friend. Keith saw his friend and found him hurt, but alive, however the friend later dies. Keith tried to help him, but unsuccessfully, with very detailed description provided by the author:

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<sup>42</sup> Frank Rich, "The Clear Blue Sky," review of *Falling Man*, by Don DeLillo, *New York Times*, May 27 2007, Sunday Book Review, accessed June 12, 2017, <http://www.ny-times.com/2007/05/27/books/review/Rich-t.html>.

He began to lift, his face warm with the blood on Rumsey's shirt, blood and dust. The man jumped in his grip. There was a noise in his throat, abrupt, a half second, half gasp, and then blood from somewhere, floating, and Keith turned away, hand still clutching the man's belt...He looked at Rumsey, who'd fallen away from him, upper body lax, face barely belonging...He stood and looked at him the man opened his eyes and died. This is when he wondered what was happening there.<sup>43</sup>

Before Keith witnessed his friend's death, he was not aware of something ill happening. He felt the after-impact explosion, felt the tower moving from side to side, but but with the movement ceasing, he deemed it not important. DeLillo masterfully depicts Keith's shock, for when he leaves his office, he takes his coat with him: "He took his jacket off the door. He reached behind the door and took his jacket from the hook, not sure why he was doing this but not feeling stupid about it, forgetting to feel stupid."<sup>44</sup>

Keith's reaction might be seen as very strange reaction, for people would normally just run away, not thinking about their belongings, but in the case of Keith, the author depicts him as surprisingly calm at the moment. Keith runs away using a staircase and later in the book, he encounters a lot of dead bodies and hurt people, as he runs away from the collapsing towers. He also witnesses people jumping out of windows hoping their lives will end quickly. His descend from the tower was very slow because of the amount of people and objects present on the fire escape. On his way down, Keith got into possession of a briefcase, which was not his as he had originally thought. He later discovered that it belongs to a woman named Florence Givens, who is another character in the novel.

This chapter of the *Falling man* ends with Keith's walk through the ashes, ruins and dust from the fallen towers. After that, the reader observes the character of Keith's gradual process of coping with the situation. Keith's trauma is triggered inside the tower. He is one of the few characters that only need their own coping strategies and does not need a professional help of a psychologist, even though all the moments described above created basis for mental problems. DeLillo does not depict the protagonist as the one suffering from anxiety attacks; Keith has no nightmares, and only experiences flashbacks of the horrors from time to time, however, it seems that it does not him the character and he is able to cope with the whole situation himself.

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<sup>43</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 243.

<sup>44</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 240.

According to Toby Litt, a reviewer from *The Guardian* “after the catastrophic opening, the remainder of the novel is almost entirely aftermath.”<sup>45</sup> After getting away from the dust and ruins, Keith is asked by a passing driver whether he needs a lift somewhere. Although Keith lived separately from his family, his wife and son are the first people he desires to see. As he is already carrying burden of trauma, Keith gives an address to the driver and asks him to Keith’s family. As Krippner argues in his book, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, the need to be in contact with close relatives ranks among coping strategies and it is the first one Keith instinctively employs.<sup>46</sup> Later on, DeLillo’s main character of *Falling Man* develops more coping strategies that are effective for reducing the impact of trauma on his mental health. Visiting Lianne even precedes the visit to the hospital. Shortly after he rings her doorbell, Lianne takes Keith to the hospital for a necessary medical examination. After staying at his wife’s and recovering fully, Keith returns to his apartment but finds it inside a restricted area guarded by police officers and military. Keith decides to move out and take away all his belongings, as he is not able to live near the place where he nearly lost his life.

Back in Keith’s new/old apartment, the reader finds yet another trigger. In this case not for trauma, but for another coping strategy. Keith finds the briefcase he forgot he had and could not recall where he got it: “He’d seen it, even half placed it in some long-lost distance as an object in his hand, the right hand, an object pale with ash, but it wasn’t until now that he knew why it was here.”<sup>47</sup> Keith later realized that it was passed to him by a stranger in the tower and he decided to keep it. Unfortunately, he could not remember the reason why he kept it and did not send it away. Due to traumatic memories, Keith struggled with opening the briefcase at first; he remained calm, but felt the presence of death around him as is explained in the novel: “He examined the items with detachment. It was somehow morbidly unright to be doing this but he was so remote from the things in the briefcase, from the occasion of the briefcase, that it probably didn’t matter”<sup>48</sup>

Upon opening the briefcase, Keith finds out it belongs to a woman named Florence Gibson. He decides that the briefcase should be returned to its owner. A new setting is introduced, a flat of Florence. The setting is later connected to one of the coping strategies. At Florence’s place,

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<sup>45</sup> Toby Litt, “The Trembling Air,” review of *Falling Man*, by Don DeLillo, *The Guardian*, May 26 2007, accessed June 12, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/may/26/fiction.dondelillo>.

<sup>46</sup> Krippner et al., *Post-traumatic*, 49-64.

<sup>47</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 35.

<sup>48</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 36.

Keith gives her the briefcase back and wants to leave immediately, but she stops him. They start to talk, in fact she starts to talk about 9/11 and Keith just sits there and listens. He does so to hear her out, whilst thinking about his experiences in the tower: “She was going through it again and he was ready to listen again. He listened carefully, noting every detail, trying to find himself in the crowd.”<sup>49</sup> Keith is left silent, as if he needs silence to absorb all the mutual feelings and memories he has with Florence.

As the reader follows Keith’s story, DeLillo depicts the relationship between Florence and Keith as a brief affair-of-connectedness,<sup>50</sup> as explained by Toby Litt. The relationship becomes closer and eventually intimate, as Keith and Florence shift from friends to lovers. Their relationship is very strong, hardened by the mutual horrors they have experienced during the attacks on the Towers. The strength of their bond is seen, when a man offends Florence and Keith rushes in to defend her. The scene of the rage Keith feels towards the offender shows the strength of their relationship:

He walked over there and punched the man. He walked over, stopped, set himself and threw a short right. He hit the man up near the cheekbone, one blow only, and then he stepped back and waited. He was angry now. The contact set him off and he wanted to keep going. He held his hand apart, palms up, like here I am, let’s go. Because if anyone said a harsh word to Florence, or raised a hand to Florence, or insulted her in any way, Keith was ready to kill him.<sup>51</sup>

Although Keith is having an affair, he is, at the same time, trying to be a good husband and father again. His actions are oxymoronic. His feelings cause an interference of two contradicting coping strategies: The need to be with his long-lost family and his need to share his inner fears with Florence as a survivor like him. Keith’s relationship with Florence is a coping strategy, because as DeLillo explained, Keith would not even consider going out with Florence, should they meet under common circumstances. Because they share the same traumatic past – they were inside the same building when the planes crashed in – they had a strong basis to build a relationship on. To help each other to deal with his/her innermost fears. Nevertheless, the author let their relationship fades away after Keith’s fight in the shop.

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<sup>49</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 59.

<sup>50</sup> Litt, “The Trembling Air.”

<sup>51</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 133.

Keith's second coping strategy - which is finding someone with the same memories about 9/11 and also having an affair with that person, is in conflict with the first one: The need of reconnect with his family. With the use of Florence's character, Keith realizes he needs more than just his family. He found himself to be into poker, which could be considered as his third coping strategy. Keith found a distraction, a hobby; a strategy described in Krippner's book *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*.<sup>52</sup> Poker was not new to Keith, for he used to play it with his friends, which he has lost as a consequence of the attacks. As the story goes on, Keith is tortured by memories and flashbacks of him playing poker with his lost friends. The novel contains professional poker players' jargon, which is nearly incomprehensible to ordinary readers. Through these flashbacks, Keith's future career is foreshadowed.

As the plot continues, Keith's life progress is described. He travels a lot, finds a new job as a poker player. At first, Keith wants to go back to his old life, find a job in an office as a lawyer again. His initial plan was going to a gym after work, to release the anger stored in him. This plan of his is pictured as follows:

He would need to do serious gymwork once he started his job, days away now. It was no good spending eight hours at the office, ten hours, the going straight home. He would need to burn things off, test his body, direct himself inward, working on his strength, stamina, agility, sanity. He would need an offsetting discipline, a form of controlled behaviour, voluntary, that kept him from shambling into the house hating everybody.<sup>53</sup>

As seen from the extract, Keith would have to battle anger when working inside the office which is an after-effect of the PTSD.<sup>54</sup> The thought about being inside the office again, after almost died in his previous job, wasn't right for him. The 9/11 changed him – before the events, he was an office lawyer with a stereotypical life, however after the attacks he searches for more. He needs an adventure, distraction and the affair. Keith nearly fully recovers without any outside help, yet is still occasionally haunted by memories and feelings he experienced in the burning tower. Certain hints provided by the author indicates that Keith is still occasionally controlled by his fear and trauma, e.g. when he has to use plane to get to poker tournaments: "...every time he boarded a flight he glanced at faces on both sides of the aisle, trying to spot

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<sup>52</sup> Krippner et al., *Post-traumatic*, 49-64.

<sup>53</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 143.

<sup>54</sup> Claude M. Chemtob, Raymond W. Novaco, Roger S. Hamada, Douglas M. Gross, and Gary Smith, "Anger regulation deficits in combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 10, no. 1 (1997): 17-36, doi:10.1002/jts.2490100104.

the man or men who might be a danger to them all.”<sup>55</sup> After a few years, Keith is depicted as a character which is unable to stay home, feels the need of an adventure, yet still values his family. By the end of Keith’s story, the reader is drawn back to the place where it all had begun, and a description of what exactly happened to the main character is provided. For some readers, the last chapter provides a plot twist in the way they perceive Keith’s character. Up until now, his past was not clear, as the reader only knows that Keith was inside the North Tower by the time of the attack, however in the last chapter, called *In the Hudson corridor*, all further details are provided.

### 6.1.1 Analysis of Justin and Lianne Neudecker

This chapter focuses on secondary characters of the book *Falling Man*, Lianne and Justin Neudecker. Both characters are depicted as secondary victims of trauma, as was the author’s intention to show to readers their feelings and coping strategies. They haven’t been in the centre of New York when the attack happened, but an important, closely-related person was. Lianne, Keith’s wife, works as a freelance editor and leads a group of elderly people who are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. Sessions Lianne has with the patients are her coping strategy, for she was diagnosed with Alzheimer herself few years before the attacks happened. The disease is in her family for generations, her father ended his life before the disease got him. Thus, the author set the basis for Lianne’s trauma, prior the 9/11 attacks. Lianne was in a close relation with her father, who she thinks shot himself with a rifle he used to teach her hunting.

On the day of the attacks as described by Adam Mars-Jones, who is a writer working for *The Guardian*: “Lianne wasn’t in the towers that fell, but she is the one who comes closer to breaking down.”<sup>56</sup> Seeing the fall of the towers on a TV made her think that her husband is dead. Even though they lived separately at that time - and Lianne was the one who sent him away - she was in shock. As was mentioned before, Keith went straight to visit her after he nearly lost his life. DeLillo describes Lianne’s immediate feelings through a dialog with her mother Nina:

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<sup>55</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 198.

<sup>56</sup> Adam Mars-Jones, “As His World Came Tumbling Down,” review of *Falling Man*, by Don DeLillo, *The Guardian*, May 13 2007, accessed June 14, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/may/13/fiction.dondelillo>.

It was not possible, up from the dead, there he was in the doorway. It's so lucky Justin was here with you. Because it would have been awful for him to see his father like that. Like grey soot head to toe, I don't know, like smoke, standing there, with blood on his face and clothes.<sup>57</sup>

DeLillo also describes Keith's appearance through Lianne's memories:

When he appeared at the door it was not possible, a man come out of an ash storm, all blood and slag, reeking of burnt matter, with pinpoint glints of slivered glass in his face. He looked immense, in the doorway, with a gaze that had no focus in it. He carried a briefcase and stood slowly nodding.<sup>58</sup>

Based on the details provided in the description of Keith's appearance, the state of shock Lianne experienced is completely understandable. As D.P. Sharma argues in the book *Victims of terrorism*, the shock of assuming that her husband had died and his later appearance on her doorstep gave basis for her trauma.<sup>59</sup> However, in DeLillo's hands, her trauma and PTSD were not depicted as so serious as it was in Keith's. Lianne is depicted as a character without any symptoms and only one individual coping strategy. Basically, in the novel *Falling Man* Lianne is shown as being glad that her husband is home again to be with her and their son. As mentioned by Toby Litt: DeLillo also uses Lianne's thoughts about Keith's return and why did he not go to a hospital first, but wanted to see his estranged family.

In following chapters, DeLillo depicts feelings and coping strategies of another character Justin. At one point in the novel, Lianne realizes that something is wrong with her son. He used to spend his free time with his friends; a brother and a sister just named 'the Siblings.'<sup>60</sup> The author pictures Lianne as a mother who thinks her son is not old enough to experience mental issues or can suffer from any signs of trauma, although the opposite is true. Her realization of the fact that her son might be suffering from trauma is described in the book through a dialog with Isabel, the mother of 'the Siblings':

'Yes, and sort of talk in code, and they spend a lot of time at the window in Katie's room, with the door closed. [...] It's getting a little strange, frankly, all the time they

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<sup>57</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 8.

<sup>58</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 87.

<sup>59</sup> D. P. Sharma, *Victims of terrorism* (New Delhi: A.P.H. Pub. Corp., 2003), 22-28.

<sup>60</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 16.

spend, first, sort of huddled together, and then, I don't know, like endlessly whispering things in this semi-gibberish, which is what kids do, but still.' Lianne wasn't sure what this was all about. It was about three kids being together.<sup>61</sup>

As mentioned by Frank Rich in the *New York Times*: "Lianne finds out that the kids are not all right. Staring through binoculars from the 27th floor of a high rise, they keep searching for more planes sent by an enemy they've phonetically approximated as 'Bill Lawton'."<sup>62</sup> With the fact, DeLillo uses a typical example of coping strategy used by traumatized children. They created a game with a fictional character,<sup>63</sup> in order to process the events of 9/11. The author provides information about Justin's and 'the Siblings's' coping strategy through a dialog between Lianne and Keith:

'He takes the binoculars over to the Siblings'. Any idea why?' 'They're searching the skies.' 'For what?' 'Planes.' [...] 'Has he said anything about this man Bill Lawton?' 'Just once. He wasn't supposed to tell anyone' [...] 'The kid slipped. He let the name slip. He told me the planes were a secret. I'm not supposed to tell anyone the three of them are up there on the twenty-seventh floor searching the skies. But mostly, he said, I'm not supposed to mention Bill Lawton.'<sup>64</sup>

The explanation of the origin of the name Bill Lawton is provided through a dialogue between Lianne and Keith:

'Robert thought from television or school or somewhere, that he was hearing a certain name. Maybe he heard the name once or misheard it, then imposed this version on future occasions. In other words, he never adjusted his original sense of what he was hearing.'<sup>65</sup> 'What was he hearing?' 'He was hearing Bill Lawton. They were saying bin Laden.'

Justin played the game with 'the Siblings', as they were basically the watchers of the sky and they thought that bin Laden was a pilot of one of the planes which hit the towers. In the novel, together with the coping strategy Justin shared with the Siblings, he also starts to use only monosyllabic words. It originally had started as a homework; later on, however, Justin admits that there is something more to it. DeLillo uses Justin's monosyllabic expression to illustrate his own coping strategy and the way the experienced trauma affected him. As depicted by the author as follows:

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<sup>61</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 17.

<sup>62</sup> Rich, "The Clear Blue Sky."

<sup>63</sup> Krippner et al., *Post-traumatic*, 49-64.

<sup>64</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 73.

<sup>65</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 73.

‘How do you know the monosyllables were really a school thing? Maybe not,’ he said, ‘Because maybe it was Bill Lawton. Because maybe Bill Lawton talks monosyllables.’ [...] ‘He says things that nobody knows but the Siblings and me.’ [...] ‘The whole point,’ he said, snapping the words clearly and defiantly, ‘is that he says things about the planes. We know they’re coming because he says they are. But that’s all I’m allowed to say. He says this time the towers will fall.’<sup>66</sup>

DeLillo wanted to show the children’s imagination, as the children transformed an Arabic name bin Laden into American one – Bill Lawton. The children transformed it into something they know and could understand.<sup>67</sup> Justin manages to recover, but it is only when the elder from ‘the Siblings’, admits that it is time to say goodbye to Bill Lawton and stop watching the skies.

At one point between Lianne’s realization of Justin’s problem, DeLillo adds a new character into the story, known as a Falling man. Lianne is the only character in the book who has met him. She firstly saw him on her way to pick up her mother at the train station, specifically The Grand Central Station. The author introduces the character in the following way:

There were people clustered near the entrance, on both sides, other pushing through the doors but seemingly still engaged by something happening inside. She made her way out onto the crowded sidewalk. [...] A man was dangling there, above the street, upside down. He wore a business suit, one leg bent up, arms at his sides. A safety harness was barely visible, emerging from his trousers at the straightened leg and fastened to the decorative rail of the viaduct. She’d heard of him, a performance artist known as Falling man. He’d appeared several times in the last week, unannounced, in various parts of the city, suspended from one or another structure, always upside down, wearing a suit, a tie and dress shoes. He brought back, of course, those stark moments in the burning towers when people fell or were forced to jump.<sup>68</sup>

It seems for the readers that it did not have a greater impact on Lianne’s mental health and not evoked any memories of 9/11. However, it changed by the time when DeLillo let her to meet him for the second time. The author depicts the second Falling’s man performance as being very emotional, which rooted deeply in Lianne’s mind, and was brought to light when she

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<sup>66</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 102.

<sup>67</sup> Laura Murray, James Rodriguez, Kimberly Hoagwood and Peter S. Jensen, “Child and adolescent trauma treatments and services after September 11: implementing evidence-based practices into complex child service systems,” in *9/11: Mental Health in the Wake of Terrorist Attacks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 378-381.

<sup>68</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 33.

was reading his obituary in a newspaper. DeLillo uses very specific description of their second meeting alongside with detailed description of Lianne's feelings when she sees him performing.

White male in a suit and tie, it now appeared, as he made his way down the short ladder through an opening fence. This is when she knew, of course. She watched him lower himself to the maintenance platform that jutted over the street, just south of the intersection. [...] He stood on the platform, about three stories above her.<sup>69</sup>

DeLillo made the character of Lianne feel confused, and struggling with understanding the motives behind the act, in which the Falling man stood above a trail in a neighbourhood with small number of people. It was when she asked herself a question 'For whom he performs?'. As the Falling man stood above the railway line, she had suddenly seen his purpose:

Then she began to understand. Performance art, yes, but he wasn't here to perform for those at street level or in the high windows, He was situated where he was, remote from station personnel and railroad police, waiting for a train to come, northbound, this is what he wanted, an audience in motion, passing scant yards from his standing figure.<sup>70</sup>

Description of the trigger that made Lianne feel unpleasant is pictured by DeLillo as follows:

The jolt, the sort of mid-air impact and bounce, the recoil, and now the stillness, arms at his sides, one leg bent at the knee. There was something awful about the stylized pose, body and limbs, his signature stroke. But the worst of it was the stillness itself and her nearness to the man, here position here, with no one closer to him than she was. She could have spoken to him but that was another plane of being, beyond reach. He remained motionless, with the train still running in a blur in her mind and the echoing deluge of sound falling about him, blood rushing to his head, away from hers.<sup>71</sup>

After that, Lianne was not able to look at this picture any further so she just run away. As is mentioned later in the book, the Falling man had died and Lianne found his obituary and wanted to know more about him. At one point in the book, it may seem that she became obsessed with him. The protagonist's real name was David Janiak. He studied acting at a university and was arrested and charged with the breach of peace numerous times. DeLillo mentions that Lianne also found photos of his performances all over high buildings in New York City.

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<sup>69</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 159-160.

<sup>70</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 164.

<sup>71</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 168.

By reading about him, Lianne calmed down, as finding more facts about his life helped her to get the Falling man out of her head. The author uses the information about the artist as Lianne's coping strategy, to get rid of a traumatic experience by learning more about it, the process of learning about trauma is explained in *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Invisible Injury*.<sup>72</sup> David Janiak's death is the last information about him that DeLillo gives to readers.

## 6.2 The analysis of Florence Givens

This chapter focuses on the secondary character of the book *Falling Man*. The name of the protagonist is Florence Givens. As mentioned above Florence is Keith Neudecker's lover, even though "Florence is not a woman who would normally attract him, but the sharing of extreme experiences creates an overriding affinity,"<sup>73</sup> as mentioned in a review by Adam Mars-Jones. She is a supporting character, pointing out that even the event like 9/11 can bring people together and create a strong bond between them, even if it is based on traumatic event. Even though their relationship lasted for only days, it was a relationship that helped Florence and Keith to overcome their trauma. Florence first met Keith when he had brought her briefcase back. She invited him in and they started talking about what they both went through.

DeLillo provides a detailed description of the incident and what really happened to her:

Men ripped their shirts and wound them around, their faces, for masks, for the smoke. She saw a woman with burnt hair, hair burnt and smoking, but now she wasn't sure she'd seen this or heard someone say it. Times they had to walk blind, smoke so thick, hand on the shoulder of the person in front. She'd lost her shoes or kicked them off and there was water like a stream somewhere, nearby, running down a mountain.<sup>74</sup>

In the *Falling Man*, the mutual dialogues and memories shared between the characters helped Florence and Keith to clear their minds and move the event into their past, being able to live again for the present.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Kinchin, *Disorder*, 4-6.

<sup>73</sup> Mars-Jones, "As His World Came Tumbling Down."

<sup>74</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 55.

<sup>75</sup> Barbara Rubin Wainrib, *Healing crisis and trauma with mind, body, and spirit* (New York: Springer Pub., 2006), 89-07

At one point in the book, DeLillo adds Florence's confession to Keith. Her process of coping with the trauma can be seen in the confession, depicted by the author as follows:

I can't explain it but no, you saved my life. After what happened, so many gone, friends gone, people I worked with, I was nearly gone, nearly dead, in another way. I couldn't see people, talk to people, go from here to there without forcing myself up of the chair. Then you walked in the door. I kept calling the number of a friend, missing, she's one of the photographs on the walls and windows everywhere, Davia, officially missing, I can barely say her name, in the middle of the night, dial the number, let it ring. [...] Then you walked into the door. You asked yourself why you took the briefcase out of the building. That's why. So you could bring it here. So we could get to know each other. That's why you took it and that's why you brought it here, to keep me alive.<sup>76</sup>

After that, they met again several times, but their relationship just fade away.

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<sup>76</sup> DeLillo, *Falling Man*, 108-109.

## 7. The analysis of characters in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is a novel written in 2005 by Jonathan Safran Foer. It follows the life of the Shell family, but mainly the story of the youngest of them, Oskar. Oskar is a nine-year old boy who lost his father in the attack on the World Trade Centre in November 2001. The book has three different narrators. As Maria Holmgren Troy explains in her article: "In Foer's novel, Oskar's first-person narrative is juxtaposed with his paternal grandparents' letters: his grandmother's long letter to him, written after most of the events in the novel have already taken place, and his grandfather's unsent letters to Oskar's father."<sup>77</sup> The novel has two different settings. The first setting is in New York City, two years after the 9/11 attacks and a setting dates to the 1960's.

As defined in *Computational and Cognitive Approaches to Narratology*, the plot is written as a first-person narrative, with three different narrators, as mentioned above. At the beginning of the book, the presented stories seem unrelated but at the end, they interweave. Being written from a child's point of view, even though Oskar is depicted as a young genius, Foer uses vocabulary that makes *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* very readable. A lot of pictures, along with the vocabulary are used to make his book appealing. The pictures are used in order to illustrate Oskar's journey. The book also includes selected pages from letters that were meant to be sent to their child by Oskar's Grandparents, but were never sent. The letters are used to illustrate the past of the Grandparents.

*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* was well accepted among readers and reviewers, for example in *The Spectator*: "Utterly engaging. From the very first page it is hugely involving to read. [...] A heartbreaker: tragic, funny, intensely moving."<sup>78</sup> However, John Updike.<sup>79</sup> Michiko Kakutani,<sup>80</sup> ranks among those critical to the novel. Despite the criticism, the book

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<sup>77</sup> Maria Holmgren Troy, "The Bereaved Post-9/11 Orphan Boy," *American & British Studies Annual* 7 (2014): 11-19.

<sup>78</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, a book cover.

<sup>79</sup> John Updike, "Mixed Messages." Review of *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, by Jonathan Safran Foer, *New Yorker*, February 18, 2015, accessed June 16, 2017, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/03/14/mixed-messages>.

<sup>80</sup> Michiko Kakutani, "A Boy's Epic Quest, Borough by Borough," review of *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, by Jonathan Safran Foer, *The New York Times*, March 22, 2005, accessed June 16, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/22/books/a-boys-epic-quest-borough-by-borough.html>.

was turned into a movie in 2011. According to the Internet Movie Database, it was nominated for two Oscars, yet did not win any.<sup>81</sup>

## 7.1 The Schell family

Before the attacks, a fictional Schell family consisted of four members. Thomas Schell, Linda Schell – who is only called mum in the book, Oskar Schell and Oskar's grandmother, however her name is never mentioned. Thomas Schell, who is just called dad in the novel, was a jewellery maker with an office in Manhattan, New York. Thomas was in the World Trade Centre on 9/11 2001, because he had some business there. Unfortunately, he found himself at the wrong place at the wrong time, and in the novel died during the attack. Oskar is very close to his father Thomas and thus Oskar is very traumatized by his death. Another person Oskar loves is his grandma, a mum of Oskar's dad. Oskar's mother Linda, in the novel referred to as mum, is a busy attorney and her relationship with Oskar is very tense. There are lots of minor characters in the book, but they are not essential for purpose of this paper. The last important character is grandfather, whom the author made unknown at the beginning, but the reader and eventually Oskar get to know him as the plot unfolds. As there is no character in this book who had survived the attack, only secondary victims of trauma are present.

### 7.1.1 Analysis of Oskar Schell and his relationships with his family

This chapter focuses on the main protagonist of the book *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* named Oskar Schell. The novel opens up with Oskar's stream of consciousness, as he thinks about death and his father's funeral. Foer depicts him as an angry young boy, because there is no body to be buried and it looks like he tries to boycott the funeral rite: I believed that once you're dead, you're dead. [...] And anyway, it's not like we were actually burying him, anyway."<sup>82</sup> Oskar is depicted as a very clever boy, who speaks French and interested in almost everything. Michael Faber describes him as: "a tambourine-playing, jewellery-making,

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<sup>81</sup> "Awards," IMDb, Accessed March 24, 2017. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0477302/awards>.

<sup>82</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 4.

butterfly-collecting, Shakespeare-quoting little nerd who ceaselessly conceives impossible inventions.”<sup>83</sup>

The author made the relationship Oskar had with his father very emotional and close, the death left Oskar broken and traumatized. Oskar keeps thinking about him in the novel, and suffers from many symptoms, such as being afraid of people. Foer mentions the most serious symptoms:

Even after a year, I still had an extremely difficult time doing certain things, like taking showers, for some reason, and getting into elevators, obviously. There was a lot of stuff that made me panicky, like suspension bridges, germs, airplanes, fireworks, Arab people in [...] public places, scaffolding, sewers, [...] smoke, knots, tall buildings, turbans.<sup>84</sup>

Another hint about Oskar’s mental health that Foer provides to readers, are nightmares Oskar experiences. When he cannot sleep, he secretly listens to an answering machine. On 9/11, his father called from the North Tower many times, however Oskar was too afraid to pick up the phone, as Tim Adams explains in his book review.<sup>85</sup> The last call on the machine ended at 10:24, few minutes before the tower collapsed, a moment Oskar saw on a TV. That phone call was a trigger for Oskar’s trauma. In the novel, Oskar told the secret of the last call only to one character – William Black who is further described in paragraphs below. Foer used Oskar’s and the William’s dialogue to show readers what triggered Oskar’s trauma.

‘It was 10:22. I looked at the caller ID and saw it was his cell phone’ [...] ‘There was a beep. Then I heard Dad’s voice. *Are you there? Are you there? Are you there?* ‘He needed me, and I couldn’t pick up. I just couldn’t pick up. I just couldn’t. *Are you there?* He asked eleven times. I know, because I’ve counted. It’s one more than I can count on my fingers. Why did he keep asking? Was he waiting for someone to come home? And why didn’t he say ‘anyone’? Is anyone there? ‘You’ is just one person. Sometimes I think he knew I was there. [...] You can hear people in the background screaming and crying. And you can hear glass breaking.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Michael Faber, “A Tower of Babble,” review of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, by Jonathan Safran Foer, *The Guardian*, June 5, 2005, accessed June 17, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/jun/04/featuresreviews.guardianreview22>.

<sup>84</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 36.

<sup>85</sup> Tim Adams, “A Nine-Year Old and 9/11,” review of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, by Jonathan Safran Foer, *The Guardian*, May 29, 2005, accessed June 16, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/may/29/fiction.features>.

<sup>86</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 301.

Oskar hid the machine and also the truth that his father called that day after the attacks. In the following paragraphs, Foer created a coping strategy for Oskar, pain. Specifically, a thing that helps him to escape from his memories: Whenever he feels angry or anxious, he pinches himself and therefore numerous bruises appear all over his body. As Fiona Gardner argues in her book *Self-Harm: A Psychotherapeutic Approach*, Foer depicts Oskar unable to handle the psychological pain, so he transforms it into a pain he knows and can cope with.<sup>87</sup> Due to all the problems the main character of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* suffers from, the reader can see that he needs help, he needs to cope with his father's death and needs a closure. In the novel, Oskar uses tambourine which serves him as a music therapy tool – the rhythm and sounds helps with stimulating the brain and makes the patients feel better, in simplified explanation, as mentioned in *Adolescents, Music and Music Therapy: Methods and Techniques for Clinicians, Educators and Students*.<sup>88</sup> Oskar is the only character in the book who needs a professional therapist. At one point in the book, the therapist even recommends Oskar's hospitalization, but his mum says no.<sup>89</sup> It might seem appeal to the readers that the therapist was not helpful at all.

One day, a year after the *worst day* – a name introduced by Foer, which Oskar uses to talk about the 9/11 2001 – Oskar recalls his father and wants to feel a contact with him. Oskar goes into his dad's closet, still full of clothes: “Even though Dad's coffin was empty, his closet was full. And even after more than a year, it still smelled like shaving. I touched all of his white T-shirts. I touched his fancy watch he never wore”<sup>90</sup> The scene in which Oskar finds an important key is depicted by Foer as:

There was a pretty blue vase on the highest shelf. What was a pretty blue vase doing way up there? I couldn't reach it, obviously, so I moved over the chair with the tuxedo still on it. [...] But then I had tips of my fingers on the vase, and tragedies started to wobble, and the tuxedo was incredibly distracting, and the next thing was that everything was on the floor, including me, and including the vase, which had shattered.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Fiona Gardner, *Self-Harm A Psychotherapeutic Approach* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 18-25.

<sup>88</sup> Katrina McFerran and Tony Wigram, *Adolescents, Music and Music Therapy: Methods and Techniques for Clinicians, Educators and Students* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2010), 60-74.

<sup>89</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 200-207.

<sup>90</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 36.

<sup>91</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 37.

There was an envelope with a key inside with a word ‘Black’ written on it inside the vase. Oskar decides to find out where is the door or the box that is opened by the key. He discovers later that the word could stand for a surname. Oskar decides to visit every single Black in New York to discover what its purpose and what secrets does it hide. For this part of the book, Foer used a coping strategy which is typical for children - a game, in this case a treasure hunt. The creation of the game functioning as a coping strategy is explained by Krippner in *Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*.<sup>92</sup> Oscar is described as an adventurous character – his father used to plan expeditions, such as finding the lost sixth borough of New York City, a borough Foer created.<sup>93</sup> The author made Oskar think that finding a lock that can be opened with the key was the last expedition Oskar’s dad created for him. Thomas Schell used to create expeditions before his death, as Walter Krin explains in his review for the *New York Times*: “The puzzles that Oskar's wonderful father, a retail jeweller and armchair intellectual brimming with erudite fun facts, invented to educate his gifted boy about science, art and history. The last of the father's "Reconnaissance Expeditions" was ominously different.”<sup>94</sup> That was the last chance for Oskar to be in touch with his dead father and it should give him a closure.

As the plot follows, Foer uses a lot of minor characters named Black, who Oskar meets, with one being important for his treasure hunt. It is a character named Abby Black – an Afro-American woman, who lives in the smallest house in New York City. Due to this character, Oskar eventually finds out who the mysterious Black was and who was the rightful owner of the vase with the key. Abby’s husband William. William inherited the vase along with other items after his father died. Oskar’s dad bought the vase, not knowing that there is a key inside. William was seeking the vase after he sold it to Thomas Schell. William’s father, with whom he did not have a good relationship, wrote him a letter in which he claimed that he hid something inside a deposit box and the key is inside a blue vase. Oskar gives William the key, which Foer depicts as unintentional closure over William’s father’s death, nevertheless Oskar did not get his. This situation leaves Oskar even more disappointed and traumatized. Only one character in the book helps him to cope with that situation - a renter.

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<sup>92</sup> Krippner et al., *Post-traumatic*, 49-64.

<sup>93</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 8-14.

<sup>94</sup> Walter Krin, “Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close: Everything Is Included,” review of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, by Jonathan Safran Foer, *New York Times*, April 3, 2005, accessed June 18, 2017, [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/03/books/review/extremely-loud-and-incredibly-close-everything-is-included.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/03/books/review/extremely-loud-and-incredibly-close-everything-is-included.html?_r=0).

The renter is a mysterious man who lives with Oskar's grandmother. As the plot follows, Foer gives readers a hint, that the renter is Oskar's grandfather. Foer uses letters to describe grandfather's life. He named Thomas Schell, born in Dresden, Germany. He survived the bombing of Dresden, in which he lost his entire family. That moment in the past left the character of grandfather traumatized and he gradually lost his ability to speak, which is used by Foer to depict him as a deeply traumatized character. The author created a new form of communication for the grandfather, a diary, in which the words he wants to say are written. Also Foer uses his hands, with the words 'yes' tattooed on right hand and 'no' on the left.<sup>95</sup> Oskar got to meet him when he visited grandmother's apartment, however, she was not at home. In the following paragraphs, Foer gives another coping strategy to Oskar – sharing secrets and traumatic thoughts.<sup>96</sup> Oskar tells grandfather about the treasure hunt and soon after that, they become secret friends. One night Oskar decides to dig up dad's empty coffin and shares his plan with the renter.<sup>97</sup> After the disappointment with the key, the renter suggested that they should go to the cemetery:

He wrote, 'Maybe it's time to do the thing we've been planning.' I opened my left hand, because I knew if I tried to say something I would just start crying again. We agreed to go on Thursday night, which was the second anniversary of Dad's death, which seemed appropriate.<sup>98</sup>

In the book, they fill the coffin with grandfathers letters addressed to Oskar's dad. Through the particular moment, Foer enables Oskar to have at least a small closure over his father's death. Grandfather is the second narrator used in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. As mentioned, his life story is described through chapters that are in a form of letters. He wrote many letters for his son after he left his wife. He left her because she got pregnant and at the beginning of their marriage, they set couple of rules, with the first rule being: Never have children. As a consequence of the World War II, grandfather did not want children. His lover Anna, grandmother's sister, was killed during the bombing of Dresden, pregnant with his child. Oskar's grandparents met again after the World War II in the US and "impulsively marry as a mutual rescue," as John Updike argues in his review<sup>99</sup> It was a case of coping with

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<sup>95</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 260-261.

<sup>96</sup> Krippner et al., *Post-traumatic*, 49-64.

<sup>97</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 259.

<sup>98</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 304.

<sup>99</sup> Updike, "Mixed Messages."

trauma through being with someone with the same traumatic history, as explained in *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Invisible Injury*.<sup>100</sup> Grandfather returned to New York a few days before the attacks in order to reunite with his son, but Foer never gives him the chance.

Foer created a third narrator in the book which is Oskar's grandmother. Her chapters are written in epistles, named 'My feelings,' and is divided into four parts. The letter is intended for Oskar, with whom is grandmother very close, as they talked with each other through a walkie-talkie and left notes on windows for each other. She was always there for Oskar to comfort him. At the end of the book, the grandmother follows grandfather to the airport, because he wanted to run away again. She convinces him to stay, but they have not left the airport; Foer let them stay at the airport and to get stuck somewhere in between past and future, with the airport as the symbol of something in between.

As the plot follows, when Oskar comes back from the cemetery later at night, he managed to settle his relationship with his mum. Foer depicts their relationship as very tense through the book and Oskar blames her for not being at home when dad called on the worst day, as described through an argument they had, by Foer:

'Where were you!' 'Where I was when?' 'That day!' 'What day?' 'The day!' 'What do you mean?' 'Where were you!' 'I was at work.' 'Why weren't you home?' "<sup>101</sup>  
Foer also used Oskar's character to hurt Mum: "If I could have chosen, I would have chosen you!"<sup>102</sup>

By the end of the book, Foer depicts Oskar as being comfortable with his mum finding a new boyfriend, Ron. It might seem throughout the story that mum did not care for Oskar as much she should have. However, the author later reveals that she had known about his adventures all along and she had called to all the minor characters named Black Oskar planned to visit, so she knew who they were and whether they were not dangerous.<sup>103</sup> Foer ends Oskar's story and narration, when he is lying in his bed and opens his notebook called '*Stuff That Happened to Me*', finding a picture of a body falling from the tower. Oskar wonders whether it might be his Dad. He reverses the picture, so it looks like the body is not falling, but rising back into the tower.

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<sup>100</sup> Kinchin, *Disorder*, 4-6.

<sup>101</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 169.

<sup>102</sup> Foer, *Loud&Close*, 171.

<sup>103</sup> Kakutani, "A Boy's Epic Quest, Borough by Borough."

## Conclusion

Trauma as a psychological problem can be observed on patients who experienced a tragic event. Trauma was firstly used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was later a course of study for psychology. According to modern psychology, there are two different groups that cause trauma – natural disasters and events caused by mankind. The most typical symptoms of trauma are hyper-arousal, intrusions and constriction.

As for the Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD in short), it begins with traumatic events. Features, symptoms, and therapy concerning PTSD and trauma are nearly similar. The most common experienced symptoms are nightmares, insomnia, and flashbacks. A man can cope with PTSD and trauma by using a professional help provided by a therapist or by using a coping strategy, moreover a patient can have more than one coping strategy. Among those widely used belong: a game creation used by children and a need for someone who shares the same tragic past, infidelity or finding a new hobby.

American history is rich in traumatic events, among the most important ranks: slavery, the Vietnam war or Holocaust. These events, among others, laid basis for trauma in the American society. The 9/11 attacks are the most recent traumatic event, and it took few years before American writers found courage to write about such a controversial moment of recent past. Don DeLillo and Jonathan Safran Foer wrote books on the tragic event, depicting the trauma most American citizens experienced.

To explain what exactly was behind the 9/11 attacks, a brief background of the attacks is provided in the first part of this work / thesis.

As the analysis of the *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* and *Falling Man*, both books contain characters experiencing trauma. A character named the Falling man, setting in New York and the fall of the towers are features the books share together. Keith Neudecker, a person afflicted by 9/11, appears in the book *Falling Man*. He is pictured as a man who is able to cope with his trauma without any help of a therapist, only using his coping strategies, even though he suffers from numerous symptoms. His wife does not seem to suffer from any symptoms of trauma. Their son Justin is depicted as a boy who is fighting with his feelings, but at the end he is able to recover at the end, using his own coping strategy and again with no help of a therapist.

As the outcome of the analysis shown, in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, only one character, Oskar Schell is brought to attention as a secondary victim of trauma. His father died during the attacks, and Oskar tries to preserve his dead father's presence and their close relationship. He does so by following a clue he thought his father gave him. Eventually the clue led to someone different; to a man named William. At the end of Oskar's story, he is able to accept his father's death and find a peace of mind. Another character suffering from trauma is a part of the book, but the traumatic event was the World War II. It is Oskar's grandfather, who remain silent since the WWII. Other characters in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* does not seem to have any symptoms of trauma.

## Resumé

Tématem této práce je analýza dvou vybraných knih a následná charakteristika vybraných postav z hlediska prožitého traumatu, které bylo způsobeno událostmi z 11. září roku 2001. Pro tyto účely byly vybrány knihy *Padající muž* od Dona DeLilla a *Neuvěřitelně hlasitě a k nevíře blízko* od Jonathana Safrana Foera. Děj obou knih se odehrává v New Yorku krátce po teroristických útocích na Světové obchodní centrum a zachycuje svědectví postav, které byly v budovách přítomny nebo znaly někoho, kdo ve věžích zahynul. Práce je rozdělena do dvou částí, z nichž první se zabývá pojmem trauma, post-traumatickou stresovou poruchou, popisem událostí 11. září a vymezením důležitých momentů těchto událostí a prožitků postav. Dále pak pojednává o autorech, kteří se věnovali nebo stále věnují tématu 11. září, a v neposlední řadě je v ní stručně popsán výskyt traumat v americké literatuře. Druhá část se věnuje zmiňované analýze postav trpících traumatem, které bylo způsobeno událostmi z 11. září 2001.

První část práce začíná objasněním pojmu trauma. Je poskytnuta definice pojmu, aby nedošlo k záměně s pojmem trauma pocházejícím z medicínského prostředí. V tomto případě se jedná o porušení těla jedince, které je patrné na první pohled, na rozdíl od psychického traumatu, jež je vysvětleno jako náhlé poškození lidské mysli, které je způsobeno silným šokem s dlouhotrvajícími následky. Psychická újma plyne z prožitých nepříjemných, děsivých momentů. Pojem trauma v původním smyslu byl prvně použit u popisu symptomů poškození u osob, které byly účastníky prvních železničních nehod a následně si stěžovaly na bolesti, jež ale nebylo možné pozorovat na těle obětí. Později se pojmem trauma zabýval Jean-Martin Charcot nebo také Sigmund Freud.

Moderní psychologie rozděluje dvě základní skupiny událostí, které způsobují psychická traumata, a to v první řadě poruchy způsobené přírodními neštěstími a druhá skupina se zabývá událostmi způsobenými lidmi. Traumatická reakce vzniká jako následek po prožití děsivé události, kdy není možno utéct, nebo provést protiútok. Trauma způsobuje desorganizaci jednotlivých komponentů v kognitivních schématech, která jsou používána pro orientaci v životě a jsou formována získanými zkušenostmi. Tato desorganizace může vést k vnitřnímu chaosu a dále pak k asociaci jedince, k narušení mezilidských vztahů a navození pocitu viny. Symptomy, které se u traumat vyskytují, se rozdělují do dvou, popřípadě do tří skupin. Konkrétně se jedná o nadměrné vzrušení, intruzivní příznaky a o příznaky stažení, sevření. Tyto

symptomy lze pozorovat také v případě posttraumatické stresové poruchy (PTSD), jelikož hranice mezi pojmem trauma a PTSD je velice tenká, téměř žádná.

Posttraumatická stresová porucha patří mezi úzkostné poruchy a poprvé byla definována v 19. století mezi vojáky stejně jako pojem trauma, který je s touto poruchou úzce spojen. PTSD byla přijata jako diagnóza v roce 1980. Prožití traumatické události obvykle vede k PTSD a situace, které PTSD spouštějí, jsou stejné jako u traumatu - jedná se o události, které člověka přímo ohrožují na životě. Touto poruchou trpí obvykle váleční veteráni, oběti holokaustu, přírodních událostí nebo přeživší teroristické útoky. Mezi nejčastější příznaky patří nespavost, noční můry či záblesky minulosti.

Symptomy PTSD se rozlišují stejně jako symptomy traumatu, ale kromě toho se ještě odlišují symptomy intrusivní, vyhýbavé a fyzické. Pro snadnější diagnózu bylo stanoveno šest kritérií, které musí pacient splňovat. Jedná se o prožití traumatu, znovuprožívání, vyhýbání se traumatickému stimulu, fyzické změny, sociální změny a určité trvání problémů. Léčba PTSD a traumatu je složitá díky velkému množství symptomů. Každý jedinec, který si prošel traumatickou událostí, si vytvoří určité postupy jak se s traumatem vyrovnat. Oběti, ale také sekundární oběti, což jsou lidé, kterých se traumatická událost dotkla pouze nepřímo, si vytvoří postupy, které jsou velmi individuální, ale mohou se dělit na okruhy, které si oběť dále adaptuje podle sebe. Děti si nejčastěji snaží pomoci vytvořením fiktivní hry nebo útekem. Dospělí si vytvářejí pozitivní postupy, jako např. nový koníček nebo trávení času s rodinou, ale mohou přijmout i negativní postupy, jako např. užívání drog, agresivní chování nebo nevěru. Terapie vedená zkušeným specialistou obvykle využívá dva postupy, a to konkrétně desenzibilizaci a přepracování očních pohybů či kognitivně behaviorální terapii.

Dalším tématem první části práce je výskyt traumatu u postav v americké literatuře a jeho rozlišení na osobní (způsobené útokem na člověka) a historické (způsobeno událostmi ovlivňujícími celou zemi). Kromě traumatu z teroristických útoků je zmíněno trauma způsobené otroctvím, válkou ve Vietnamu anebo například trauma vzniklé u obětí holokaustu. Zvláštní pohled pak přinášejí zmínění spisovatelé, kteří se zabývají tématem 11. září 2001. U dvou z nich, konkrétně Jonathana Safrana Foera a Dona DeLillo, je uvedena stručná biografie, jelikož tato práce analyzuje jejich knihy.

Kapitola uzavírající první část práce uvádí stručnou časovou osu, vysvětluje událost, ke které došlo 11. září 2001, a přináší informace o organizaci, jež stála za těmito útoky. Zároveň předkládá stručné informace o jednom z pilotů, Muhammadu Atta, který navedl jedno z letadel do severní věže Světového obchodního centra.

Druhá část této práce obsahuje rozbor dvou knih. První analyzovanou knihou je *Padající muž* od Dona DeLilla. Tato část práce začíná stručným seznámením s knihou, obsahuje údaje o postavách, jež budou analyzovány, a jaké ne. Jednotlivé kapitoly knihy *Padající muž* jsou tvořeny rozříštěnou kompozicí a jsou plné detailních popisů událostí.

Hlavní postava knihy *Padající muž* je Keith Neudecker. Pracoval jako právník ve Světovém obchodním centru a přímo prožil teroristický útok, který byl spáchán na New York 11. 9. 2001. Sledování této postavy ukazuje, jak tuto událost prožil a jak se vyrovnával s tímto negativním prožitkem. Avšak teprve v poslední kapitole autor Don DeLillo uvádí informace o tom, co Keith prožil.

Keith používal pro vyrovnání se s traumatem několika postupů. Nejdůležitějším postupem k vyrovnání se s negativním prožitkem byl návrat k rodině, od níž po nefungujícím vztahu odešel několik měsíců před útoky. Tento pokus o zbavení se následků děsivého prožitku se však nezdařil, proto se pokusil o jiné řešení. Navázal intimní vztah s Florence Givens, která stejně jako on byla přítomna v obchodním centru těsně před pádem věží a přežila. Dohromady je svedla aktovka, která se Keithovi dostala do rukou. Společný prožitek a vzpomínky na útoky z 11. září se staly pojítkem jejich vztahu. Kdyby se potkali za jiných okolností, jejich vztah by se s největší pravděpodobností nestal tak intenzivním. V průběhu děje se čtenář dozvídá rovněž o Keithových kamarádech a jejich společných večerech, při kterých hrávali poker. Ani jeden z těchto kamarádů nepřežil zmiňované teroristické útoky. Keith byl dokonce svědkem tragické smrti jednoho z nich (jmenoval se Rumsey), kdy se ho Keith snažil zachránit. Bohužel bez výsledně, Rumsey mu zemřel v náručí. A právě zmiňovaný poker se stane Keithovou budoucí prací, neboť po událostech, které prožil, nebyl schopen návratu ke své původní práci, kdy většinu času pobýval uzavřen v kanceláři. Novou náplň jeho života mu přinesly dobrodružství a cestování.

Práce se dále zabývá postavami Lianne a Justina Neudeckerových. Lianne je Keithova manželka a spolu mají syna Justina. Lianne si také prožila už v dětství své trauma, když její otec dobrovolně odešel ze světa, neboť nedokázal snášet příznaky Alzheimerovy nemoci, již po něm Lianne zdědila. Návratem Keitha, manžela a otce svého syna, Lianne též prožívala jakoby pokus o překonání svého traumatu z dětství a z dřívějšího rozpadu své vlastní rodiny. Zpočátku si sama ani neuvědomovala, že také jejich syn Justin prožil situaci, kdy se jeho otec ocitl ve smrtelném nebezpečí, a zažil své vlastní trauma. Nepříznivé prožitky způsobily u Justina vyjadřovací obtíže, kdy mluvil pouze v jednoslabičných výrazech, které, jak později sám vysvětlil, používal proto, že jimi mluvil i Bill Lawton. Byla to fiktivní postava, již si děti vytvořily a které daly jméno podle Usáma Bin Ladina, neboť se domnívaly, že pilotoval jedno z letadel, která naletěla do věží obchodního centra. Dále pak spolu s kamarády pozoroval oblohu a společně očekávali další útoky. Justin se však postupně dokázal se svým traumatem vyrovnat a na konci příběhu je opět zdravým chlapcem.

Lianne je jediná postava v knize, která se setkává s hercem vystupujícím pod přezdívkou Padající muž. Navštíví jeho vystoupení celkem dvakrát. Poprvé v ní zhlédnutí jeho představení nezanechá žádné hluboké emoce, ale podruhé na ni jeho akrobatický kus zapůsobí tak silně, že musí utéct. Padající muž vystupuje v obleku a pokaždé se hlavou dolů spouští zavěšený na bezpečnostním laně, jako by padal z věže, z výškových budov po celém New Yorku. Když si pak Lianne přečte v novinách jeho nekrolog, prožívá další stresující okamžiky, jichž se zbaví až poté, kdy si vyhledá více informací o tomto herci.

Poslední postavou, jež je sledována v této části práci, je Florence Givens, milenka Keitha. Po prožitých děsivých událostech při útoku na Světové obchodní centrum nebyla schopna se začlenit zpátky do normálního života. Přestože jejich intenzivní vztah trval pouze pár dní, setkáním s Keithem se dokázala zbavit svého traumatu a to jí v podstatě zachránilo život.

Tato část práce se dále zabývá knihou *Neuvěřitelně hlasitě a k nevíře blízko* od Jonathana Safrana Foera. Stejně jako u *Padajícího muže* i v tomto případě jsou nejdříve uvedeny informace o postavách. Zvláštní zajímavost této knihy spočívá v tom, že roli vypravěče zde plní tři různé postavy. Tyto kapitoly vypravěčů jsou psány ich-formou.

Stěžejní postava a první vypravěč v této knize je Oskar Schell, malý chlapec, který přišel 11. září 2001 při pádu severní věže Světového obchodního centra o otce. Oskar je vyobrazen jako

postava, která trpí mnoha symptomy traumatu, například nespavostí a nočními můrami. Ten den přišel Oskar domů dříve ze školy a poslechl si na záznamníku zprávy, které tam jeho otec namluvil těsně předtím, než zemřel. Jelikož si byli s otcem velice blízcí, Oskar se snaží o kontakt s ním, i když je jeho otec už po smrti. Při prozkoumávání otcovy skříně rozbije vázu, ve které je klíč skrytý v obálce, na níž je napsáno slovo Black. Oskar zjistí, že se jedná o čísi příjmení, a vydá se po stopách záhadného Blacka v naději, že mu to přinese nějaké zadostiučinění. Na své cestě potká mnoho lidí a nakonec zjistí, komu klíč patří. Ukáže se, že klíč nemá nic společného s jeho otcem, ale pomůže původnímu majiteli Williamovi smířit se s jeho zesnulým otcem.

Při svých dobrodružstvích Oskar narazí na nájemníka své babičky, který se později ukáže být jeho dědečkem. Dědeček si také v mládí prožil určitý typ traumatu. V době 2. světové války žil v Drážďanech a celá jeho rodina, včetně jeho těhotné přítelkyně, byla zabita. Po této události nebyl schopen nikdy znovu promluvit. Oskarova babička je sestra oné zesulé dědečkovy přítelkyně a dědečka poznala po válce na letišti ve Spojených státech. Dědeček opustil babičku krátce poté, co mu oznámila, že s ním čeká dítě. Vrátil se k ní až těsně před tím, než jejich syn zahynul, čímž ztratil možnost setkání se synem. Právě Oskarovi prarodiče jsou v knize *Neuvěřitelně hlasitě a k nevíře blízko* druzí dva vypravěči, kapitoly o nich jsou psány formou dopisů.

V závěru knihy Oskar dosáhne aspoň náznaku klidu, když mu dědeček pomůže vykopat otcovu prázdnou rakev, kterou naplní dopisy, jež dědeček napsal svému synovi, ale nikdy neodeslal. Oba tak dosáhnou alespoň malého smíření nad svou ztrátou. Oskar se poté usmíří se svojí matkou, s níž měl po otcově smrti velice napjatý vztah.

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