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Reenacting Trauma in the Wake of 9/11: Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*

Keywords: trauma, reenactment, 9/11, American literature, Don DeLillo

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyze the way in which Don DeLillo portrays the trauma experienced by 9/11 survivors in his novel *Falling Man*, focusing on the main character. In my analysis I begin with the definition of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and employ trauma theory, mainly Dominick LaCapra's concepts of "acting out" and "working through" trauma, to show how the novel portrays the main character, Keith Neudecker, as being frozen in a state of perpetually reliving the traumatic experience; his thoughts, actions, and even the structure of the novel reflect this. Furthermore, I analyze the way in which DeLillo's representations of both 9/11 and the trauma caused by the event are problematic. By presenting the attacks as a unique occurrence and by making his main character a white, educated, middle-class American man, DeLillo fails to give recognition to the suffering of other categories of people who might have been harmed by 9/11 or by any other traumatic event. Through Keith Neudecker, DeLillo presents a model of behavior in which trauma cannot be overcome and progress is impossible, as being representative, while discounting the fact that people have different levels of resilience.