

**Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého**

**Trauma in short stories of Ali Smith in  
comparison with Janice Galloway and A.L.  
Kennedy**

**(Bakalářská práce)**

**Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého**

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**Trauma in short stories of Ali Smith in comparison with  
Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy**

(Bachelor Thesis)

**Trauma v povídkách Ali Smith ve srovnání s Janice  
Gallowayovou a A.L. Kennedyovou**

(Bakalářská práce)

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*Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.*

*V Olomouci dne .....*

*Podpis .....*

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## **Introduction**

Trauma as a concept is nothing new. For many years, trauma has been connected mainly with the military. It used to describe the effects experience has had on soldiers in combat. Soldiers have traumatic stress reactions to the horrors they go through such as killing people and seeing their friends being killed. During World War I, the trauma caused by war has been named shell shock. Connected to war, survivors of concentration camps during World War II have been exposed to an immense cause for trauma too.

However, soldiers or survivors of such horrible experiences as concentration camps are not the only people who can fall victims to trauma. Even in our everyday lives, everyone can be exposed to an experience that can result in a traumatic reaction. Since trauma is classified as a response to an unexpected event that happens suddenly and is hard to comprehend, many examples can be found in everyday life. Natural disasters such as hurricanes or tsunamis, death of a loved one – those are examples of events that are not in anyone's control but can be very traumatic.

People can inflict trauma on others as well. When they rape someone, mentally abuse them, drink or abuse drugs, or leave their children to grow without one of the parents, they hurt others. Each person deals with the trauma in their own way and at their own pace. In literature, stories including trauma are often written by people who have experienced it first hand which is one version of a coping mechanism.

However, that is not the only way trauma can be portrayed. In the Scottish literature, which is concerned in this thesis, it is not written by trauma survivors. It just portrays glimpses into the lives of fictional people who are dealing with bad experiences.

This thesis is concerned with the works of Ali Smith, A.L. Kennedy and Janice Galloway separately and then compared together. Each of these authors deals with trauma in her works differently but some similarities can be found. They are discussed and compared more deeply in later chapters.

In order to understand the topic of trauma better and to present the research, there will first be a discussion of the theoretical framework, namely how trauma is described by several psychoanalysts or critics such as Freud, what can be the causes of trauma and how

people generally cope with it. Then, the thesis continues to lightly describe contemporary Scottish literature and how trauma manifests itself in literature overall. Separately, trauma in chosen works of Ali Smith, Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy is discussed. The analyses are then concluded by comparing the three.

# 1. Trauma

Generally, trauma can be defined as “a response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena”<sup>1</sup>.

This definition contains two main parts that are important to understanding what a trauma is. The first one is the need for some cause. It is an experience that happens and causes distress to a person. For every human being, the cause of trauma differs as there are many possible events that can influence the mentality. For example, it can be a loss of a loved one, experiencing war as a soldier, or being sexually abused.

The second part describes the fact that at the moment of the event’s happening, it is not understood properly. This results in a long-term reliving of the event through nightmares or flashbacks that force the person to remember what happened and are uncontrollable. The reason why the experience might not be fully processed while happening, as Caruth explains, is because it happens too unexpectedly for it be grasped enough by the consciousness<sup>2</sup>.

One of the first people who has been paying attention to traumatic experiences and their effect on people more deeply was Sigmund Freud, mainly in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. He starts by describing a condition that has been known for a long time but focuses mainly on physical experiences that threaten life. At that time, this was called traumatic neurosis. Only after the 1<sup>st</sup> World War did they realise that this neurosis does not have to be caused by some accident but can be purely psychological as well. Freud points out the importance of a fright which is a “state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it; it emphasises the factor of surprise”<sup>3</sup> which is the same view on the causality of trauma as Caruth has. According to the pleasure principle, which is the organism’s need to protect against a stimulus which is not pleasurable but can

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<sup>1</sup> Cathy Caruth. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 91.

<sup>2</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Sigmund Freud. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), 6.

cause harm, people try to avoid as many unpleasant experiences as they can. A traumatic experience is then a stimulus breaking through a protective barrier. This provokes “a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism’s energy and to set in motion every possible defensive measure”<sup>4</sup>, as Freud puts it. Once this happens, it is not about protecting the brain from stimulus but rather processing the amount of information it has received.

Freud also writes about the ways trauma comes back to the affected person. During awake hours, people do not think as much about the traumatic events but rather try not to think about it. However, when it comes to dreams, as Freud explains, they bring “the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright”<sup>5</sup> thus repeatedly inflicting trauma onto the person.

In the words of Balaev, trauma can also be described as an experience that “creates a speechless fright that divides or destroys identity”<sup>6</sup> as well as response to an event that changes the way one views themselves and the society. Looking at this definition, it metaphorically describes to which degree there was damage and how much the consciousness of an individual was changed. As Balaev puts it, “the origin of traumatic response is forever unknown and unintegrated”<sup>8</sup> as well as the experience itself being understood “as a fixed and timeless photographic negative stored in an unlocated place of the brain, but it maintains the ability to interrupt consciousness”<sup>7</sup>.

Balaev, however, also argues that when looking at memory as an active process, it cannot be said that memories of trauma and normal memories are separated. According to her research, traumatic experience cannot be remembered exactly how it happened but rather the recollection involves “new details with each telling, or is constructed from different perspectives, which demonstrates that memories of the traumatic experience are

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<sup>4</sup> Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> Michelle Balaev. “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory.” *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 41, no. 2. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44029500>, 2008). 149.

<sup>7</sup> Balaev, “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory”, 151.

revised and actively rearranged according to the needs of the individual at a particular moment”<sup>8</sup>.

Trauma “displaces his or her preconceived notions about the world”<sup>9</sup> and alters the worldview of a survivor. People who have grown up with traumatic events happening in their childhood and who carry the trauma with them into adulthood have a different reaction to traumatic events in adulthood than those who have lived their life pretty much sheltered from anything bad in their life. For those who have already lived through an early trauma, a new traumatic experience only confirms what they already assume – a lot of negative things happen, and they come to expect it. On the contrary, the ones with a very positive view of the world get their views and beliefs shattered and are left with a very empty feeling inside. In both cases, they are “left with a heightened sense of vulnerability and lack of control”<sup>10</sup>. Both types of people usually grow a sense of vulnerability, they feel more intensely that they cannot control their life and they start to question why such things happen. With these questions, they are trying to make sense of the trauma.

### **1.1 Causes of trauma**

There are many different causes of trauma. It can be caused both by physical and psychological events. A person might be traumatised by being a victim to a natural disaster such as a tsunami or an earthquake. There are also events that combine both of these events. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of trauma, specifically to men, was caused by the wars. Soldiers often come back from war shell-shocked or with other mental damages. Sexual abuse, rape and domestic violence are another example of psychological and physical event that leads to trauma. From the psychological point of view, the most common cause of trauma is the death of a loved one. In this case, Caruth questions whether the trauma comes from experiencing the death of someone or having to deal with the fact that the person is

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<sup>8</sup> Balaev, “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory”, 164.

<sup>9</sup> Kalí Tal. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). 15.

<sup>10</sup> Debra and Gillian Eagle Kaminer. “Trauma as a Crisis of Meaning.” In *Traumatic Stress in South Africa*, 60–79. (Wits University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.18772/22010105096.7>, 2010). 62.

the one who survived. In her opinion, it is the middle ground of “the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival”<sup>11</sup>.

## **1.2 Dealing with trauma**

Traumatic experience often makes itself known through flashbacks, nightmares, or other similar phenomena, often developing into post-traumatic stress disorder. These moments force the person to relive the experience. Those who experience a traumatic event often “struggle to develop an understanding of why the trauma happened, and of why they were singled out to be a victim”<sup>12</sup>. Survivors of trauma, according to Kaminer, might find it difficult to connect what they lived through with what they believe about themselves, the world and people in general, as well as doubt their basic expectations of the world, which leaves them distrustful and vulnerable. They “try to develop explanations for the traumatic event and to generate meanings that will allow them to make sense of the world in future”<sup>13</sup>. There are some options how a person can work with their trauma.

Freud shows an example of a coping mechanism created by a one-and-a-half-year-old child. The little boy is quite attached to his mother and whenever she leaves him for a couple of hours, it is difficult for him to deal with the situation, causing a traumatic experience to a certain level. However, being as small as he is, the boy is still able to create a way to calm himself down and learn more about the situation. Freud observes him playing a game with his toys, throwing a wooden piece over the edge of a cot, making it disappear, then pulling it back into the view again. At his age, the boy cannot speak, but these actions are accompanied by sounds distinguished by Freud and the boy’s mother as German words meaning ‘gone’ and ‘there’. The boy repeats these actions repeatedly, showing more joy in the appearance of the object. By repetition of the distressing event, he establishes in himself a way to understand that his mother must leave in order for her to come back and bring him joy in doing so. As Freud puts it, “her departure had to be enacted as a necessary

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<sup>11</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Kaminer. “Trauma as a Crisis of Meaning”, 60.

<sup>13</sup> Kaminer, “Trauma as a Crisis of Meaning”, 60.

preliminary to her joyful return, and that it was in the latter that lay the true purpose of the game”<sup>14</sup>.

For some people, explaining the reason why a traumatic experience happened to them and not someone else by attributing it to fate or destiny can help a lot to make it easier to deal with. When viewed like this, it is often considered to be sort of a test to challenge the victim’s beliefs, punish them, or teach them something. Even people who did not have any belief before a traumatic event happened turn to finding some spiritual journey, they can go on to find support while recovering. On the contrary, a traumatic event can result in a loss of faith in people who had belief for a very long time.

The hardest to deal with is when trauma is caused by another person, such as rape or abuse. Victims are not able to understand why and how people can be able to inflict so much pain and horrible things onto others. Sometimes, however, the survivors can start creating excuses on behalf of the abuser, trying to find reasons why they might go and commit such crime.

While struggling to “deal with feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability in the aftermath of trauma, many survivors wrestle with questions such as ‘why does this sort of thing happen in the world?’, ‘how can people do this sort of thing to other people?’”<sup>15</sup>. It is very common for the traumatised person to see the reason in themselves because they did not do enough to prevent such a thing happening. Since survivors’ beliefs in being competent and in control of their life are challenged by the traumatic event, they “often feel ashamed by their failure to prevent the trauma from happening, or even that they are somehow to blame for the trauma”<sup>16</sup>. This feeling can be made stronger by the society who views some trauma victims as the reason for it happening, such as rape victims walking alone in the night. Some might not blame the things they did but who they are in general, such as being too weak, too trusting, or a bad person, which is a reason why they deserved what happened.

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<sup>14</sup> Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, 9-10.

<sup>15</sup> Kaminer, “Trauma as a Crisis of Meaning”, 62.

<sup>16</sup> Kaminer. “Trauma as a Crisis of Meaning”, 68.

The response of the public plays a big role in the coping of a person with a traumatic event as well as in their view of it. Sometimes, the victim can be made to believe they are lucky that they survived what happened and something much worse might have occurred. This often leads to the survivor feeling invalidated and unworthy to be as distressed as they are. It belittles their feelings and makes them unimportant, causing them to compare with others who have been through worse. They might also compare the ways they are coping with the trauma and feel better or worse about their progress based on how the others are doing.

Even from such horrible experiences as traumatic events can come something good. Trauma survivors often report that they learned how much strength they have inside in order to be able to deal with what happened. They also learned to open more, share their vulnerability and feelings, how to ask for help and be more emotionally intelligent. All these positive changes usually lead to an improvement in interpersonal relationships. Changes in priorities and importance of things are another example of things that change after a traumatic experience. This growth, however, does not happen right after surviving a trauma. It takes a lot of time for the victim to get to terms with what happened and then move on to finding sense and lessons in it. For each person, the time, growth, and coping is different and cannot be compared as each individual has different experience.

### ***1.2.1 Treatment***

As trauma can often be a part of the unconsciousness rather than consciousness, it is up to the doctor to be able to distinguish where the trauma lies, piece it together and communicate it back to the patient at the right time by interpreting it and delivering it to the patient in a way that will resolve the problem rather than make it worse. Often, a patient cannot even remember the most essential part of what happened and that serves as the root to the path of the solution. The amount of information that can be remembered differs person to person and as Freud mentions, the treatment must happen as a whole. A part of the event must be experienced again, however, the doctor must make sure “the patient retains some degree of aloofness, which will enable him, in spite of everything, to recognize

that what appears to be reality is in fact only a reflection of a forgotten past”<sup>17</sup>. By managing this, the therapy will be successful.

On the contrary, if the treatment is not done right, it can lead to a tragic end. The repetition of a trauma can be in itself traumatic because it threatens the chemical balance of the brain. This can result into many things, even a suicide. Caruth explains this on an example of survivors of concentration camps or soldiers from Vietnam, in between whom was a high suicide rate even when they were all in safety<sup>18</sup>.

When the traumatic experience is prolonged, repeated, and truly horrible, especially at a young age, it can lead to traumatic amnesia, dissociation or repressed memory. A person like this usually does not recall any trauma happening until adulthood, when they start attending therapy. Only then do they start to remember the experience piece by piece, and these recollections allow the patient to start healing gradually. This is one of the views of trauma theory. Suleiman, however, argues that even through allowing some relief, “it can also wreak havoc in real life, as family members are suddenly viewed as perpetrators of horrific abuse”<sup>19</sup>. It cannot be ruled out that the memories might not be accurate as a significant amount of time has already passed since the traumatic event happened, and it is possible it is not recalled correctly.

There is a second point of view of trauma theory, which stands against the notion of repressed memory. Some of the scholars stand very firmly against Freud’s opinions. Others argue that when recalling a repressed memory, major mistakes can be made, and people can start believing in delusions. Another argument is that the worse and more violent the trauma is, the more will the person who experienced it remember it and have it in mind for much longer than they would wish to, unable to forget. It is admitted, however, that a person can forget about the trauma for some time after it happened, only to remember it suddenly due to some trigger.

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<sup>17</sup> Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 63.

<sup>19</sup> Susan Rubin Suleiman. “Judith Herman and Contemporary Trauma Theory.” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1/2 (2008): 276–81. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27649762>) 278.

When dealing with trauma, as Suleiman puts it, it is very important to remember that “trauma is not only a drama of past event, but also, even primarily, a drama of survival”<sup>20</sup>, keeping in mind that sometimes the trauma does not come from encountering death, for example, but from the guilt of survival.

### ***1.2.2 Cultural coping***

Kalí Tal discusses three ways of cultural coping. They are mythologization, medicalization, and disappearance.

Mythologization takes traumatic experience and turns it into a story with a standardised narrative that represents the story. This results into “turning it from a frightening and uncontrollable event into a contained and predictable narrative”<sup>21</sup>.

Medicalisation views the victims of trauma as people with an illness which can be cured by therapy and medication.

By using the strategy of disappearance, the victim is made to believe that no traumatic event has occurred by their surroundings.

## **1.3 Trauma in literature**

Main character in a story that has suffered through a traumatic event is the one who brings to the reader the details about the individual's trauma. Often, the role of the protagonist can be to “reference a historical period in which a group of people or a particular culture, race, or gender, have collectively experienced massive trauma”<sup>22</sup>.

Often in the narrative, trauma is not described directly with pieces of silence, leaving the reader to pay close attention to spot what happened or even to imagine it themselves which makes the experience of reading the story more intense, connecting the reader more closely with the protagonist. The story can be presented in a “nonlinear plot or disruptive temporal sequences to emphasize mental confusion, chaos, or contemplation as a response

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<sup>20</sup> Suleiman, “Judith Herman and Contemporary Trauma Theory”, 280.

<sup>21</sup> Tal, *Worlds of Hurt*, 6.

<sup>22</sup> Balaev, “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory”, 155.

to the experience”<sup>23</sup>. Overly graphical descriptions of trauma might trigger flashbacks in a reader that has also survived a traumatic event.

Trauma survivors write stories themselves and these are considered as literature of trauma. This literature involves “reconstruction and recuperation of the traumatic experience”<sup>24</sup>. The writing itself of the traumatic events a survivor went through can help them cope with the situation as there is “strong evidence that the process of telling one’s story and writing about personal trauma can be essential elements of recovery, and that in addition to the integration of the self fractured through intimate violence, such acts also may have lasting effects on the human immune system”<sup>25</sup>.

Trauma narratives done by survivors show violence but at the same time they “give a voice to heretofore silent histories; help shape public consciousness about violence against women; and thus alter history’s narrative”<sup>26</sup>.

Literary critics have two views on how trauma can be portrayed in books. One stands on the side of it being unspeakable, therefore manifesting itself in the gaps of the text and things that are missing. Others, especially the new generation, slowly shift their focus towards what is written since there is a possibility that the trauma can be spoken which broadens the material that can be interpreted. When survivors manage to write about their trauma, putting it into words “has the power to enact healing, give order, and allow the reconstruction of the victim’s shattered psyche”<sup>27</sup> and can be viewed as an effort to rehabilitate. Some traumatic memories can be remembered more strongly than others thus some authors might be describing the trauma in vivid detail. However, these memories can be warped.

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<sup>23</sup> Balaev, “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory”, 159.

<sup>24</sup> Tal, *Worlds of Hurt*, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Wendy S Hesford. “Reading Rape Stories: Material Rhetoric and the Trauma of Representation.” *College English* 62, no. 2 (1999): 192–221. (<https://doi.org/10.2307/379018>). 195.

<sup>26</sup> Hesford. “Reading Rape Stories: Material Rhetoric and the Trauma of Representation.” 195.

<sup>27</sup> Joshua Pederson. “Speak, Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory.” *Narrative* 22, no. 3, 333–53. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24615578>, 2014) 339.

## 1.4 Scottish literature

Contemporary Scottish fiction is the most known and successful genre as well as the most controversial out of modern Scottish literature. Among the most remarkable writers from this era we can find authors such as Muriel Spark, Alasdair Gray, Irvine Welsh, Ian Banks, and the three authors concerned in this thesis.

Many Scottish writers have been rediscovering old Scottish traditions of literary fiction in their works with the new easier access to older Scottish writings, sometimes accompanied with new internationalism. They often exploited old works and ideas characteristic to Scottish fiction such as the tradition of dualism. Authors also started to pay more attention to the regions, writing about the places they know, in order to reassess identity.

Slowly, they also began to see the need of finding new inspiration. Searching for the detachment from the Scottish traditions, some authors started to place their works outside of Scotland but often still keeping the protagonist Scottish. One thing that has been true to Scottish literature over the years is the traditional sceptical bleakness. The writers rising at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have the most impact on “the dramatic way in which harsh social realism is combined with humour and positive vision”<sup>28</sup>. The most dominating theme that has become very common is the description of emerging from trauma, as well as the direction of women’s writing.

Scottish short stories can be classified as a genre in itself. There is a big amount of significant contemporary writers of short stories such as Muriel Spark, Janice Galloway, A.L. Kennedy, or Chris Dolan. Short stories come from the oral tradition in which telling stories was a way to entertain each other. Narrators in earlier short stories often serve the role of retelling something that they heard before. The oral roots mean that “the images have to be sharp and characters must arrive fully formed, rather than give them time to develop”<sup>29</sup>. A first person narration in the Scottish short story is very important as it creates

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<sup>28</sup> Douglas Gifford, Sarah Dunnigan, and Alan MacGillivray. *Scottish Literature*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002.) 937.

<sup>29</sup> Gifford, Dunnigan, MacGillivray, *Scottish literature*, 987.

a bond with the reader, making them emotionally interested very quickly by showing what the character is thinking and how they see the world, allowing the reader to see and think the same as the character does, sometimes portrayed in a stream-of-consciousness.

#### ***1.4.1 Women writing***

Women writers in Scottish literature with novels and short stories have begun to be the most growing area in contemporary fiction. They often take “their exploration of the situations of women at the turn of the century into even more sophisticated analysis of issues of gender and identity”<sup>30</sup>. There can be found many instances of repressions of the past and ghosts in the works of women.

Both Kennedy and Galloway are very important writers for Scottish literature since they “were to the fore in what was to become a movement in fiction towards personal and national regeneration”<sup>31</sup>.

#### ***1.4.2 Trauma***

Previously, it was stated the protagonist often represents a collective trauma of a group sharing certain characteristics. When it comes to Scottish literature, or more specifically the works of Ali Smith, Janice Galloway, and A.L. Kennedy which are being discussed in this thesis, the situation is different. The trauma represented in these works focuses mainly on personal traumatic experience that happens either in childhood or adulthood.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Scottish literature has started to leave behind the dystopian nightmare and turned towards urban gloom and focusing on bleakness in different ways. From that, a big preoccupation with trauma has risen with an “impressive number and quality of novels dealing with the psychological breakdown and trauma expressed through the experience of life as waking nightmare or through dream allegory”<sup>32</sup>. It is not sure whether this amount of works focused on these themes are in any way a reflection of the

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<sup>30</sup> Gifford, Dunnigan, MacGillivray, *Scottish literature*, 940.

<sup>31</sup> Gifford, Dunnigan, MacGillivray, *Scottish literature*, 940.

<sup>32</sup> Gifford, Dunnigan, MacGillivray, *Scottish literature*, 909.

current Scottish reality and pressures but most of the writers have a lot in common: “a damaged protagonist (damage can be physical but it is the mental harm that matters the most), unwilling or unable to face the events which caused the damage, evades reality through various diversionary strategies”<sup>33</sup>. These strategies, or rather attempts to escape reality, mostly take the form of dreams. However, dream escapes are hardly successful. Instead of helping the character relieve some anxiety or the troubles of remembering the trauma, they bring it up again, quite realistically, and cause new concern and fright to arise. They reveal to the reader more truth about the traumatic experience. In the same time, the dreams are often needed for the protagonist to be lead towards some kind of sanity and mental health.

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<sup>33</sup> Gifford, Dunnigan, MacGillivray, *Scottish literature*, 909.

## **2. Ali Smith and trauma**

### **2.1 Ali Smith**

Ali Smith started as a critic of the works of Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy. As a literature major, she was able to use her academic critical skills to pinpoint different approaches and themes in the works of fiction. Her works are a big and important part of the contemporary canon of Scottish literature.

Some occurring themes can be found in the works of Smith. Her stories and novels include women in love with other women and their relationships, women dying young, people suffering from different illnesses, dealing with death, and the struggles of becoming an adult. Usually, she describes everyday life of the characters who are often outsiders. Her stories also often deal with painful experiences and their influence on people.

Smith plays around with the way things are written visually such as leaving blank spaces, writing divided words on blank pages, structuring the prose as poetry. Her structure is quite free, adding conceptual art to traditional fiction.

### **2.2 Death as a cause of trauma**

In *Hotel World*, all the stories revolve around one specific event and place, all the characters are connected to it in some way. There can be found an example of trauma caused by a sudden death of a close loved person. The story begins with a ghost of a girl who died when she was just 19 years old. On her first night working in a hotel, she makes a bet with another person working there about whether she can fit into a dumb waiter or not. The ropes of it are not strong enough which leads to her falling down four stories and dying. The girl is introduced as a ghost, a year after her death, and using flashbacks, her story is told. Slowly, the ghost is losing the ability to function properly. There are often blank spots, missing words, punctuation, symbolising how trauma can affect the memory of a person, losing the ability to name certain things. One example can be found right at the beginning of the story when Sara's ghost is thinking about what she will miss when she goes along with the decaying body. One of the things she mentions are birds and "their

beady . The things they see with”<sup>34</sup>. The omission is done graphically, leaving a blind space instead of the word she cannot recall. It also shows the fact that it is better to not say some things explicitly: “Attention is always directed to the horror of what cannot be named and needs, therefore, to be made abject: the dumbwaiter, the eyes, the toast, Sara’s body, death”<sup>35</sup>.

However, even if she is a ghost, she is still able to come back to her body that is buried in the ground. She goes there sometimes, watches as the corpse decays, talks to her body, asks it questions about the fall. This shows that even as a ghost, it is very hard for the girl to deal with the reality of being dead. She is not able to properly let go of her life, always coming back to the hotel or back to the corpse. Later, it is revealed that the name of the dead girl is Sara Wilby.

Sara’s death had the most impact upon her family, specifically her younger sister Clare. Clare is not able to let her sister go even after the year that has passed. She clings to her things, refusing to let them be thrown away by their father. Everyday, Clare comes to the hotel, sitting in front of it and just looking at it, thinking. People mistake her for a homeless person, giving her money. Clare is extremely obsessed with trying to find out how long it took Sara to fall down the four stories and die. She slips into the hotel, going to the floor where Sara climbed into the dumb waiter, and starts throwing things into to shaft, trying to count and figure out how many seconds it was, setting down on around four seconds. Sara, for most part, never leaves Clare’s mind, sometimes it is not even possible to avoid mentions of her sister as her schoolmates keep talking about her, about how she died, there are articles. But Clare also tries to keep her thoughts positive, remembering the good days as much as the horrible traumatic event. There is a time when she starts to come to terms with the loss a little bit, mainly after she has achieved to count the seconds of the

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<sup>34</sup> Ali Smith. *Hotel World*. (London: Penguin Group, 2002), 8.

<sup>35</sup> Gemma López Sánchez. “‘Mind the Gap’: Powers of Horror and Trauma in Ali Smith’s ‘Hotel World’ / ‘Cuidado Con El Hueco’: Los Poderes Del Horror y El Trauma En Hotel World de Ali Smith.” *Atlantis* 32, no. 2 (2010): 43–56. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41055398>.) 49.

fall for her sister. The moment that indicates that change and piece is coming is when she thinks “wherever you are now I know you will be keeping us me & mum & dad safe”<sup>36</sup>.

In the example of the Wilby family, there are three different ways of dealing with the traumatic event of losing a loved one. One can be seen in the father who is trying to get rid of everything that can bring back painful memories of his dead daughter. He wants to eliminate anything that could serve as a reminder. Her mother, on the day of the funeral, is visibly distraught and very sad. As Sara describes it, there are unspoken words around her meaning “although this is my home where I have lived for twenty-two years, and in it I am surrounded by family and familiar things, I do not rightly know any more where it is I am in the world”<sup>37</sup>. After losing her nineteen-year-old daughter, she feels lost and without any hope for the future. On the other hand, Clare’s coping mechanism is the complete opposite. She is refusing to get rid of anything, trying to keep her sister close and her memory alive. The obsessive behaviour concerning finding out details of the death is another way she is trying to cope with it. In the end, she is successful with it as knowing the details brings at least some resemblance of a peace to her mind.

Sara, as a ghost, tried to appear to her family to perhaps bring back her presence into their life. Their reactions fit very well with the coping mechanisms they have adopted. Her father tried to distance himself as much from it as possible, pretending not to see and building a wall around himself, with every appearance of Sara, “he added a new layer of bricks to the top of it”<sup>38</sup>. Sara showed herself to her mother only twice because it broke her again and again. Every time, the mother had a very emotional reaction, reliving the trauma again and again, causing her to cry and not to be able to sleep. Sara kept making her “cry, made her miserable, jumpy and fearful”<sup>39</sup>. Her sister Clare, however, could never get enough of her, as can be seen in the way she was trying to keep a lot of Sara’s things with her. Knowing that her sister is still close, even the form of a ghost she cannot interact with,

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<sup>36</sup> Smith, *Hotel World*, 220.

<sup>37</sup> Smith, *Hotel World*, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *Hotel World*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Hotel World*, 13.

only sees sometimes, is able to bring at least some piece to Clare, assuring her she is not alone.

Lise, a receptionist in the hotel, has gone through a mental breakdown and is unable to do anything due to her depression. The unmentioned, but most probable source of trauma-caused depression is Sara's death. She has met her, known her a little bit. All the employees of the Global Hotel know what has happened, who worked that night, and who was with Sara when it happened. It was a bus boy, Duncan, who made the bet with Sara, who witnessed her crawling up into the dumbwaiter and falling. He carries with himself a sense of guilt and often spends a lot of his time in a room next to the lobby of the hotel, hidden from everyone, dealing with his own thoughts and feelings. The other employees are protective of him and tell him whenever a boss might be near to make sure he does not lose his job.

Another instance of how losing a close person might affect the survivor is shown in *How to Be Both*. A mother of a family has died in September, leaving behind two children, daughter and a son, and a husband. Each of them is dealing with it in a different way.

The father has taken on an approach that many people might as well which is trying to drown his sorrow and memories in alcohol. He drinks a lot, leaving the daughter to take care of her brother. It seems that rather than finding an efficient way of dealing with his grief and being a functional father, he would rather avoid anything that could make him more upset than he already is.

The son, an eight-year-old Henry, is finding it hard to deal with the whole situation. He misses his mother a lot, making him unable to stop crying for a very long time. Thankfully, he has his older sister who is trying her best to cheer him up even when she is suffering just as much.

George is the name of the daughter. Her character is very strong as she is mourning her mother but still manages to put others first and take care of them. With her father being unable to perform basic parent tasks, it is up to her to take care of herself and her brother. This, however, does not mean that she is coping well. George is hardly able to listen to music without hurting. The only time she is able to laugh for the first time since September is on New Years' day when her friend from school makes her laugh. In a way, George is

able to make light of her situation sometimes, such as in one scene in school: “Mrs Rock, George had said the last time she’d seen Mrs Rock, I am between you and a hard place”<sup>40</sup>. This instance shows that not everything is lost when it comes to George dealing properly with the loss of her mother and one day, she can be okay again.

There is, however, one more thing out of the ordinary George does as a sort of a coping mechanism. George’s mother has been obsessed with a painting of one specific author from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. George proceeds to stalk her mother’s friend, sitting outside her home and following her to the gallery where the painting is. She also becomes very interested in the painting itself, trying to learn more about the painter.

The whole story is intertwined with a story of a 15<sup>th</sup> century artist who is a girl but has to pretend to be a man in order to be able to gain artistic education and work as a painter. Her mother also died when she was little. The coping mechanism this character acquired was climbing into a wardrobe of her mother’s clothes, spending time in there engulfed in the smell of her. Later, she goes on wearing nothing but her mother’s clothes around the house. Her father is taking his wife’s death hard too and seeing his daughter wearing the clothes makes him hurt more. This girl is also the author of the painting George’s mother has been obsessed with her whole life.

Magnus in *The Accidental* is not dealing with a loss of a family member or a loved one but his classmate. Since he is good at operating computers, he has helped a few of his classmates to create an image of one of the girls with her face being placed on a half-naked body. They have then printed it out and spread it around the school. Their actions have driven the girl to a suicide. Magnus is having a really tough time to process what has happened and it is very hard for him to live with the guilt of being part of it. Magnus keeps repeating to himself, usually with slightly changed words but the same meaning, the same five sentences: “He was part of the equation. They took her head. They fixed it on the other body. Then they sent it round everybody’s email. Then she killed herself”<sup>41</sup>. He also repeats to himself that it was just a Tuesday, what he was wearing on that day, what exactly he had

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<sup>40</sup> Ali Smith. *How To Be Both*. (London: Penguin Group, 2015), 177.

<sup>41</sup> Ali Smith. *The Accidental*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2005), 36.

done. Magnus cannot get it out of his head, it is permanently in there now. He has been suspended from school because of his actions. The guilt Magnus is feeling has driven him to depression and suicidal thoughts. For most of the days, he barely leaves his room, always taking a little bit of food up to his room, spending most of his time alone. He even attempts a suicide by trying to hang himself in a bathroom. Amber, a young woman who has arrived at the house the family is spending their holiday in without knowing anyone, has found him during the attempt and saved him. Later, she talks about it in front of his family, but none of them are taking it seriously. Amber is the only person who has managed to break him out of his shell and ease the depressive thought a little. They go out together to a church where they often have sex together. After Amber is kicked out of the house by Magnus' mother, his situation gets a little worse again but not to the point it was before. He gets a letter from school saying all is forgiven and he can come back which does not help to ease any of his bad feelings. On the contrary, his regrets are even bigger and he continues to beat himself up. The only thing that seems to make everything easier is when he is called bad names by his sister.

Magnus' coping approach is very simple but tragic. His traumatic experience is made more difficult by his role in the event happening. A lot of time is needed for him to process, during which he shelters himself away from everyone around him. At one point, it gets to be too much thus leading him to the attempt of taking his life. Family members are not much of a support to him as Magnus' mother works a lot without really having time for them, after the holiday going even to the extent of leaving them for a long time in order to travel around the U.S. Only when a stranger arrives into his life who is willing to help him, listen to him and spend time with him, is Magnus able to come out of his shell a little more and start to live a normal life to a certain extent. The punishment Magnus has gotten from school is not enough for him. Even after everything is solved from the side of the girl's family and the school, he continues to be burdened by guilt and the need for proper punishment. He finds a small comfort in being insulted.

Even an encounter with a total stranger dying near a person can cause trauma and affect the person, making them think about the fact that people will not be alive forever. When a woman is coming home on a train in "Being Quick" in *The Whole Story and Other*

*Stories*, the train hits and kills a person. She has a man waiting for her at home but her phone is broken therefore she cannot call him to make him less worried. The train is stopped, so she gets out and walks home. The realisation of how fleeting life is makes her want to enjoy the time alone without worrying about others. At the beginning of the story, she sees Death which is very unexpected for her. Of course, it is just an ordinary man that she sees and gives him the attributes, the metaphor, of him being Death, but this encounter symbolises what is to come – a real death happening very near the woman protagonist.

### **2.3 Relationships leading to trauma**

Relations with other people can be good but also abusive, whether it's between friends or family. In the works of Smith, they range from rape, toxic relationships or lack of parents in children's lives.

#### ***2.3.1 Sexual abuse***

Elsebeth Freeman is a sick homeless woman when we meet her in *Hotel World*. In her life, she has experienced many things, such as a couple of men trying to perform exorcism on her. When she was 14 years old, Else was having sex with a 40-year-old Mr. Whitelaw. Just from the age difference it is obvious that this was rape. Reading on the description Else provides, it is obvious she did not want any part of it and was forced. In her head, she is telling herself to be as placid as possible, to make herself loose as if she is not a person but a soft doll. When the man tells her to stop holding too tight, she starts to loosen, but also think that she must be better for him:

“She is doing it wrong. She is holding on too tight. She has to hold on more loosely. For the life of her she can't think how to do it. Then she remembers the puppet Snow White that hangs on the back of her bedroom door. She imagines it like it would be if she were to take it off the hook and lay it out on the bed with its arms and legs loose on their strings. She pretends her arms and legs are like that, nothing to do with her, can only be made to work from above”<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Hotel World*, 60.

The coping mechanism Else adopts in this scene is dissociation. She tries to be somewhere else both with her body and her mind, letting it wander to films, Scottish history, Snow White, puppets, anywhere she can. Mr Whitelaw supports this kind of behaviour by praising her.

Knowing that her mother is upstairs in the bathroom has left its mark as well. This experience has been carried with her through her life, making her relationships almost non-existent. She likes to go around the city to look into people's houses, making herself at least see a normal family life she does not have as a homeless person. Around the time of the story, she is close to Abe, another homeless person, but they are not established partners.

### ***2.3.2 Missing parents***

Three girls are left to live alone in "Paradise" in *The Whole Story and Other Stories* after their parents separated and left them, both living with someone new and not caring about their children. They all hope they knew what happened, where they are, even if it meant they died in a speedboat accident, because "at least you would know where they are. At least you could look at the surface of the water and know that this was where they'd gone down. At least they would be dead, and it would mean something, instead of just living somewhere else with other people they're having sex with"<sup>43</sup>. Each of the girls is dealing with it differently but besides the youngest sister, they are dealing with it quite well. Kimberly works as a manager in a fast-food restaurant and she is really strong. Even when the fast food gets robbed, she handles it in a calm manner. As the oldest sister, she is the one taking most care of the family therefore she has to keep calm and be organised. Gemma, the middle sister, works on a cruise ship and is also dealing with the situation well. On the other hand, the youngest sister, Jasmine, has not come to terms with the situation yet. She stays out late into the night, drinking alcohol in a cemetery. Her coping mechanism and reaction to the whole situation is rebellion. Because when she is drunk, her feelings are numbed, and she can feel peaceful at least for a bit. Once she starts sobering up, "she can

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<sup>43</sup> Ali Smith. *The Whole Story and Other Stories*. (London: Penguin Group, 2004), 94.

feel everyfuckeenthen, every thing there is in the whole universe, she can feel it all”<sup>44</sup>. She is still very young, underage.

When a child is missing a father, it can truly hurt them. Growing up without one of the parents is hard. One of the coping mechanisms is finding a father figure in someone else. For Elisabeth in *Autumn*, it is her neighbour Daniel Gluck who becomes this figure for her. They met when she was still a child and they bonded very quickly. During her growing up, he spent time with Elisabeth, talked with her, and supported her in reading and learning. With Daniel being quite old, it comes to a point where he is hospitalised and in a coma. Elisabeth tries to visit him as often as she can to spend time with him. She usually just sits there with a book, reading it to herself or to Daniel, or she does not do anything at all, just keeping him company. She is unable to part with him even when he has no notion about his surroundings as she most likely does not want to lose another father figure that she has in her life.

Another instance of a missing father can be found in *Winter*. Art has never known his father, only his name and the fact he was an actor. He has no father figure in his life, only a mother who in her age started to develop a mental illness, hallucinating and most likely battling an eating disorder. From the missing father, Arthur has developed attachment issues that are complicating his relationships.

Arthur’s mother Sophia did not have her father in her life much either. He was not fully absent; he worked a lot and never had much time for his daughters. It was very rare for the father to spend time with his children during a weekday, as they were devoted to working in his office. Even in his absence, he was very strict with the older daughter Iris, who was kicked out of home by him. She had to go on living in a house with many people because that was the only home she was able to afford. These traumatic events were the reasons why the sisters were driven apart and never could successfully repair their relationship.

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<sup>44</sup> Smith, *Whole Story*, 112.

### ***2.3.3 Abuse in relationships***

Penny Warner is a rich journalist that takes part in the story of *Hotel World* as a person who is staying in the hotel, keeping company with Else and helping Clare to figure out the length of the fall. Growing up, Penny's mother and father were not good parents. Her mother has been showing obvious preference and more love to Penny's brother. Penny was not able to properly deal with the situation and to get more attention, she started sleeping with her parents' friends. When she found out her father was cheating on her mother, Penny, again to gain more attention, began to steal things. As a neglected child, Penny was trying to make her parents pay attention to her through doing these things. When she was a teenager and understood what was happening, she started to steal. Penny is fully aware of the fact that what she did was to get attention, some reaction from her parents, but it did not work yet.

Not only is Elisabeth in *Autumn* missing her father in her life, but her mother is also not doing a good job of being a parent. She is negligent towards her daughter, and usually does not pay that much attention to her daughter. This is most likely a second reason for Elisabeth's seeking of a person who will pay attention to her and take care of her. When it comes to her mother, there is another thing Elisabeth has to process. One day she comes into the living room to find her mother kissing a woman friend. Considering it was never mentioned that her mother might be attracted to women, it comes off as a big surprise. However, Elisabeth is able to deal with this situation well.

As was mentioned previously, Arthur in *Winter* has developed attachment issues in his relationships. He was dating Charlotte with whom he had fought most of the time. Overall, their relationship was quite toxic, and they ended up breaking up just before Art was supposed to come visit his mother together with Charlotte. Art was not able to commit properly to the relationship.

Eve and Michael in *The Accidental* are an example of a non-functioning couple trying to make it work. Michael has been cheating on Eve with his students for about ten years by the time the story takes place. Eve has known about it for a long time but prefers not to pay attention to it in order to make it work. Michael is her second husband. However, he was never able to properly stand in the position of a father of Eve's children. After their holiday

ends and they come home, Eve cannot take it anymore, she becomes traumatised from all of the bad things happening in her life. She leaves the family for a long time to travel but somehow, they still manage to stay together.

#### **2.3.4 War**

In *Winter*, there can be found an example of what happens to soldiers after experiencing war and how flashbacks come to life. Sophia is walking with her father one day through the town when some crates fell off a lorry. Her father in reaction “dived for the ground, he threw his hands over the back of his head like a bomb had gone off”<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Ali Smith. *Winter*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2017). 166.

### 3. Trauma in the works of A.L. Kennedy

#### 3.1 A.L. Kennedy

In her works, Kennedy well combines old traditions with new female inputs. A reader can never really predict what is to come in Kennedy's fiction. In her *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*, one can find an incredible "range of approaches and modes; from grim urban realism to surrealism, satire, and sardonic humour"<sup>46</sup> but keeping it unified in the theme of misfits and losers. Her characters often abuse themselves without even really knowing it, they are neurotic and obsessive. Especially in her novels, characters battle with dealing with a traumatic event. Those instances can be found in short stories too.

In *Now That You're Back*, Kennedy is moving more towards surrealist comic satire and grotesque stories of "sensitive exploration of damaged psyches and attempts at reconciliation"<sup>47</sup>. Often, Kennedy leaves spaces in her works, does not melodramatise certain things, but instead leaves the reader to figure out what might have happened. She instead focuses on the current reality. The titles of her works can be sometimes misleading, teasing something that is not delivered, but instead gives a shocking content.

Kennedy's novels and short stories often include a conflict between the person's inner feelings and thoughts, and how they are perceived by society and what is their identity in it. Her characters usually have trouble accepting themselves and want to become better in the eyes of society. The themes are quite bleak but written with great imagination and precision. Kennedy also tries to show that what is viewed as ordinary lives is in fact very complex.

In her novels, Kennedy ends with hope and a way to resolution, but nothing is developed fully. There is only a suggestion of possible resolution and normal life. Her short stories, on the other hand, are only glimpses into moments of the character's life of isolation and sadness. Short epiphanies allow the characters to have a look at their situation, but it is never enough for them to make a change or move past it.

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<sup>46</sup> Gifford, Dunnigan, MacGillivray, *Scottish literature*, 946.

<sup>47</sup> Gifford, Dunnigan, MacGillivray, *Scottish literature*, 946.

Often, Kennedy uses religious symbols, such as the god-like figure in “Breaking Sugar” in *Original Bliss* in the form of Mr Haskard, as well as magic realism, symbolism and allegorical meanings.

### 3.2 Broken relationships

When a child loses both parents, they are usually raised by a foster parent or grandparents. That is the case of John in “Bracing Up” in *Now That You’re Back*. Both of his parents are not around, therefore he was raised by his grandfather Tad-cu. The treatment John received was not nice at all. Tad-cu has been bullying him almost his whole childhood, abusing and hurting him. John does a puppet theatre on the streets, playing a Welshman. Tad-cu took it as an opportunity to beat him up for it. He was hoping that Tad-cu would like it, as is expressed in the following passage: “And you’d thought he would like it. For no good reason, but you’d thought it might be something he’d be proud of. You’d been doing a Welshman, for Christsake. Bloody convincingly, too”<sup>48</sup>. On the contrary, Tad-cu took it almost as an insult towards his own person, expressing his feelings by saying “Spoiled. I said you were spoiled and I was right. No one with our name will ever do what you just did. No one. What was it supposed to be? Ha?”<sup>49</sup>.

What Tad-cu wanted from John was perfection as he imagined it and was not afraid to beat him into it. In this prolonged traumatic event, all bravery and feeling of safety was lost in John. For twenty years, he did not feel safe anywhere and avoided people, he was not able to open up, and form any meaningful relationships. but lived with the need to repay Tad-cu. When his grandfather was old and staying in a home, John paid him a visit where he finally faced the old man and told him off. Only afterwards was he able to move on a little bit and start feeling safe. However, it did nothing to rid John of feeling miserable.

Getting married and waking up to a dead husband after a wedding night, that is a traumatic event that happened to a Grandmother in “Genteel Potatoes” in *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*. The cause of death is cancer and it makes the Grandmother

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<sup>48</sup> A.L. Kennedy. *Now That You’re Back*. (London: Vintage, 1995), 100.

<sup>49</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You’re Back*, 100.

feel as if it all has been just a bad joke. After the horrible experience of waking up to a dead body next to her, she struggles with feeling lonely and the need to have company. For quite some time, she “can’t let herself be alone in her own home. She will willingly sit in the street in the rain, jut to keep near to people as they pass”<sup>50</sup>. Grandmother does not recover from the empty feeling left in her until she gets married again to Grandfather, who is very much in love with her. Only then “things will begin to get better, although never entirely the same”<sup>51</sup> – the Grandmother is not able to come to the way she was before, carrying with her the trauma her whole life, but is able to cope.

The Grandmother’s siblings have lived through the Second World War and thus saw many things that can be classified as traumatic experiences. Grandmother’s sister Sue has found a severed head in an alley behind their house. Interestingly, Kennedy points out that it is unknown what will happen with the head, as if there could have been many things done with the head. However, living with the image of finding a head lying around is difficult, especially since it is not the only instance in their family.

Losing a loved or a close person is traumatising no matter how it happens, whether it is by them dying, getting divorced or just plainly leaving. Even after a divorce can a person be so broken that they need a long time to deal with the situation. That is the case of a father in the story “The Snowbird” in *Original Bliss*. He and his wife have been divorced for some while now but he has not properly processed it yet. The father has some issues to which his daughters pay a lot of attention and try to help him deal with it. He is trying to be as good of a dad as he possibly can because he loves his daughters a lot. As a father, he is also very concerned about whether the girls even like spending time with him or if they want to stay with their mother with whom he does not have a good relationship.

The daughters are coping with the divorce very well and it is obvious that perhaps they are putting aside their own feelings in order to be able to help their father get everything together and be a functional person. Especially Amanda has matured very quickly in order to be able to take care of her father when he needs it. She has become truly

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<sup>50</sup> A.L. Kennedy. *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*. (London: Phoenix, 1995), 46.

<sup>51</sup> Kennedy, *Night Geometry*, 46.

a practical person, paying attention to every detail, even to the amount of painkillers her father takes in order to make sure he does not overdose. Amanda became interested in world events, even the horrible ones, which might be explained by the traumatic event of divorce she has gone through as she can find out about what bad things are happening to other people and not only to her.

### 3.3 Sexual abuse

Being raped by a father and then many more men has messed up with the protagonist's head in the story "Friday Payday" in *Now That You're Back*. Her father called it "having a cuddle and said it was her mother's fault. He'd used to do this with her mother but then she'd gone to somewhere else and he still needed someone because he was a normal man"<sup>52</sup>. Not only was he using her, but also manipulating her by saying these things. It led to her wanting "to be somewhere else. It made you need a different place to be, getting stuck with a normal man"<sup>53</sup>.

Out of all the men who abused her, she actually preferred her father a little bit as he was smoother and craftier, perhaps even gentler than other men. One of the experiences with different men other than her father is described like this: "Only he'd called it testing the goods when he did it and he'd made her take him out of herself and rub him. He'd put it in her throat so she'd thought she would die, couldn't breathe, didn't know how to manage yet"<sup>54</sup>.

Whether some of them were better or not does not matter in the end. Every single time something like this happened, she would be wishing to be somewhere else and have no part in any of it. At one point, however, she resigned a little bit and started to think that "that was badness, she just had to accept that there was badness in people, like that"<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You're Back*, 133.

<sup>53</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You're Back*, 133.

<sup>54</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You're Back*, 132 – 133.

<sup>55</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You're Back*, 133.

All these events have lowered her sense of self-worth and any prospects of having a good future. Instead, she has grown up to become a prostitute with a drug addict boyfriend Danny that also took the money she made on the street from him. She even goes to the length of distancing herself from the amateurs, young school kids that come out on the street to make money for the weekend on Friday night, keeping her distance from them to be able to get more customers and appear a bit more professional since for her, it something she has to do to be able to survive.

Danny, her boyfriend, used to be a much better man before he started taking drugs. She has been thinking of having a proper future with him, starting a family. At the point of the story, however, he was addicted to taking drugs so much he was “sticking needles anywhere he’d seen a vein”<sup>56</sup>. Now she has to bring him money she makes on the street for his drugs and take care of him. All the time, she was trying to make everyone take precautions to make sure they stay as healthy as possible, and Danny is now ruining it with the needles. Sometimes, she wishes he was gone, dead, with all the other people as well, so that she can live a better life.

Grace’s father in “The Moving House” from *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains* has been absent in most of her life. The first memory that she has is of her father picking her up from her bed, bringing into the living room with drawn curtains and sitting with her there, Grace falling asleep. When she woke up, that was it, she never saw her father afterwards.

Grace then moved in with Aunt Ivy, her grandmother’s sister. For some time, life was good but lonely. Ivy has worked in a hospital which meant that Grace was often waking up alone, making her own breakfast and, overall, just having to take care of herself. Until the day she found her aunt dead in the bedroom. However, Grace knew it was coming, as “you shouldn’t trust old people, they always die, and as soon as she opened the door, she knew”<sup>57</sup> since Ivy was sick as well.

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<sup>56</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You’re Back*, 136.

<sup>57</sup> Kennedy, *Night Geometry*, 37.

Afterwards, she has gone back to live with her mother and a man, Chick. One day, he has taken Grace up to their room and raped her. Kennedy does not describe the scene explicitly, it can be only deduced from the way Grace is thinking and the conversation they have. When it happened, Grace was very happy it did not take place in her own room, in her bed, because she thought of it as a way to keep it clean and hers. However, when she woke up in the morning, she hated the smell of him that was still clinging to her – it made her sick the night before and in the morning, it was even worse. Grace felt as if he had “spoiled them, the way he had spoiled her skin. She couldn’t wash enough; he was in the bone and he came back like another dream”<sup>58</sup>. The only thing Grace wished to do was get rid of him, the feeling of him on her skin. It is not clear whether Grace has shared what happened with anyone, but she definitely wanted to get away as far as she could. Chick made her believe that no one would trust her if she told them what he did, threatening her not to tell and calling her names. He has also tried to emotionally extort her from telling her mother, since she’d be angry and sad, finishing his speech by telling her that next time will be better and she will come to enjoy it. Chick also indicates that he personally is going to do it again since it is ““something you do with a friend””<sup>59</sup>.

The story begins with a dream, and after learning about the rape, it can be connected together very easily. Grace describes it as a familiar dream, but she feels like she could not have slept. Still, “the dream is sharp in her mind, as if it had happened again in sleep”<sup>60</sup>. In her dream, she can see a room with drawn curtains. This image can be connected both to the first memory she has and the last memory of her father, as well as to the time of the rape, as in both instances, the curtains possibly being drawn in both her dreams.

### **3.4 Psychological abuse**

In “Now That You’re Back”, there are three brothers – Phil, Tom, and Billy. Living with their parents, they had a very hard childhood. Their mother was very sweet, trying to

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<sup>58</sup> Kennedy, *Night Geometry*, 41.

<sup>59</sup> Kennedy, *Night Geometry*, 41.

<sup>60</sup> Kennedy, *Night Geometry*, 35.

protect them as much as possible. On the other hand, the boys' father must have been very abusive towards them. It is not explicitly mentioned what has been done to them but "when Pa came home they had to be asleep, they must be sleeping. He felt himself lying frozen with his eyes shut, hoping there would be no voices in that paper-walled house, hoping for no noises, no crying and no footsteps suddenly storming to turn on their light"<sup>61</sup>. From this quote, it is obvious that their father was not a patient or kind man but was abusive.

Tom has been scarred the most out of the three boys as the youngest brother. Judging from a conversation he had with his brother Billy regarding alcohol in the house and getting rid of it, it can be assumed that Tom is a now sober alcoholic. When he was still drinking, there were times from which he cannot remember anything. At a funeral, he has punched Billy but learned about it only later. Once, he ended up being found lying on the roof of a car and taken to a hospital, his brothers thinking that was the end of him. At the same time, he is carrying with himself a lot of trauma and some mental issues that are not discussed much in the story. Tom cries a lot, is sort of aloof and has been gone for some time. It can be clearly assumed that he is struggling with suicidal thoughts as shows the end of the story: "And another day almost over, made it again, that deserved a smile"<sup>62</sup>.

The fear of his father, of being hurt generally, has stayed with Tom most of his life. Even when his father is no longer a danger to him, he gets scared. Phil once finds Tom standing outside, skipping stones on the water of the pool, and the first moment of Phil's presence, of his voice, frightens Tom. He is able to recognize him and knows that with his brother, there is absolutely nothing for him to fear, he still finds "himself curling over slightly under his words, a cold space swinging open in his chest"<sup>63</sup>. This example shows how much Tom has been affected by his father since he gets so easily worried and afraid of what pain might come. The fear does not leave him even in the night where nightmares come to frighten him even more, waking up with a scream from them.

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<sup>61</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You're Back*, 246.

<sup>62</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You're Back*, 246.

<sup>63</sup> Kennedy, *Now That You're Back*, 229.

Having his brothers with him is a big help for Tom. Both Phil and Billy are very kind to him and try to take care of him. They still make some mistakes by keeping alcohol with them when they should not, but fix their mistakes quickly. As his brothers, they also help him when he is having a bad dream, trying to soothe him. They are there to always soothe him and not judge when he starts crying, support him when he is feeling horrible even if it seems that he is trying to claw his way out of himself. But Phil keeps on hugging him, steadying him, trying to make him feel better. Thanks to all this support, Tom is able to cope in a good way and live his life a day at a time. Both brothers are extremely protective of him, going to uncomfortable lengths in order to make Tom feel better after his nightmare, always assuring him that they are here for them and will help him deal with his struggles.

The protagonist in “Groucho’s Moustache” in *Original Bliss* is a person who needs trust and values it above all, which is also a reason why she believes even the stupidest things. However, whenever anyone lies, she gets very aggressive about it. She fantasises about “choking this or that flagrant liar by pushing a hatchet into their windpipe ... ripping out the lungs of various statesmen, broadcasters, tobacconists, bar-room gossips, bus drivers and partners-for-life. I picture myself, spreading their warm and slippery lungs across enormous linoleum floors and then stamping them into paste”<sup>64</sup>. It is obvious there must have been something to cause this need for being able to trust people and demand it. At the time of the story, she is not able to trust any man as they usually lie.

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<sup>64</sup> A.L. Kennedy. *Original Bliss*. (London: Vintage, 1998). 37.

## 4. Janice Galloway and trauma

### 4.1 Janice Galloway

Janice Galloway has written some outstanding works concerning new ways of looking at women in contemporary Scotland. In her short stories, she deals with “issues of male-female relations, in a range of perspectives, moods, and styles; from the humorously sympathetic regarding gender differences to ferocious anger and even surrealism”<sup>65</sup>.

In her works, there can be found topics of exploring sexuality and gender identity, sometimes in a very intense way. Both in Galloway’s novels and short stories, characters can be found struggling with dealing with trauma and the consequences that come with it. Galloway is able to draw inspiration from her first-hand experience of having an alcoholic father who died when she was just a child, her mother attempting a suicide, as well as her own struggles with a mental illness. Galloway is a feminist which is quite visible in her works. She gives a voice to edgy female characters who are very strong. They do not conform to traditional views of society and are able to find their place in the men-ruled world. She also uses Scottish accents in the ways the characters speak. Galloway does not confirm the opinion that Scotland is defined by the male population and tries to establish women, and female artists, as an important part of the country’s culture.

Galloway experiments in the way she writes by adding rhythmical alterations to punctuation or creates paragraphs in a way that shows her artistry. Some works are built like a collage. As an author, Galloway excels in writing short stories, novels and also historical novels.

Not only does Galloway’s characters experience traumatic events and have to deal with them, she also comments on how society views rape victims through the protagonist of the story in “Peeping Tom” in *Where You Find It*. In the story, there is a man looking in through a window at a girl doing yoga. She has read somewhere about the easy victim mentality and is trying to do everything she can to make sure it does not apply to her, she is trying to be very brave and refuse to be a victim. Because, as she puts it, “at least then

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<sup>65</sup> Gifford, Dunnigan, MacGillivray, *Scottish literature*, 940.

I'll know if I'm raped and hacked to fragments I didn't give the guy any encouragement. I didn't ask for it. I want to be sure I took no chances on that score"<sup>66</sup>. As was mentioned previously, society often finds a fault in rape victims rather than the rapist, such as commenting on the fact that a woman should not be walking alone in the night or she wore short dress and thus was asking for it. This passage can be viewed as a critique of this mindset of belittling the survivor's trauma.

## 4.2 Psychological trauma

Visits at the dentist are usually quite traumatic experiences for children every time. In the story "Blood" from the collection of the same name, the experience is made much more drastic. In vivid detail, the story describes the removal of a tooth of a schoolgirl. The girl is immobilised, and the dentist is using unnecessary strength to perform the extraction. Afterwards, there is a lot of blood which does not stop flowing for quite some time. She feels ashamed of her bleeding when she goes back to school and hides in a music practice room to be alone. The reason for this might relate to a metaphor for menstruation. Bleeding in a young girl's life, especially if others happen to find out, is very shameful and there is no wonder she tries to hide it from others even though she is bleeding from her gums after a doctor's appointment.

Sometimes, fathers adopt strange ways of teaching their children how to stand up for themselves in school. Such a case can be found in "Scenes from the Life No. 23: Paternal Advice" in *Blood*, where a father is doing it by tricking his son to trust him. He puts little Sammy onto a mantelpiece, telling him to jump down and he will catch him. However, when Sammy jumps, the father moves away and Sammy falls down on the floor. The lesson is finished by the father's remark: "Let that be a lesson to you son. Trust nae cunt"<sup>67</sup>.

This way of getting a point across is very brutal and can cause some mental damage to the child later on in life through inflicting trauma in them. Playing with the mind of an innocent child and tricking them into trusting, then betraying the trust truly shows to them

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<sup>66</sup> Janice Galloway. *Where You Find It*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 119.

<sup>67</sup> Janice Galloway. *Blood*. (London: Minerva, 1992), 16.

that you cannot trust anyone. If this is repeated or not dealt with correctly, the child can grow up into a person with serious trust issues, not able to connect with anyone, thus ruining every relationship in their life. In the story, however, it is not mentioned what happened afterwards, how it was handled or how the son reacted. We only learn that even through his strong and serious façade, the father ends up regretting the action slightly, holding back tears.

In the story of “Frostbite” in *Blood*, we encounter an old man trying to catch a bus going to his son’s place. He is terrified of his son being mad at him due to him being late. There must be a reason for such a fear since being late is not such a big of an offence. It can be assumed that the son might be either quite a violent person or not able to control his anger very much.

The old man, Pat, is coming from a pub to the bus station when he falls and a young woman waiting for a bus goes to help him. At this point, it is revealed that just moments ago, he has been abused by a woman he met in the pub. She has broken his glasses and his retelling of it has reduced him to tears. Pat was just at a pub having a drink when it happened with “a bad woman but he hadn’t known it at the time, and as they were leaving the pub together, going out the door, she hit him. Knocked him down in the street hard, so it broke his specs”<sup>68</sup>. He ended up feeling extremely sad afterwards, always looking at his broken glasses. This experience has instilled in him bad feelings, being afraid of what might happen next, as well as causing a very emotional reaction to the kindness of the young woman helping him.

Mothers love is very important in every child’s life and in a boy’s sometimes even more. A lack of affection and attention can be quite traumatic to the child and cause them to create attachment issues as well as the need for attention. This is the case in “He Dreams of Pleasing his Mother” in *Where You Find It*. There is no indication of how old the son in the story is therefore it cannot be judged properly how much effect the trauma has on him. When he was six, he was hurt by his mother, which is said to be an accident but might have been meant. He is sitting outside watching his mother leave, meaning to wait for her until

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<sup>68</sup> Galloway, *Blood*, 25.

she returns. More than determined to wait, he would be there “no matter what condition he was in when she arrived, he’d be here”<sup>69</sup>. It shows how much not getting enough attention from her affects him when he keeps trying his best to be there for her. It will most definitely have a major impact in his later life.

### 4.3 Sexual and physical abuse

Even when consented, sex might end up being a traumatic experience. It can be assumed that the story “David” in *Blood* describes such an occasion. A girl is at a party, and she goes into a bathroom with a boy where they end up sleeping with each other. During the whole event, it is obvious that the girl might not be fully willing to participate but neither is there explicitly mentioned the fact that she does not want to have sex with the boy. There is however something stopping her a little, a bad feeling, a tightness in her stomach. At the end, a friend from downstairs is calling the two of them, wondering if they are okay. She is not able to think, not sure whether she is or is not okay, as well as wondering what else she can say. This shows the uncertainty of the whole exchange in the girl and the fact that she is not sure what to do about what they had done.

“A Week with Uncle Felix” describes how an eleven-year-old girl named Senga is dealing with her father’s death. She loved him and losing him has been hard on her. However, even with him alive, things might not have been too easy. When thinking about being able to speak about him dying, she feels that the word dad is strange in this context. Also, she remembers things that were not entirely good: “cigarette burns, the stink of drink and being woken up in the dark, shouting. Crying and hysterics”<sup>70</sup>. From this passage, it can be assumed that her father liked to drink and perhaps abused her mother when he did drink which would explain the shouting and crying. From her mother, she has heard a lot of descriptions of how he was “drunk and violent, a good thing he died when he did, wasted his life and tried to waste everybody else’s”<sup>71</sup>. He died in a hospital where Senga visited

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<sup>69</sup> Galloway, *Where You Find It*, 185.

<sup>70</sup> Galloway, *Blood*, 165.

<sup>71</sup> Galloway, *Blood*, 169.

him and sang for him. Her father cried when this happened but was not able to recognize his daughter.

Even if living with him might not have been easy, his loss is a traumatic event for her as she finds it hard to cope with it. Uncle Felix is her father's brother who comes to visit once. Senga does not remember him, but he takes her with him for a bit to his home in England.

Senga is fascinated with a man who knew her father when he was a child and wants to know a lot of things about him. However, she is not able to do so. Or even speak out loud about the death of her father. Her chest ends up tightening and voice chokes up. She is also not sure what exactly she would like to hear. Learning that he liked flowers is not what Senga is looking for.

It is obvious just from the fact that Felix keeps a photo of Senga in his house that he has some ulterior motives with her. When he describes how he used to take her photos to work to show his co-workers how pretty niece he has, it makes it clear he would like to sexually abuse her. And he does so. On the last night of Senga staying with Felix, he tucks her to bed and while doing so, they talk, Felix gives her a necklace, and Senga starts to feel really sad, on the verge of crying. She moves a little closer to him for comfort, but he asks her for a goodnight kiss. Senga is wearing just a short nightie which Felix uses to his advantage to slip a hand in between her thighs and on her breasts. Senga prepared mentally for what is about to come, fully aware of what can happen. She promises to herself that "she wouldn't shout. No matter what happened she wouldn't shout"<sup>72</sup>. Thankfully, Felix stops and leaves, saying it was a mistake and she should not take it too hard.

For already traumatised Senga from her father's death, coping with this situation is not easy. In the night, she is left with only a piece of broken lace in her hand. When she is supposed to leave in the morning, she is ready quickly and cannot get away fast enough, her stay there only prolonged by them taking lots of pictures. This story does not mention anything about how Senga deals with the situation when she comes home, what sort of long term effect it has on her or if she tells anyone. The story ends with her leaving the house in

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<sup>72</sup> Galloway, *Blood*, 176.

a car but if the story did continue, it is clear that there would be mentions of how such a traumatic experience – of being molested by a family member – has been understood and processed by Senga.

Alcohol can make any person lose control of their emotions and become violent which has a negative impact on their surroundings and can cause trauma to those affected by them. That is the case of Mary in “A Proper Respect” in *Where You Find It*. Her husband is a drunk who physically abused her which is why she decided to leave him along with their child. She was let alone afterwards, no one really willing to take the two of them in and help. Not only did Mary go through trauma of living with an abusive drunk partner, but the society around her also excused his actions. They view a drinking man as something normal that they should do and if they drink too much, they need it. When it comes to the abuse, no one supports her in trying to get away from it, not even her mother. She tells her that since she picked him and married him, it is her own fault and has to deal with it. The response of society is that “if he’d hit her it would be nothing she hadn’t asked for”<sup>73</sup>, making it all her fault for not taking enough care of him as he was seen hanging up washed laundry.

#### **4.4 Losing something dear**

An event as simple as hair cutting can lead to a slight development of trauma. “Into the Roots” in *Blood* introduces an eleven-year-old Alice who is forced to have her hair cut. However, she is not able to part with her hair and in order to deal with the loss, she keeps it all. In the later years, she has developed a big emotional connection to her hair, refusing to let them be cut, using them as a device to shield herself from the eyes of others. Towards the end of the story, Alice has broken up with her partner Charles and is struggling to deal with the loss. This brings back again the difficulties of parting with things she is emotionally attached to as she considers cutting her hair since Charles has liked them long. But she is not able to do that, opting rather to go out for a walk to clean her head, finding a tree full of hair.

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<sup>73</sup> Galloway, *Where You Find It*, 144.

Seeing a cat burning in a fireplace and not being able to do anything to help is horrible in itself. But when a person who is mourning the death of the cat decides to climb into the fire as well, that is not something little Janet should experience in such a short time. But she does in “Breaking Through” in *Blood*. Janet is so very confused about what has happened but in the end helps Bessie to get into the fireplace. The story only shows glimpses into this situation and in no way describes what happens next. However, seeing an animal and a person burn alive is definitely a traumatic experience for anyone, let alone a child.

## 5. Comparing the three authors

One thing all the works of these three authors have in common is that there is no resolution to the trauma in any of the stories. They are mostly just an insight into a certain moment of the protagonists' lives, describing what is happening at the moment with extra flashbacks. These moments describe what has happened previously and could have caused the current mental state of the person. There are usually obvious signs that some traumatic event did happen in the life of the protagonist.

The stories only mostly aim to give a description of what is going on currently but they mostly never go as far as finding and delivering a resolution to trauma survivors. Some hinting can be found towards a possible development or a path towards dealing with the trauma and finding some realisation in few of the stories but it usually never goes as far as actually getting to the point of improvement. Their coping mechanisms are mostly not described or it is not mentioned if they are helpful. The survivors never seek professional help nor do they fully realise some traumatic experience happened to them.

In between the common topics of trauma causes can be found losing a loved person. This traumatic event appears in the works of all three authors as the biggest cause of the struggles. Death is unpredictable and often comes when least expected which is why it is traumatic to the protagonists. The lost person is mostly a parent but it is not always because they die. In Kennedy's "Bracing Up", the parents of the child have died leaving the boy with his grandfather whereas in Smith's "Paradise" they have separated and stopped caring about their three daughters, finding a new partner and beginning life with them.

Another theme repeated over and over again is abuse, whether sexual or psychological. It can be done either by family members, loved ones or total strangers. An example of molesting a family member can be found in Galloway's "A Week with Uncle Felix" or both a psychological and physical abuse in "Now That You're Back" by Kennedy.

There is a slight distinction in the styles of how each of the three authors portrays the trauma and what kind of impact it has on the protagonists. Some of them include more details of what happened, others show more of how the person is behaving right now.

Ali Smith has been inspired in her works by both Galloway and Kennedy and many other authors she used to write criticisms about. She has learned a lot about how to explain

and show things and it is obvious from her works. Her descriptions of trauma are clear and a reader does not have to look for clues in between lines as much as with Kennedy or Galloway. Smith provides the reader with flashbacks and scenes explaining why things are the way they are right now even if they are not presented chronologically or in a set order.

Galloway, on the other hand, provides mostly only an insight into the current situation with only very briefly grazing the reasons why it is the way it is. Her stories focus mostly on the description rather than the emotional state of the protagonists. Kennedy's stories stand in the middle. They show slightly more details than Galloway's but at the same time do not dive as deeply as Smith's stories.

## **Conclusion**

The original aim of this thesis was to conclude what trauma is and how it is demonstrated in the works of Ali Smith, Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy. The research has shown that each of the authors takes a slightly different approach but they keep true to Scottish literature and are able to portray trauma well. The works chosen for this thesis have demonstrated examples of typical causes of trauma in many different types of people.

The initial discussion of trauma theory revealed how exactly trauma can be defined, how it manifests itself and what are the possible treatments. The definition of trauma is a response to an unexpected event that is hard to comprehend and process. The impact of trauma might include flashbacks to the traumatic experience, inability to create meaningful relationships or nightmares. There is no real treatment for trauma but coping mechanisms, therapy and understanding of what happened and coming to terms with it help to live with it better.

Describing the works of the three Scottish authors, it can be concluded that they are writing meaningful fiction that shows the importance of talking about trauma as many people encounter it during their life at least once without even realising it. All three authors use the most common causes of trauma and show how it affects each of their protagonists. They do not fall into one category and each person deals differently with the same traumatic event.

Lastly, this thesis addresses the similarities and differences in the works of Smith, Kennedy and Galloway. The research has revealed that there are more things in common rather than different. Each of them has a slightly different approach but in the end, they open very important conversations.

## Resumé

Původním záměrem této práce bylo shrnout co trauma je a jak je reprezentováno v dílech Ali Smith, Janice Galloway a A.L. Kennedy. Výzkum ukázal, jak jednotlivé autorky přistupují k popisu trauma. Díla vybraná pro tuto práci ukazují příklady typických příčin traumatu v různých typech lidí.

V úvodní diskuzi o traumatu samotném je popsána definice trauma, jeho příznaky a možnosti léčby. Trauma je definované jako odpověď na nečekanou situaci, která je těžko pochopitelná a zpracovatelná pro daného člověka. Tato definice obsahuje dvě důležité části. První z nich je nutnost pro nějakou situaci, důvod, proč trauma vzniká. Druhou, stejně podstatnou částí, je fakt, že traumatizující situace je těžko zpracovatelná. Člověk ji není schopen pochopit během toho, co touto situací prochází. Doba, za jakou se traumatizující situace zpracuje a pochopí se u každého jedince liší a není jasně vymezená.

Původně bylo trauma spojeno především s válkou. Vojáci v ní prožívali velké množství hrůz, například smrt svých přátel nebo povinnost zabíjet nepřátele. Tato zkušenost měla negativní dopad na jejich psychiku. Postupně však začali psychologové popisovat trauma i v lidech, kteří válku neprožili, ale prošli jinou traumatizující situací. Jedná se například o náhlou smrt blízkého člověka, znásilnění nebo přírodní katastrofy jako hurikán nebo tornádo.

Jedním z prvních psychologů, kteří se začali traumatu věnovat více, je Sigmund Freud. Ve své práci se zaměřuje na fyzické trauma způsobené situací ohrožující život i na psychické trauma. Zdůrazňuje důležitost element překvapení. Dle jeho principu potěšení sa jednotlivé organismy snaží vyvarovat nepříjemným situacím. Freud se také věnuje vzpomínkám a snům, skrz které se trauma často obětím vrací a skrz které ho znovu prožívají.

Neexistuje žádná jednotná účinná léčba na trauma, pouze různé techniky, které pomáhají zvládat trauma a jeho projevy. Přístup k léčení je pro každou oběť specifický a přizpůsobený. Jedná se však většinou o kombinaci terapie, porozumění tomu, co se stalo a proč, a přijetí toho, co se stalo. Spousta obětí se často ptá, proč se traumatizující situace stala zrovna jim, čím si to zasloužili. Důležitou roli ve zvládnání traumatu hraje také reakce a podpora okolí.

I když neexistuje žádná zaručená forma zvládnutí trauma, je třeba s ním pracovat správně. Pokud se tak neděje, může to vést k ještě horším projevům. Opakované prožívání traumatu skrz terapii může vést k mnoha nepříjemným situacím, v nejzazším případě dokonce i k sebevraždě oběti.

V literatuře se trauma objevuje ve formě hlavní postavy, která prošla traumatizující situací a soustředí se na vnitřní pochody postavy. Často se stává, že trauma není popsáno detailně, ale pomocí nápověd, které pomáhají čtenáři zjistit, co se stalo a proč se postava chová určitým způsobem. Příběhy obsahující trauma mohou psát lidé, kteří trauma neprožili, nebo ti, kteří traumatizující situaci zažili a pomocí psaní se s ní snaží vyrovnat.

Současná skotská literatura čerpá náměty ze skotské tradice i historie, věnuje se současnému životu v Skotsku nebo skotské osoby v zahraničí. Skotská literatura je tradičně pochmurná, zabývá se tématy, které jsou dramatické, popisují drsnou realitu, jako například drogově závislé osoby nebo právě traumatizované postavy.

Tato práce se zaměřuje především na trauma v dílech tří současných skotských autorek; Ali Smith, Janice Galloway a A.L. Kennedy. V nich můžeme najít příklady jednotlivců, kteří prožili traumatizující situaci a ve chvílích, které jsou popisované v příbězích, buďto právě tuto situaci prožívají nebo, častěji, prochází jejími následky a snaží se s ní vyrovnat.

Mezi hlavní příčiny traumatu v dílech Ali Smith patří smrt. Jedná se například o rodinného příslušníka, spolužáka nebo dokonce i naprosto cizí osobu. Další často se objevující příčinou je trauma způsobené jinou osobou. Mezi tyto patří znásilnění, chybějící rodiče v dětství nebo násilí. Každá z postav, které Smith popisuje, se s traumatem vyrovnává jinak. Někteří podléhají alkoholu, jiní se nedokáží odpoutat od ztracené blízké osoby a neustále se snaží zjistit detaily jejich smrti.

Smith nejčastěji popisuje traumatické situace nepřímo, ukazuje je v různých situacích a vzpomínkách dané postavy. Zaměřuje se více na dopad, jaký tato situace na postavu měla, jak se vyrovnávají s tím, co prožili, a jestli se posunují ve zpracování traumatu. Postavy se mohou stranit společnosti, preferovat samotu nebo jsou naopak neschopné navázat plnohodnotné vztahy na základě jejich problémů důvěřovat ostatním.

A.L. Kennedy se zaměřuje na problematické vztahy, sexuální zneužívání nebo psychologické násilí. Její postavy si často samy ubližují aniž by si toho byly vědomy. Její povídky jsou často pouze náhledy do života postav. Neobsahují tedy příliš mnoho detailů, čtenář je nucen číst mezi řádky. Postavy tak nedosahují rozluštění jejich problémů, na konci povídky často trpí stejně jako na začátku. Objevují se záblesky naděje, kdy postava vidí možnost, jak zlepšit svou situaci, nikdy ale netrvají dostatečně dlouho, aby se postava opravdu vyvinula a dokázala trauma zpracovat.

Každá postava se v dílech Kennedy vyrovnává s traumatem podle svých vlastních možností. Některým trvá překonat strach z člověka, který jim ubližoval, tak dlouho, dokud ten člověk neumírá, a pouze tehdy nalézají odvahu se mu postavit. Vyrovnat se se ztrátou blízké osoby, ať už z důvodu smrti nebo rozvodu, trvá každé postavě jinak dlouho a pomáhá jim něco jiného. Jedna postava se potřebuje soustředit na své děti, jiná najít náhradu za partnera.

Janice Galloway se věnuje především psychickému traumatu způsobeného cizími lidmi i blízkými, ale také fyzickému násilí a sexuálnímu zneužívání. V porovnání s Kennedy a Smith se Galloway věnuje i méně obvyklé příčině traumatu v dílech těchto autorek, a to ztrátě věci, ke které si postava vyvinula velice silný vztah. V případě jedné povídky to jsou vlasy.

Její postavy opět nemají příležitost se posunout blíže k vyrovnání se s traumatickou situací. Povídky se zaměřují především na situaci, kdy daná situace probíhá, popisují vzpomínky na ni nebo na ni nepřímo poukazují.

Všechny tři autorky se věnují traumatu podobným způsobem. V dílech Ali Smith se ve srovnání s Galloway a Kennedy objevuje více popisů vlivu prožití traumatické situace než popis situace samotné. Postavy mají větší možnost růstu, povídky se zaměřují na větší časový úsek. Kdežto díla A.L. Kennedy, a především Janice Galloway, poskytují povídky pouze krátký náhled do života postav, popisují současné dění a postavy se nevyrovnávají s traumatem. Pouze Galloway popisuje traumatizující situaci napřímo, Smith a Kennedy se k situacím vrací spíše ve vzpomínkách a popisech současného psychického stavu postavy.

Příčiny traumatu u postav všech tří autorek se příliš neliší. Opakují se situace jako smrt blízkého člověka, sexuální zneužití, psychické i fyzické násilí nebo nepřítomnost rodiče v dětství.

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## **Anotace**

### **Anotace česky**

A.L.Kennedy, Janice Galloway a Ali Smith jsou často spojované v rámci mnoha kategorií. Trauma narace je jeden z nich a poskytuje prostor pro další analýzu. Jednotlivé autorky se od sebe liší, ale všechny se zabývají obyčejnými, malými a nedůležitými životy jednotlivců, kteří zažili útlak, násilí nebo dokonce smrt. Tato práce se zabývá rozdíly v zobrazení těchto jednotlivců v dílech Kennedy, Galloway a Smith.

### **Klíčová slova**

Trauma, zvládací techniky, traumatické události, násilí, smrt

### **Anotace anglicky**

A.L.Kennedy, Janice Galloway and Ali Smith have been grouped among many categories. The trauma narrative being one of them and it provides a potential stepping stone for further analysis. Different as the individual authors might be perceived, all of them concern themselves with uneventful, "small", insignificant lives; individuals subjected to oppression, abuse and even death. This thesis follows the difference of treatment of these individuals by Kennedy, Galloway and Smith.

### **Key words**

Trauma, coping mechanisms, traumatic experiences, abuse, death