

Trauma and the Mediation of Memory in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*

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Abstract—This paper examines the interplay between trauma, memory, and media in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*. Set in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the novel delves into the psychological impact of collective trauma and the role of media in shaping individual and communal memory. By analyzing the experiences of its characters, this study argues that media representations act as both a catalyst for memory and a framework for understanding trauma. Drawing on trauma theory and media studies, the paper explores how DeLillo critiques the media's role in creating a fragmented and often commodified narrative of 9/11. Additionally, it considers the ethical implications of using graphic imagery in both fictional and real-world contexts, focusing on the recurring motif of the "Falling Man" photograph. The findings reveal how *Falling Man* bridges the personal and the public, offering a profound commentary on the relationship between mediated memory and the psychology of grief.

Index Terms—trauma, media, 9/11, collective memory, psychological impact

I. INTRODUCTION

Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* is a seminal work in the literary response to September 11, 2001. The novel not only portrays the intimate aftermath of the tragedy but also interrogates the pervasive role of media in framing the event. Media representations—from live news broadcasts to iconic photographs—profoundly influence how individuals and societies remember and process trauma. This study investigates the dynamic relationship between trauma, memory, and media as depicted in *Falling Man*, positioning the novel as a critique of how modern media mediates collective and personal grief. Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* is an emotional exploration of the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, focusing on the lives of individuals affected by the tragedy. The novel opens with Keith Neudecker, a survivor of the World Trade Center attacks, stumbling away from the collapsing towers, bloodied and perplexed, carrying a briefcase that isn't his. This physical dislocation mirrors his emotional and psychological state as he attempts to reconnect with his estranged wife, Lianne, and their young son, Justin.

Lianne struggles with her anxieties, aggravated by the trauma of the attacks and her fraught relationship with her mother, Nina, who is in a contentious romance with Martin, a European intellectual. The narrative alternates between these domestic struggles and the symbolic presence of the *Falling Man*, a performance artist who reenacts the iconic image of a man falling from the towers, a haunting visual metaphor of the day's horrors. As the characters grapple with their fragmented lives, the novel delves into themes of memory, identity, and the pervasive impact of violence. Keith, drawn into professional poker games, drifts further from his family, while Lianne seeks solace in a writing group of Alzheimer's patients, symbolizing her fear of forgetting and being forgotten. Interspersed are glimpses into the minds of the terrorists, particularly Hammad, offering a chilling counterpoint to the victims' experiences. Through its fragmented structure and stark prose, *Falling Man* captures the bafflement, grief, and resilience of a world irrevocably altered, leaving readers to contemplate the personal and collective scars left by one of the most defining events of the 21st century.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Feleki (2023), *The Silence* portrays how the present American culture is getting changed with the use of technology and media, transcending human limitations. The researcher also states that the Western world has completely

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adopted Digital technology which causes extreme anxiety in people. The ceaseless dependence on technology makes one unable to think about what is important and lose the self, time, and memory. He also questions the future of writing. Moreover, he states that sociocultural life is fragmented by technological development and it seems like an electronics wasteland. The author says that DeLillo's character misses human contact and worries about what happened to memory, the use of language and meanings in that way, one loses the connection with history, and physical and mental capabilities are eliminated. DeLillo has dealt with the impact of technology and media and how everything is mediated at the same time he says this would lead to the end of civilization as well as writing.

Whelan (2011) says the themes in Don DeLillo's works from 1988 to 2010, focus on how he explores the impact of conspiracy, paranoia, and terror on society. In the novel *Libra*, he perceives how order leads to paranoia, with conspiracy theories becoming a way to find meaning. This paranoia affects individual identity and detaches people from reality because the assassination of JFK reveals how conspiracy is prevalent in society. There is chaos and one does not know the real cause behind the murder but it appears as a pure accident. Conspiracy leads to terror and attacks it severely affects the people and the unprecedented events give great fear and threat to the current culture. In *Mao II*, DeLillo shifts from conspiracy to the relationship between art and terror, highlighting how artists have lost influence, leaving terrorists to shape the future. He portrays a bleak view where terror dominates narratives. After the 9/11 attacks, DeLillo's works, such as *Falling Man* and the essay "In the Ruins of the Future," continue to explore these themes but with a focus on the power of art and narrative to connect humanity and counter fear. He emphasizes the need for creating "counter-narratives" that challenge fear-driven stories and promote understanding and connection. Finally, in *Point Omega*, DeLillo suggests that art and literature are essential for human advancement and for combating the paranoia and fear that dominate the culture. He presents the idea that through art, humanity can achieve a more unified and progressive existence.

Brown (2020) illustrates that Don DeLillo's *White Noise* explores how people navigate the confusing and often disorienting nature of modern life, particularly within postmodern culture. It refers to a world where traditional meanings, identities, and values have become uncertain or constantly shifting, often influenced by media, advertising, and consumerism. Everything can be interpreted in many ways, and the symbols and signs in the world (like brands, media, and advertising) are constantly shifting, making it hard to find stable, universal truths. Brown states that DeLillo presents death as the only thing that remains constant and certain. In a world where everything else seems unclear or unstable, death is something that cannot be reduced or reinterpreted—it's the ultimate certainty for all people. The paper argues that in *White Noise*, death functions as this "transcendental signified." It's the one thing outside of the confusing systems of signs in postmodern life that can bring a halt to the endless uncertainties. Brown also says DeLillo suggests that in a world where traditional beliefs (e.g., religion, faith in meaning, or metaphysical truth) have been discarded, people still find certainty in the inevitability of death. In the postmodern era, even those who feel detached from conventional sources of meaning are confronted by the reality of mortality.

Gee (2021) claims that DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007) portrays the symbolic and narrative power of "jumpers" as emotionally charged representations of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, focusing on their depiction in photography, literature, and film. Despite their striking immediacy and emotional weight, visual records of jumpers were swiftly censored from mainstream media circulation shortly after 9/11. The researcher says that the censorship, coupled with the selective curation of the 9/11 archive, reflects a deliberate shaping of collective memory that supports specific political and military narratives. Twenty years later, the archive continues to prioritize images and stories that justify governmental responses, including international military interventions, while marginalizing alternative perspectives. The researcher also points out that the study interrogates these exclusions by analyzing three key representations of jumpers: Richard Drew's iconic yet controversial photograph *The Falling Man*; its literary reimagining in Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man*; and its cinematic portrayal in Alejandro González Iñárritu's short film from the anthology 11'09"01: September 11th. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the paper explores how these narratives operate within and against the dominant cultural frameworks surrounding 9/11. By focusing on the figure of the jumper, this paper reveals how such representations function as sites of both empathy and discomfort, often reinforcing governmental and societal support for interventions while suppressing dissenting voices. The paper also considers how the narrative construction of jumpers could offer alternative interpretations that challenge the hegemonic discourse of heroism, victimhood, and the inevitability of retaliation. Ultimately, this work seeks to uncover the political and emotional stakes of inclusion and exclusion in the 9/11 archive and to argue for the necessity of a more nuanced, pluralistic engagement with these representations.

He (2024) says that Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* novel depicts the profound psychological and emotional effects of the 9/11 attacks and the unresolved trauma faced by an average family, particularly the Neudeckers, as they struggle to navigate the consequences of the event. The researcher says that the novel focuses on three key perspectives: the family's unresolved emotional wounds, the ideological clashes that surface in their disputes, and the existential crisis marked by confusion and loss of belief. Through close textual analysis, it argues for the significance of literary narratives like *Falling Man* in fostering trauma recovery, offering humanistic care, and providing a framework to understand and navigate personal and collective suffering. It examines the profound impact of the 9/11 attacks on individuals and society, focusing on how the novel vividly depicts the internal and external struggles of traumatized victims. The researcher also talks about how the novel underscores the importance of family, affection, and friendship as essential components in the healing process, portraying these relationships as a means to reclaim humanity and move beyond the metaphorical "falling." It

also delves into the significance of unwavering determination, courage, and faith in helping individuals navigate through pain and achieve self-salvation. The novel shapes the boundary between fact and fiction to highlight the struggles of ordinary people whose voices are often unheard, showing the author's dedication to addressing humanity's spiritual and emotional needs.

The study places the novel within the context of trauma stories, showing how literature helps us understand human emotions and the process of healing. It emphasizes the importance of human connection and resilience in overcoming challenges, suggesting that strong faith can guide individuals toward healing and renewal.

Therefore, the current study aims:

- To analyze how Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* represents trauma and its impact on personal and collective memory.
- To examine the role of media in shaping the recollection and interpretation of 9/11 events.
- To explore the ethical challenges of representing trauma through graphic imagery, using the "Falling Man" photograph as a focal point.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a qualitative methodology rooted in literary analysis, supported by trauma theory and media studies frameworks. Trauma Theory: Drawing on Cathy Caruth's exploration of unprocessed memory and delayed understanding, this approach analyzes how trauma is represented in the fragmented experiences of the characters. Caruth's work provides a lens through which to interpret the psychological impact of 9/11 on individual and collective memory in the novel. Media Studies: Jean Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality is utilized to examine how media representations of 9/11 blur the boundaries between lived experience and mediated memory. This framework helps critique the novel's portrayal of the media's role in commodifying trauma and shaping public narratives.

Close Reading: A textual analysis of *Falling Man* focuses on key motifs, such as the "Falling Man" photograph, to explore the intersections of personal grief, collective memory, and ethical representation of trauma. By integrating these approaches, the methodology provides a multidimensional analysis of how DeLillo's work engages with trauma and memory's psychological and cultural dimensions in the context of mediated experiences.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Trauma and the Personalization of Collective Memory*

The novel's characters navigate their grief within a framework dictated by collective memory. Trauma theory, particularly Cathy Caruth's exploration of unprocessed memory and delayed understanding, provides a foundation for analyzing the characters' fragmented experiences. Lianne's engagement with her Alzheimer's group juxtaposes the fading individual memories of patients with the indelible and inescapable memories of 9/11, highlighting the tension between personal and collective recollections.

The image had burned into him, the man falling. Not falling, really, but hanging there, suspended in the swell of the smoky sky. It came to him in flashes, unbidden and unstoppable, as though his mind was replaying a memory he never wanted to own (DeLillo, 2007, p. 66).

DeLillo conveys the relentless recurrence of traumatic imagery and its profound influence on the character's memory and how the past, especially traumatic events, constantly intrudes on the mind in unsettling, uncontrollable flashes. The "man falling" becomes an emblematic image of the 9/11 attacks, symbolizing the helplessness and devastation of that day. By describing the figure as "not falling, really, but hanging there," DeLillo suggests the suspension of time and reality that trauma induces, freezing the moment in the protagonist's mind. The smoky sky evokes an atmosphere of chaos and disorientation, reinforcing the weight of the event. The involuntary and "unstoppable" nature of these mental flashes reflects how trauma overrides conscious thought, replaying itself without permission. This demonstrates how trauma becomes an intrusive, inescapable memory, reshaping the individual's perception of reality and identity.

In *Falling Man*, Don DeLillo juxtaposes the intimate, fragmented experiences of trauma with the overarching narratives of collective memory shaped by societal forces. The novel illustrates how personal grief and loss are inevitably entangled with the communal process of remembering a shared catastrophe like 9/11. Lianne's interactions with her Alzheimer's group highlight this dynamic, as the fading personal memories of patients stand in stark contrast to the inescapable and vivid cultural recollections perpetuated by media coverage and public discourse. Through Keith's struggles with survivor's guilt and disconnection, DeLillo underscores the tension between the need for individual healing and the collective compulsion to memorialize. The narrative suggests that while collective memory can provide a framework for understanding trauma, it often risks homogenizing diverse personal experiences, reducing them to symbolic representations. This duality invites reflection on memory's power to unite and alienate, as individuals navigate their grief within the constructed boundaries of a collective identity.

B. *The Fragmented Self: Psychological Impact of 9/11 in Falling Man*

In *Falling Man*, Don DeLillo vividly portrays the psychological fragmentation experienced by individuals grappling with the trauma of 9/11. The novel's characters exhibit profound disruptions in their sense of self, mirroring the shattering effect of the tragedy on their lives and identities. Keith Neudecker, a survivor of the Twin Towers collapse, embodies this

disintegration. After escaping the devastation, Keith struggles to reconcile his pre-9/11 identity with the overwhelming weight of his survival. “Many individuals may develop some acute symptoms after a traumatic affair such as sleep disturbance, derealization, severe anxiety disorders, dissociative symptoms, dissociative amnesia, low concentration, etc.” (Tahan et al., 2021).

His drift between isolation and half-hearted attempts to reconnect with his estranged family reflects a fractured psyche unable to fully inhabit either the past or the present. Lianne, Keith’s ex-wife, offers another perspective on the psychological aftermath of the attacks. Her obsessive needs to control her environment and her heightened sensitivity to triggers, such as her irritation with her neighbor’s music, suggest a deep-seated anxiety. Lianne’s engagement with her Alzheimer’s writing group juxtaposes the characters’ fading memories with her struggle to cling to a coherent sense of self in a world irrevocably altered by trauma. This comparison underscores the theme of cognitive fragmentation as a shared human experience, exacerbated by the intense, collective grief of 9/11.

These lives were now scattered, like pieces of glass flung from a shattered frame. Every step forward brought a soundless echo of what was lost, a disconnection that refused to mend, haunting every corner of thought and memory (DeLillo, 2007, p. 98).

DeLillo describes the emotional and psychological aftermath of trauma and the image of broken glass suggests that the characters' lives have been shattered, much like an object that's been destroyed beyond repair. The "soundless echo" refers to the silent but persistent reminder of their loss, and the "disconnection that refused to mend" speaks to the difficulty of healing or moving on from the trauma. It shows how the trauma affects their minds, leaving lasting, haunting memories that continue to influence their present lives. “Psychological trauma can occur as a result of different events, but such disorders have many common features. It is usually a disorder that leads to a state of extreme bewilderment and uncertainty,” (Spytska, 2023). DeLillo also uses fragmented narrative techniques to reflect the psychological impact on his characters. The disjointed structure, frequent shifts in perspective, and sparse, minimalist prose mimic the disorientation and alienation felt by individuals in the wake of trauma. These literary choices immerse readers in the fragmented mental states of the characters, creating a visceral connection to their experiences. Whereas the world was previously viewed as being trustworthy and benevolent, this belief may become transformed into the sense that “people will hurt me, and I can’t trust anyone.” Additionally, trauma survivors might find that the world they used to perceive as being stable and predictable, now seems unpredictable and out of their control (Straussner & Calnan, 2014).

Ultimately, *Falling Man* explores how trauma disrupts the continuity of identity, forcing individuals to rebuild their sense of self amidst the lingering shadows of tragedy. The novel suggests that healing is a slow, nonlinear process, with survivors carrying the scars of their experiences in ways that reshape their relationships, perceptions, and existence. By focusing on the fragmented self, DeLillo offers a poignant commentary on the enduring psychological impact of 9/11, both on individual lives and on the collective American psyche.

C. Media as a Mediator of Memory

DeLillo portrays the media as a double-edged sword—an indispensable tool for documenting history but also a mechanism that shapes and commodifies traumatic experiences. The recurring motif of the “Falling Man” photograph encapsulates this tension. For Keith, the protagonist, and others who witnessed the event, the image serves as a psychological trigger, constantly resurfacing in their consciousness. The novel critiques how such imagery, while powerful, reduces complex human experiences to symbols, potentially desensitizing viewers while simultaneously trapping survivors in a loop of mediated recollection. It was the same story repeated in every voice, an endless narrative of dust and falling, of faces covered and people lost. Memory itself seemed communal now, a thing that crossed boundaries and reshaped itself in the telling (DeLillo, 2007, p. 112).

DeLillo describes how the traumatic events of 9/11 are not just personal but shared by many. The "same story" refers to the repeated recounting of tragic events, like the destruction and the people who were affected. The idea of "memory itself seemed communal" suggests that after such a massive event, the memories of what happened aren't just individual but collective. As people recount their experiences, those memories are reshaped and altered in the process, merging personal trauma with a broader, shared memory of the event. This illustrates how trauma can transform individual memory into a communal experience that transcends personal boundaries.

Jack is bewildered at the effect of the radio on his son’s perception of what is actually going on. He feels as if his children are growing up in a world filled with the media and it influences them so that they only trust what information is gained from television or radio. It means that experience is no longer immediate but mediated (Pérez García, 2018).

Media serves as a crucial intermediary between personal experiences and collective memory, shaping how traumatic events are remembered and understood. In *Falling Man*, Don DeLillo illustrates how media transforms raw emotional experiences into consumable narratives, often blurring the line between reality and representation.

Media interest proves that the disaster is worth noticing. In other words, the people surrender the ability to determine that which is —real and —important in their own lives. Instead, it is left up to the media to make those determinations (Boldt, 2011, p. 8).

The omnipresence of media coverage following the 9/11 attacks created a shared visual and emotional language, enabling individuals to relate to the event but also imposing a structured narrative on a chaotic reality. Through motifs like the “Falling Man” photograph, DeLillo critiques the dual nature of media as both a preserver of memory and a tool for commodification. This iconic image, while a poignant reminder of human fragility, becomes a symbol stripped of its

context, distilling a complex tragedy into a singular, haunting visual. For the characters in the novel, such as Keith and Lianne, the media's portrayal of 9/11 perpetuates a cycle of re-traumatization, forcing them to relive the event through repeated exposure to its mediated representation. Laudenbach also states that in today's media-driven world, a person who commits extreme violence gains a sense of existence or meaning because their actions are noticed and shared by the media. Even if the media doesn't glorify the killer, the act itself gives them a way to feel important or validated. In the postmodern era, where individuality is often lost, some people feel they can only reclaim their sense of self through such drastic and destructive actions, especially if the media captures it (Laudenbach, 2018).

This interplay highlights how media not only records historical events but also constructs a collective memory that may overshadow or distort individual recollections, raising ethical questions about authenticity, representation, and the responsibilities of media in documenting trauma. This approach deepens the analysis by addressing both the functional and ethical dimensions of media's role in shaping memory, aligning with the novel's central themes.

D. *Hyperreality and the Spectacle of Trauma*

Drawing on Jean Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality, this section explores how the media's saturation of 9/11 imagery creates a simulacrum that blends reality and representation. The novel's depiction of endless news cycles and replayed footage demonstrates how media consumption turns personal trauma into a public spectacle, complicating the grieving process. The characters' struggles to differentiate their lived experiences from media narratives reflect a broader societal challenge in reconciling mediated memory with raw emotional reality. "Media's power over the American people is facilitated by constructed simulation. Like Baudrillard's —Disneyland, the advertising world is hyperreal. It is specifically constructed in order to represent a —reality that does not actually exist" (Boldt, 2011, p. 8).

In *Falling Man*, Don DeLillo critiques the phenomenon of hyperreality, where the distinction between reality and its mediated representations becomes blurred, particularly in the context of traumatic events like 9/11. DeLillo's characters, particularly Keith and Lianne, navigate this mediated landscape, where their grief and trauma are constantly refracted through the lens of media narratives. For Keith, the surreal experience of surviving the attacks is overshadowed by the relentless barrage of images and stories that seek to define and package his trauma. Lianne, in turn, grapples with the inescapability of these representations, which intrude upon her attempts to process the event on a personal level. "The television becomes more real than reality itself through this distinction, representative of the hyperreal world in which postmodern American society is situated, saturating people's homes and lives" (Teo & Maffey, 2018b). The media's portrayal of 9/11 creates a hyperreal space in which the real suffering and human loss are eclipsed by a curated version of the event, designed for consumption and memorialization.

The novel also critiques how the spectacle of trauma shapes public memory and desensitizes audiences. Keith's acts seek to evoke the visceral horror of the attacks. They also reduce the risk experience to an aestheticized spectacle, alienating rather than connecting viewers to the humanity of the event. This mirrors real-world debates about the ethics of replaying traumatic imagery, which simultaneously commodifies and distances viewers from the original pain. By weaving these themes into the narrative, DeLillo portrays a world where trauma is both real and constructed, intensely personal and overwhelmingly mediated.

He saw it in her eyes, the weight of things remembered, things she couldn't let go of. Memory was a presence in the room, larger than either of them, dictating their silences, their distance, their inability to live in the now (DeLillo, 2007, p. 134).

DeLillo depicts how the weight of memory and past trauma affects the characters' present lives. It describes how the woman carries the burden of things she can't forget or move on from. The phrase "Memory was a presence in the room" suggests that the past is so powerful that it feels tangible, influencing their interactions and making it difficult for them to fully engage with the present moment. The memories, unresolved and heavy, shape their silence, emotional distance, and inability to truly live in the present. *Falling Man* challenges readers to question how the hyperreal narratives shaped by media impact collective memory, individual healing, and the ethical representation of tragedy in an age dominated by images.

E. *Ethical Implications of Graphic Imagery*

In *Falling Man*, Don DeLillo raises critical questions about the ethical dimensions of representing trauma, particularly through the recurring motif of the "Falling Man" photograph. This iconic yet controversial image of a man falling from the Twin Towers during the 9/11 attacks serves as a powerful symbol of the event's brutality and human cost. However, its presence also underscores the moral quandary of using such graphic imagery to document and memorialize traumatic events. DeLillo critiques how the media's repetition of such images commodifies human suffering, transforming individual tragedies into a public spectacle. The photograph, while evocative, risks stripping the individual of their humanity, reducing them to a symbol or an object of voyeuristic consumption.

In the novel, this tension is mirrored in the characters' responses to trauma. Keith's haunting memories and his attempts to reconcile with his survival experience highlight how graphic imagery, such as the "Falling Man", invades personal grief and complicates the process of healing. For Lianne, the image provokes both fascination and discomfort, reflecting society's ambivalent engagement with such depictions. While graphic imagery can serve as a means of bearing witness and fostering collective memory, DeLillo critiques its potential to desensitize viewers, blur the boundaries between reality and representation, and exploit suffering for artistic or commercial purposes. "In the face of what media calls a potentially

lethal event, Jack and his family are brought together by shared concerns and shared fears nurtured by news on the radio” (Baya, 2013).

Through *Falling Man*, DeLillo invites readers to reflect on the ethical responsibilities of creators, journalists, and consumers when engaging with graphic representations of trauma. The novel challenges us to consider the fine line between honoring the memory of victims and perpetuating their pain through relentless mediation. By doing so, it emphasizes the need for sensitivity, respect, and ethical consideration in representing and interpreting images of trauma.

TABLE 1
TABULAR ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT BASED ON KEY THEMES, ARGUMENTS, AND INTERPRETATIONS

Section	Main Argument	Key Points	Supporting Evidence	Interpretation
A. Trauma and the Personalization of Collective Memory	Trauma theory explains how 9/11 memories are internalized and shaped by collective remembrance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characters experience fragmented recollections. - Lianne’s Alzheimer’s group contrasts personal and collective memory. - Keith struggles with intrusive memories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caruth’s theory of unprocessed trauma. - DeLillo’s imagery of the “falling man” (p.66). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trauma disrupts perception of time and identity. - Collective memory can overshadow individual grief.
B. The Fragmented Self: Psychological Impact of 9/11	Characters experience psychological disintegration due to trauma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keith struggles with survivor’s guilt. - Lianne shows obsessive tendencies and heightened anxiety. - Memory and trauma leave lasting psychological scars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tahan et al. (2021) on PTSD symptoms. - Spytska (2023) on psychological bewilderment. - DeLillo’s metaphor of shattered glass (p. 98). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trauma disrupts identity and relationships. - Healing is non-linear and complicated.
C. Media as a Mediator of Memory	Media shapes and sometimes distorts memory of traumatic events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The “Falling Man” image becomes a recurring motif. - Media turns individual trauma into public spectacle. - Memory becomes communal through repetitive narratives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pérez García (2018) on media’s role. - Boldt (2011) on media determining reality. - DeLillo (p. 112) on reshaped memories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media constructs collective memory, often overpowering personal experience. - Repeated exposure can re-traumatize survivors.
D. Hyperreality and the Spectacle of Trauma	Baudrillard’s concept of hyperreality explains how media-saturated imagery blurs reality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9/11 images become more real than the lived experience. - Keith and Lianne struggle to differentiate real trauma from its media portrayal. - Media creates a hyperreal space where suffering is aestheticized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baudrillard’s theory of simulation. - Teo & Maffey (2018b) on media saturation. - DeLillo (p. 134) on memory as an oppressive presence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media creates a curated version of reality. - Viewers become desensitized to trauma.
E. Ethical Implications of Graphic Imagery	Graphic imagery raises ethical concerns regarding trauma representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The “Falling Man” photo commodifies suffering. - Media repetition risks voyeurism over empathy. - The novel critiques society’s engagement with graphic trauma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baya (2013) on media-induced fear. - DeLillo’s depiction of Keith’s haunted memories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethical concerns about how tragedy is documented and consumed. - Fine line between memorialization and exploitation.

V. CONCLUSION

In *Falling Man*, Don DeLillo profoundly explores the interplay between trauma, memory, and media. The novel critiques the media’s role in framing collective memory, highlighting its potential to both aid and hinder the psychological processing of grief. By intertwining personal narratives with mediated representations of 9/11, DeLillo underscores the complexities of reconciling individual experiences with the broader cultural memory of traumatic events. This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how literature can illuminate the ethical and psychological dimensions of mediated trauma, offering insights that resonate in an age of ubiquitous media.

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