

## From Psychosocial Dissociation to Social Connectivity: A psycho-traumatic Analysis of Oskar's Character in Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

Mashal Ghalib<sup>1</sup> and Usama Amjad<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*Literature reflects the society of all times. The present study attempts to explore the effects of 9/11 when two plane crashes occurred in the US world clock tallest buildings that give physical, emotional, economic and social blow to the America and its people. It creates traumatic impacts on the people who are directly or indirectly related to it. The current study describes the acting out of a traumatized character "Oskar" in post-9/11 fiction *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Saffran Foer, which is a succinct representation of the young and old persons affecting from trauma of 9/11. The textual data is analyzed through *Unclaimed Experience; Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) of Cathy Caruth and *Writing Trauma, Writing History* (2001) of Lacapra. The analysis describes the way Oskar dissociates from his family due to his 9/11 traumatic impacts or acting out in his personality and then later on he connects with his family by healing of his trauma through several challenging turmoil. The research helps us to cope up with different traumatic experiences of our daily lives and to trace the various traumas affecting particular people in the society. Oskar is stereotype of all those young children who are suffering from the trauma of different historical events. The current study can be implicated to deal with different traumas caused by unexpected events in the society that can be healed by melancholy and mourning of Freud as parallel to "acting out" and "working through" of Lacapra.*

**Keywords:** Jonathan Saffer Foer, 9/11, Lacapra, Traumatic Experiences

### INTRODUCTION

In fictional and non-fictional world, trauma has been one of the greatest impacts of the war. In fiction, the writer peeped deeply into the mind of a traumatized character so to show his/her "acting out" and coping with his own trauma. A huge number of people are suffering from trauma as post-war impact, which can also be seen in fiction written after the war.

Traumatic symptoms were present earlier but authors and other people were not familiar with explaining what happened to them in words, which can be seen by the first wave of novels that played with visual elements, lacking or seeking the vocabulary to describe the event. The next wave focused on domestic relationships, family marriages along with complexities, which often cause trauma. Trauma fiction always has a relationship with the literary devices used for the expression of trauma. For example, Kristine A. miller compares

---

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, GPGC Mardan

<sup>2</sup> Research Scholar, GPGC Mardan

Corresponding Author's Email: oamjad25@gmail.com

interviews of traumatized police officers with *The Zero* (novel) in her essay “Reading and Writing the post-9/11 Cop: Trauma, Personal testimony, and Jess Walter’s *The Zero*”.

Spiegelman in his novel *Maus* (1991) premised and enquired that mankind need a holocaust to forget the old one. The effects of 9/11 depicted in fiction to poetry, from songs to painting, from graphic novel to movies.

According to Versluys, we can place the post 9/11 novels into four different categories: the novel of recuperation, the novel of first hand witnessing, the great New York novel and the novel of the outsider (Versluys, 2007). Ian McEwan’s *Saturday* (2005) and *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer are such novels related to the trauma of 9/11.

### **Literary Trauma Theory**

It refers to how traumatic experiences in real life affect the literary work. Literary trauma deals with portrayal of real trauma symptoms in fictitious characters where they manage their trauma and working through it. It developed in 1960 with hybridization of the concepts; humanities, trauma and psychoanalysis. But it was detected in 1980 in case of post-traumatic stress disorder. Since 1990, concepts developed as an interdisciplinary study involving Literature, History, Psychoanalysis and Philosophy with concentration on memory, forgetting and narrative. Different critics have published various essays on trauma which give the impact of trauma on literature studies e.g. Cathy Caruth work “*Explorations in memory*” (1995) and “*Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, And History*” (1996). Since then many other writers have applied trauma theory to the survivors of holocaust and veterans as well as to other topics of women’s violence or child’s sexual abuse.

Trauma theory codifies that social and psychological factors affect the self-comprehension of a traumatic person experiences in the framework of a specific language. Memory plays a key role in traumatic stages of an individual. The past events reflect in the present which is responsible for the “working out” of that person.

Trauma theory was introduced in 1960, due to recognition of violence against women and children as well as the phenomenon of post-traumatic stress disorder in soldiers of Vietnam War. Psychological wounds were expressed in the shape of trauma after holocaust. Freud focused on the shocks and disappointment of the war in the form of flashbacks, recurring nightmares and compulsive repetitive behavior which provide clear evidences for psychological symptoms of a traumatic person. He gave a direct dependence of trauma symptoms on the psychological health of a person. Trauma is all the time connected with psychoanalysis and one can’t be studied without refer to the other.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Trauma is the mental irritation caused mostly by the unexpected events. The trauma of 9/11 is an event which holds as inevitable happening to the post war generation with its impacts on the upcoming generations. Jonathan Safran Foer in his novel *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*(2005) shows the “acting out” and “working through” of the protagonist Oskar with his own trauma resulted from the death of his father in 9/11 event. The protagonist passes through different stages of trauma and gets social familiarity.

### **Research Questions**

The present research answers the following questions:

1. Why the 9/11 event became the source of trauma for the protagonist Oskar in the fictional novel *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005)?
2. What are the reasons that dissociate Oskar from his family?
3. How the protagonist Oskar “acting out” the trauma due to 9/11 event?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To find out 9/11 event as traumatic agent for the protagonist Oskar.
2. To explore the reasons responsible for the dissociation/separation of the protagonist.
3. To observe the acting out phenomenon of 9/11 traumatic event.

### **Significance of the Research**

The novel gives the idea about the traumatic event of 9/11 that causes lot of deaths. The novel depicts the situation and it's after impacts that cause social disturbances. The psychological impacts of the event greatly affect the lives of the people which haunt depression and overwhelm the whole social background in the lap of trauma. The literary piece finds out the reasons which threaten the individual and collective life. This research premises theories of Cathy Caruth (1996) and Lacapra(2001) in the field of trauma theory that is applied to a traumatized character. Hence, to show how an individual suffered from trauma and working through his trauma, one can apply the comprehensive theories of Cathy Caruth(1996) and Lacapra(2001). The research in hand explains the event of 9/11 to the readers, its psychological and socio-environmental destructive impacts on the survivors as well as those who have been deserted by their loved ones. Furthermore, it is a good contribution to the research area in the field of literature and to the library.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The research encompasses the novel *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer, inclined to the character analysis of Oskar Schell. The 9/11 event has traumatic impact on social lives of people. It shows the “acting out” where traumatic symptoms revealed in a person and “working through” where a person finds a way to heal his own trauma that leads to a new recovered life. The research deals with 9/11 event that causes trauma to individuals and it support the statements through theories of Cathy Caruth (1996) and Dominick Lacapra(2001).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The first research started on trauma at the end of the nineteen century by Sigmund Freud where he discovered that the basis of women so called hysteria is psychological trauma. He then published several researches about the tracing of trauma after the greatest devastating wars in the history. The trauma leads to the disturbance and irritation of the past events into the presence of an individual which badly affects the life of the victims. Several writers started work on traumatic impacts of various historical events in particular societies.

Inayatullah (2016) has analyzed the development of trauma hit characters by narrating the ravages of war in Afghanistan. He applied trauma theory on different Afghani fiction and concluded that trauma of all types affects the fiction and literature of contemporary time.

Whitehead, A. (2004) refers to the intriguing questions of past as reverent which put characters into great dilemma of how to coping up with his own trauma. He described the worst impacts and haunting of trauma as portrayed by Pat Barker in his *"Another World"* (1998) and Binjanin Wilkomirski in his *Fragments* (1996) which shows past has a dominant role in the presence of a traumatized character. Trauma of any historical event always reflected in the fiction of that country so that second, third and fourth upcoming generations make the event as unforgettable.

Ahmad, L. (2017) premises how trauma of 9/11 event affects the fictitious characters which affect all the society. She described 9/11 event as an irrecoverable agony of mind in DeLillo's "Falling man". When discussing trauma fiction, literary devices, stylistics and formal elements are usually examined, because these support the portrayal of trauma. Such elements can be found in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer.

Caruth, C. (1996) succinctly gave the description of wound and the voice regarding trauma. According to her in its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomenon. (Caruth 1996, p.11). Caruth theory can best describe the suffering of Oskar from trauma, the coping up and his recovering from trauma.

Uytterschout, S. (2008) said that worked on the melancholy as the repressed traumatic feeling and agony as well as on mourning where the victim face his trauma endeavours and fit it into a coherent whole. He described how grandma and dad cope up with their melancholy and mourning of bombing of Dresden and came out as survivors of normal routine life though their trauma because of their memory. The same case is applied for Oskar whose melancholy and mourning compelled him to visit five boroughs of New York.

Trauma is the everlasting and premier impact of every unexpected event that can be individual or social. Several irksome acts dominates the behavior of a traumatic person and it's possible that specific trauma may continue through generations unless its healed by many satisfactory mournful activities that patch up the wounds caused by any specific trauma.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Paradigm**

The present research is qualitative that has used descriptive method for data collection. Many books has been explored by the researcher to provide the suitable answers to the research questions. The paradigm of the research is based on the framework of trauma theory by Cathy Caruth *"Unclaimed Experiences: Trauma, Narrative, And History (1996)"* and Lacapra *"Writing History, Writing Trauma (2001)."*

### **Design of the Study**

The research has used descriptive method which is based on subjective data collection. It has analyzed the traumatized character Oskar in the novel *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer.

### **Data Collection**

The first and basic source is the novel *Extremely loud & incredibly close*(2005) while the second sources are the views and critiques of different critics and writers as well as different journals related to 9/11 event and trauma theory.

### **Data Analysis**

The research is qualitative in nature which has used descriptive analysis in the novel *Extremely loud and incredibly close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer. The character analysis of protagonist Oskar has been executed through the theoretical framework of Caruth (1996) and Lacapra (2001).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The present research utilizes the “*Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, And History* (1996) by Cathy Caruth and “*Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) by Lacapra for the analysis of traumatic experiences that affect the protagonist of the novel *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*(2005).

Cathy Caruth fully explains Freud’s trauma theory; given in *Moses and Monotheism*, his concept of trauma as an agony of mind and narrative of destruction and survival as given in “Beyond the pleasure principles” (Freud. Sigmund, 1895). The succinct explanations of trauma as oscillating force between crises of death and crises of life. Trauma of Oskar can be analyzed through the above concept of trauma. She addresses trauma as the cry of wound which irritates our mind with such truth of the past that has no role in the present. She claimed that trauma itself is a complex psychological phenomenon. The characters that are prey of traumatic incidents have complex nature of knowing the reality and not knowing it. He/she could not explain it to others, which further irritates his/her mind. Trauma is unconscious and unexpected where the traumatic accident repeated in belated nightmare and flashbacks which haunt the victim’s mind in his repeated actions and behavior. Hence, her framework is suitable to analyze the trauma of Oskar caused by traumatic accident of 9/11 which later repeated from the agony of his mind and obsessive behavior

## **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

“That is kind of how I felt when I decided that I would meet every person in the New York with the last name Black. .... if they don’t swim, which I know about” (Foer, 2005, p.102).

It describes the feeling of Oskar when he visited the closet of dad where he finds a blue vase having an envelope with “black” written on it. Oskar urged by the fact to search for the lock of the key which was in the envelope so that he may discover the secret of his father and a way to process his own loss. His own trauma compelled him to search for the reason related to his father’s death as he was feeling like a shark without swimming in the water. The person dealing with trauma has two alternatives i.e. temporarily suppressing all the traumatic facts or endeavors to remember the event and adjust his/her life with the loss due to trauma. Oskar was

trying to suppress the curiosity of his father's death but his trauma finds new way of expression by searching in the whole New York for the lock of the key. He thought that the black is the name of that person which can provide information about the secret of his father. The people living in America with the last name "black" were 472 and he decided to meet all of them to ease his fear and trauma of his father's death.

"A few weeks after the worst days, I started writing lots of letter. I don't know why but it was one of the only, ... from my collection, including valuable ones which is something made me wonder if what I was really doing was try to get rid of thing."  
(Foer, 2005, p. 27)

His trauma acts out by writing letters to people and not knowing the purpose of his action. It made his trauma easy to handle by writing letters to intellectuals so as to substitute his father with the company of great people and to busy himself in strange activities and dreaming. He considered it a type of useless activity but choosing valuable stamps surprised him that how these writings can console him to fight against the fear of his trauma. It was a junky activity at superficial level but deep inside he could not control over his conscious and it was his most important task to busy himself with letter writing.

Hence what Oskar doing was out of his conscious approach and control. "I did a few other searches even though I knew they would only hurt me, because I couldn't help it" (Foer, 2005, 43). The death of his father in 9/11 made him to search more about the event which he called "worst day" due to his trauma. A lot of encyclopedic knowledge made him prolific writer though he possess only seemingly proper knowledge. He started searching about the "black" which disappointed him. The way of healing trauma by actions itself is too hurting to be handle, as the more Oskar was acting out his trauma with the hope to get rid of mental irritations the more he got disturbed by a lot of stuff which made him panicky. The way he was acting out his trauma was completely out of his control and recall. Oskar became victim to paradoxical nature, he knew what he was doing but he did not know why he was doing.

"When I did was I converted dad's last voice message into Morse code, and I used sky blue beads for silence, maroon beads for break between letters, violet beads for words between letter and long and short pieces of string between the beads for long and short beeps, which are actually called blips, I thing, or something dad would have known" (Foer, 2005, p.37).

The traumatic person is always in need of sharing his secret with someone so that give him/her to reduce the psychological burden. Oskar tried many times to share his secret of searching lock for the key with mom, when she responded to him, he would change his mind not to tell her. He confessed the secret of telephone messages belong to his father by making a bracelet, associating different meanings with particular bead which dad would have understood by only seeing the jewelry and not the encrypted confession. It was quite difficult for Oskar to recollect all the traumatic messages and premise to any of the person, but being severely irritated he searched for a way of confession through bracelet so as to lighten the pressure on his mind. He moved on to invent new things just to compensate the guilt of not picking the call of dad on 9/11. The need for the presence of dad made him to imagine a teakettle which can read's in dad's voice and other sort of things which give him the company of his dad so that he can forget the trauma and death of his father.

The fancy of inventing a singing teakettle for the replacement of his father's voice give him the courage to tackle trauma. The surprised shock of his father's death made him to think

of inventing birdseed suit that could save his father when towers blown out. Oskar is providing way for trauma and acting out his trauma through his inventions. Oskar says that “being with him (his father) made by brain quite. I didn’t have to invent a thing.” (p. 12).

It’s clear from the above passage that inventing things were the acting out of his irritated mind. Oskar got more troubled when his mother doesn’t seem troubled to him because she has already got adjusted and accepted the reality of the death of her husband. Oskar was still stuck there at the event of 9/11 even after two years have passed to it. It annoyed him and he pushed himself more into his search and quest for the secret that could lead him to the reason of his father’s death.

The old phone had messages from the Oskar’s dad which Oskar protected from his mother and grandma. “I got out of bed and went to the closet where I kept the phone. I hadn’t taken it out since the worst day. It just wasn’t possible” (p.83). Oskar was unable to call the 9/11 event by name because the very name frightened him which is why he called it the worst day. He hides the telephone which contains messages from dad and went to the radio shake where he bought an exact same telephone and records the previous greetings on the new machine so that his mother would never notice that the telephone has changed by someone. At the exact time of tower collapsing, Oskar was at home from school and he received the messages from dad but did not response him, the dad called on the telephone but the shock of unexpected event has wholly paralyzed him and he could not pick up the call. Therefore, he hides the old phone and it wasn’t possible for him to display it.

It was acting out trauma which is a state in which a person is haunted or possessed by the past and performativity caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes. The person constantly acts for the satisfaction of his trauma unknowingly but still his/her trauma never satisfies until working through and accepting the truth of the past as it is with suitable adjustments. The traumatic scene of not picking the call becomes the most irritating agony of his mind which pops up from time to time through his actions.

Oskar was scared of death due to his trauma. He was no more an agent of present but rather of past where he was thinking of how his father might have died, suffered and then buried.

“I said, do you promise not to bury me when I die.....why? “Because what if I die tomorrow? You are not going to die tomorrow” dad didn’t think that he was going to die the next day” (P .173). He spent many sleepless nights to think over why he couldn’t do anything to save his father, why he couldn’t dare to respond the dad’s call, what could be the possible secret of the key, why his father hid the envelop in the vase, when I will be able to confess everything in front of mom and his mind would be lighten from the irritation of his dad’s death. Such were the questions which need answers so that he gets rid from his trauma. All the acts of Oskar were the different shape of a struggle for answering these questions and redemption from his trauma. For most of the time, he woke up at the middle of night and was unable to fall asleep. He could not sleep at all. The past reflected to him as if it is a subtle present rather than a memory or inscription. His severe condition made him to stick in the past when he started crying in the present for no reason. His condition makes him surprised when he realized that an average person falls asleep in seven minutes but I couldn’t sleep. He named his condition as nightmares.

He felt cry during his question when he met with different people but got disappointment only and found nothing that could lead him to his father’s secret. When

disappointed from Mr. Black he quoted, “I thought I was going to cry, but I didn’t want to cry in front of him” (p. 162). This shows his acting out of trauma which suffered his whole life. Oskar despaired at the point that he has started the question to stop his cognitive irritation but with his journey his irritation and curiosity increases. Every time when he met with a black person but found nothing of his interest will make him hopeless and more irritable. I miss my dad more now than when I started. Even the whole point was to stop missing him. I told him, it starting to hurt too much. His trauma was on peak during his meeting with different people.

Caruth was fully right in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, And History* (1996) where she describes trauma to be revealed through crying, despairing, disappointment, obsessive behavior, amnesia and lack of memory. Such was the whole condition of Oskar which acts out from time to time and reminds him of 9/11.

Oskar’s trauma acts out by his search for the key through which he wants to unlock his own trauma by this journey and working through his trauma so that he may become socially connected to family and society by accepting the past and live in the present without any fear or regret. He (Oskar) clearly accept the relation of his searching and trauma as “finding the key was my ultimate *raison d’efere*, the *raison* that was the master over all other *raison*” (Foer, 2005, 69). The key was the only way to cope up with his trauma. His “*raison*” refers to the compensation of his guilt which can earn him the peace of mind. He considered himself to be responsible for his father’s death because he couldn’t help his dad in the time of need. From then on he took steps to compensate his guilt which will automatically avoid his trauma. His other “*raison*” was to keep his mom happy. Although making his mom happy was one of Oskar’s *raison d’etre*.

“Message four. 9: 46 A.M. it’s dad, Thomas Schell. It’s Thomas Schell. Hello? Can you hear me? Are you there? Pick up. Please! Pick up. I’m underneath a table. Hello? Sorry. I have wet napkin wrapped around my face. Hello? No try the other....try that one.” (Foer, 2005, p.214)

The destruction of 9/11 results the death of Oskar’s father which becomes an enigma of survival for the Oskar. The fourth message is reverberating in the whole action of Oskar which caused his unconscious guilt of not talking to his dad. He felt his dad to be so pitiable from his voice and condition which cause his enigma in the later life. Trauma of Oskar did not only destruct the presence of Oskar but it has become the enigma of his survival which put him in a paradox of destruction and survival. He always blames himself for not talking to dad in his last breaths.

The event of 9/11 revolutionized the lives of many families by pushing them into the incomprehensive trauma due to the loss of their dearest ones. It has become an association of fear, loss, guilt, pessimism, hopelessness and trauma for mothers, brothers, sisters as well as fathers and kids who lost their kinships.

Oskar often heard the messages of his father due to his irritability of his mind and to be part of the past. He was more of the past than of the present. It was his trauma which freezes him in the past. “10: 22. A.M. its DAD. Hello DAD. Know IF EAR ANY THIS I’M HELLO? YOU HEAR ME? WE TO THE ROOF EVERTHING OK FINE SOON SORRY HEAR ME MUCH HAPPINES, REMEMBER” Oskar was feeling the absence of his father which urged him to hear his last message but all the same time he is repelled by those messages due to the traumatic feelings tied up with these messages. Lacapra describes such condition as where the victim tries to avoid all those things that could remind him of his trauma. This avoidance and



attraction are the part of melancholic process termed as acting out. Even the place of accident then becomes a symbol of Catastrophe for that person as Oskar visits empire state building where he sees nothing but imagined catastrophic scenes. The greater the intensity of the shock, the more violent will be the acting out of trauma.

Oskar being the narrator describes the trauma of Mr. Black who was in the grief of his wife death and unable to get out of his home. "Mr. Black grabbed at his ears and made a bunch of weird sounds. He started crying not out of happiness, I could tell, but not of sadness either." (p. 172). Mr. Black was in his own trauma because he spent little time with wife due to his duty mostly out of home. So he used to press one nail in the bed every morning in which they loved in her last days. The trauma of Mr. Black gave courage to Oskar to face his own fears. Often one's own trauma automatically get tied up with the others trauma. The Oskar's trauma associates with the trauma of Mr. Black where it got recognition and confession which make him able to face the truth of the past and come out of it. They both get sympathized towards one another due to their traumas. Hence, both the traumas relieved from one another and Mr. Black decided to help Oskar in visiting the other people having name Black so to avoid his own trauma and accompany Oskar in dealing with his trauma of his father's death.

Oskar got closed to the man disguised as renter but actually he was Oskar's granddad i.e. Thomas Schell Sr. He was a person to whom Oskar shares the messages of his father for the satisfaction of his own trauma. "I took the phone out of the scarf that grandma was never able to finish, plugged it in, and played those first five messages for him (rentor). (p. 274). Oskar was not knowing that the renter was his granddad otherwise he would never be able to share his trauma with him as like other family members. In traumatic situation the victim always feels the need to share his trauma with other people where they don't feel any fear or humiliation. The victim hides his secret from his own family members as Oskar is doing by hiding the messages of his dad from mom and grandma. The patient shares his secret more easily to strangers. The survivors also need to tell their stories to other persons.

## **CONCLUSION**

On September 11, 2001, north and south towers collapsed due to plane crashes at 8:46. It results in huge lost to American and it's nearly countries. Moreover, the fiction became the reflection of 9/11 as traumatic event that caused traumatized symptoms on cultural as well as individual level. Many people lost their dearests and loved ones which overwhelm their minds with the trauma of 9/11. Oskar was the victim of trauma of 9/11 because on the day of that event, he came home earlier and received the messages on the phone from his father who was stuck in the tower. His father called for many times but Oskar paralyzed due to unexpected happening and was unable to pick up the call of Dad. The guilt of not picking the call irritates his mind and memories. So the 9/11 event leads to the death of his father which since then became the trauma of Oskar in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005).

Acting out refers to the signs and symptoms in Oskar behavior which shows his trauma. The question of Oskar to visit the five Buroughs of New York for the secret of the key that could lead him to his father's death was his main "acting out" of behavior. The writing of letters to different people, invention of splendor items, searching about 9/11, hiding the telephone messages of his father and his nightmares as well as late sleeping show the acting out of Oskar's trauma. He displayed obsessive behavior unknowingly and unconsciously regarding 9/11 and calling it the worst day. The guilt of not receiving his father's call in critical time of his (dad) death, he considered the happiness of mom and grandma as his ultimate compensation for the satisfaction of the agony of his mind. His own trauma joined him with the traumas of other

people during his question as supported by Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experiences: Trauma, Narrative, And History* (1996). Trauma is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other trauma". Hence, Oskar "acting out" enable him to cope up his own trauma by searching for the questions in his mind so to avoid the agony of his brain. (Caruth, 1996, 24)

The main reason which dissociates Oskar from his family is the historical event of 9/11 which reverberates in the minds of the later generations and haunts them with the bitter memories of the collapse of the buildings. 9/11 is a shocking historical trauma clearly shown by the writers of post 9/11 era in their agents and works. Oskar is a stereotype of all those young children who lost their loved ones in 9/11 and there were the victim of trauma due to this events. The loss of Oskar's father made him to think for hours, invent or search about 9/11 so as to indulge his mind and to avoid irritation caused by his trauma. Caruth in her work "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, And History"(1996) " says that "in its most general definition trauma describes as overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events occur in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena". (Caruth, 1996, 11)

So the catastrophic event of 9/11 occurs in the repetitive behavior of Oskar unconsciously. He used to hide his visits from mom and grandma and travelled in the different borough of New York to find the secret of the William's trauma. The key was nowhere related to death of his father. The immediate idea that strikes his mind is to open up the symbolic coffin of his dad which gave him the satisfaction of accepting the real death of his father in 9/11. He entered into a new chapter of his life because his questions though didn't lead him to his father secret of death but taught him many lessons of how to face the challenges of practical life. The past would no more be a horror but rather a story of what has happened to him. He looks back to his past but do not live in the past. The past will be remembered for lesson in the future and prudence in the present. So Oskar became the agent of the present and the reality of his father's death becomes the part of his memory and then he continued his normal life. He happily connects to his mom and confessed his every guilt which gave him the ultimate satisfaction and lighter the agony of his mind. The traumatic symptoms no more pop up in his personality and he became the normal person.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In Jonathan Safran Foer's novel *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) has many other research area that need to be explored. The trauma of granddad and grandma due to bombing of Dresden is another area of research.

## REFERENCES

- Ahmad, L. (2017). Trauma and function of literary device in delillos falling man and walter the zero. *Bachelor Thesis Radboud University Nijmegen English Language and Culture*.[https://theses.uibn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/123456789/4520/Ahamad%2C\\_L\\_1.pdf?sequence=1](https://theses.uibn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/123456789/4520/Ahamad%2C_L_1.pdf?sequence=1)
- Azmi, M. N. L. (2018). A New Beginning of Trauma Theory in Literature. *KnE Social Sciences*, 3(4), 57–65. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i4.1918>
- Balaeu, Michelle. (2014). Literary trauma theory reconsidered. 10.1057/9781137365941\_1. United Kindom: *Macmillan Publisher Limited*.

- Bloom, S. L., Ed. (1999). final action plan: a coordinated community-based response to family violence. Attorney General Mike Fisher's Task Force on Family Violence, *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, October 1999*.
- Caruth, C. (1995). Unclaimed experiences: trauma and the possibility of history. in c. caruth, unclaimed experiences: trauma and the possibility of history. (p. 151). *United State: Yale University Press*.
- Caruth, C. (1996). Unclaimed experience trauma, narrative and history. *United State of America: The John Hopkins University Press*.
- Caruth, C. (2018). A new begining of trauma theory. *kne social science*.
- Cavedon, C. (2015). Cultural melancholia: us trauma discourses before and after 9/11. in c. cavedon, cultural melancholia: us trauma discourses before and after 9/11. *Brill Rodopi*.
- Codde, P. (2007). Philomela revised: traumatic iconicity in jonathan safran foer's extremely loud and incredibly close. in p. codde, philomela revised: traumatic iconicity in jonathan safran foer's extremely loud and incredibly close. *Norteanstern University*.
- Code, P. (2007). Philomia revised: traumatic iconicty in jonathan safran foer's exteremly loud and incredibly close. V-35. *Studies in American Fiction. Northeastern University*.
- Codde, P. (2010). Trauma and post-9/11 novels: Foer, McEwan and McInerney (*Doctoral Dissertation, Doctoral Dissertation, Ghent University*).
- Fanuzzi, Robert & Wolfe, Michael. (eds.) 2014. Recovering 9/11 in New York Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Geertma, A. (2011). Redefining trauma post 9/11: freud's taking care and foer's extremely loud & incredibly close. *Academic Journal*.
- Haviland, B. (2015). After the fact: mourning, melancholy and nachtraalichkeit in novel of 9/11. *Jastor*. Reterived from [https://www.academia.edu/10409839/After\\_the\\_Fact\\_Mourning\\_Melancholy\\_and\\_Nachtr%C3%A4glichkeit\\_in\\_Novels\\_of\\_9\\_11](https://www.academia.edu/10409839/After_the_Fact_Mourning_Melancholy_and_Nachtr%C3%A4glichkeit_in_Novels_of_9_11)
- Hirsch, Marianne (1993) "Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory," *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*: Vol. 15: Iss. 2, Article1. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/discourse/vol15/iss2/1>
- Inayatullah. (2016). War trauma, hisory and narrative: analysis of selected afghan fiction in english.*JSPUI:Islamabad*. Retrieved from <http://pr.hec.gov.pk/jspui/handle/123456789/7592>
- Kristiaan, V. (2009). Out of the blue. in v. kristiaan, out of the blue. *Columbia University press*.
- Lacapara, D. (2001). Writing history writing trauma. *John Hopkin University Press*.
- Laub, D. (1992). Bearing witness or the vicissitudes of listening. *New York: Routledge*.
- Miller, K. A. (2014). Reading and writing the post-9/11 cop: trauma, personal testimony, and jess walter's the zero. *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory*, 70(1), 29-52.
- Saal, I. (2011). Rethinking trauma. Johns Hopkins University Press <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2011.0064>

- Schaap, T. G. (2015). *9/11 Fiction and the Construction of Cultural Trauma* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Calgary, Calgary, AB. doi:10.11575/PRISM/24625
- Siegel, E. (2009). *Stuff that happend to me: visual memory in jonathan safran foer's extremely loud & incredibly close*. COPAS.
- Trauma and post-9/11: foer, mcewan and mcInerney. (2010). *Ghent University*.
- Uytterschout, S. (2008). *Melancholy and mourning in london safran foer's extremely loud and incredibly close*. *University Gent*.
- Whitehead A. (2004). *Trauma fiction*. Edinburgh University Press. Retrieved January 13 2023 from <https://openlibrary.org/books/OL7964167M>.