TRAUMA AND SURVIVAL IN SELECT POST-9/11 FICTION

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE

DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ENGLISH

at the

Shenoi Goembab School of Languages and Literature

Goa University

By

NISHA GANGAN

Goa University
Goa

October 2022

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Under the Guidance of

Prof. K. Sripad Bhat

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Goa University, Goa.

October 2022

DECLARATION

I, Nisha Gangan, hereby declare that this thesis titled **Trauma and Survival in Select Post-9/11 Fiction** represents work that has been carried out by me and that it has not been submitted, either in part or full, to any other University or Institution for the award of any research degree.

Place: Taleigao Plateau.
Date : October 2022 **Nisha Gangan**

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the above Declaration of the candidate, Nisha Gangan, is true and that the work was carried out under my supervision.

Prof. K Sripad Bhat
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And to everyone who has been with me – A huge Thank you.

Nisha Gangan

DEDICATION

To

My Parents

My Father K Gangadharan Nambiar & My Mother G V Gangadevi

For everything in life

&

For being the reason for this journey

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

It is an indisputable fact that instances of frequent acts of terrorism have become an unfortunate part of our lives, especially in the last few decades. People suffer physically and psychologically from violent terrorist acts that scare, alarm, shock, or traumatize them. "Terrorism" or "terrorist attack" is the term generally used to characterize any form of violence perpetrated by the government, as well as unlawful wars, armed attacks, and other forms of violence committed by groups and organizations to attain a political, religious, or ideological goal. Encyclopedia Britannica records the Sicarii Zealots – a reference to members of an extremist Jewish sect aggressively and violently opposing Rome in the first century AD - as the world's first "terrorists."

The words 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' entered the English language as translations of French terms used during a specific period at the time known as the Reign of Terror (1793-1794) when the new government punished by death those persons perceived to be opposing the then unfolding French Revolution. Noah Webster initially inserted the word "terrorism" in the *Miriam-Webster Dictionary* in 1840 with a broad non-political meaning as a "state of being terrified, or a state impressing terror." The word 'terrorism' was still used even in the 20th century in its original meaning to signify "violence perpetrated by a government." In 1864, the word 'terrorist' was added to the *Miriam-Webster Dictionary* with the following definition: "TERRORIST, n. [Fr. terroriste.] (Fr. Hist.) An agent or partisan of the revolutionary tribunal during the reign of terror in France." The word "terrorism" was added in 1973 and defined as any "violent or destructive acts (such as bombing) committed by groups in order to intimidate a population or government into granting their demands."

On September 11, 2001, groups of terrorists boarded four domestic

airplanes at three East Coast airports and, soon after takeoff, incapacitated the crew and seized possession of the huge planes, which were all en route to the West Coast with full fuel tanks. At 8:46 a.m. American Airlines flight 11, which had originated in Boston, crashed into the North Tower of the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan in New York. Most onlookers believed it to be an accident. Seventeen minutes later, when United Airlines flight 175 hit the South Tower, it was apparent that the United States was under an unprecedented terrorist attack. Both buildings were severely destroyed and engulfed in flames. Office employees stranded in the buildings jumped to escape the raging fires within the skyscrapers. Almost an hour later, American Airlines flight 77 crashed into a part of the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m., causing that building to go up in flames. As the Federal Aviation Administration ordered a nationwide grounding of all aircraft, the fourth airplane, United Airlines flight 93, crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after its passengers, who had been informed of the events happening elsewhere, fought back and attempted to overpower their attackers.

The planes crashing into the World Trade Center within minutes of one another and the subsequent billowing smoke and flames, which were witnessed in real-time, have, nonetheless, become the most iconic visual picture linked with 9/11 in international public memory. In conjunction with the rise of visual culture and the postmodern trend known as hyperreality, the magnitude of the tragedy left millions of people worldwide feeling numb, unbelieving and puzzled.

The events of September 11, 2001, will be etched in the minds of Americans and many people all around the world as a traumatic tragedy, the memories of which will last for decades. For the citizens of the United States, this was a day of terrible sadness and suffering. Several hundred people were killed and hundreds injured when an unexpected and unpredictable attack occurred. Innumerable businesses, commercial establishments, offices, and workplaces in Lower Manhattan were damaged or completely destroyed. In addition, the attacks had a profound impact on national and international politics and policies. It was

unquestionably a watershed moment in world politics and also brought to the fore how terrorists have the potential to use unconventional methods to strike anywhere – even at the heart of the financial capital of the most powerful nation in the world. The subsequent declaration of a "war on terror" by the United States expectedly received strong support from its allies, but it also elicited significant disquiet in many quarters around the world.

The unparalleled shock of September 11, 2001, will undoubtedly live on in the collective memory of not only Americans but also of the whole world for the foreseeable future to come. There have been few days like it in the history of the United States, a day of unimaginable suffering, humiliation, and pain. The surprise terror attack occurred all of a sudden and resulted in several casualties. It took the lives of thousands of people, wounded countless more, damaged physical structures, sparked incredulity and terror, and had a decisive influence on national and international politics and policy, to name a few consequences. Without question, it is a defining chapter in world history and represents a new era in international politics and diplomacy. The declaration of a "War on Terror" by the United States and its allies, followed by widespread protests against such military action around the world, left the general public in a state of bewilderment, confusion, and disbelief, resulting in conflict and mistrust between the United States and its Western allies and many Eastern countries.

It was undoubtedly the first time in decades when the United States of America was enveloped in a profoundly shared sense of loss and anguish, the previous one perhaps dating back to the Vietnam War. It was extremely tough for the country to come to terms with the fact that it had just been the target of what was widely regarded as the deadliest act of terrorism committed in the twenty-first century. On the surface, the events of September 11 damaged buildings and resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent people. But because of these terrorist attacks, the "residents of the United States lost the sense of invulnerability and a sense of

security that had previously existed" (Silver 427). For Derrida, the fact that what transpired on '9/11' is commonly referred to "as a date and nothing more …[means that] …we perhaps have no concept and no meaning available to us to name in any other way this 'thing' that has just happened, this supposed 'event' " (Borradori 85-86). To Borradori, "This is part of the power wielded by terrorists. They do not seek to overthrow but to destabilize the systems of countries such as the U.S. … it is through the symbolic force of their acts … that they incite terror and, thereby, inflict their wounds." As Habermas puts it, the World Trade Center attack was exceptional due to "the symbolic force of the targets struck" (Borradori 2003 28) and 9/11 "signaled the end of a peaceful and, in retrospect, somewhat unsuspecting era" (26).

According to Judith Joseph Greenberg, the terrible trauma of September 11 shattered the psychic unity of the United States and tore the country apart into shards. (64). The political impact, the concerns over the security of the country, and international diplomatic ramifications due to the unprecedented nature of the event garnered all attention. In comparison, the people whose lives were dramatically affected and permanently transformed as a result of the attacks, on the other hand, received considerably less attention. In the aftermath of a catastrophe that killed over three thousand people, it is vital to consider the difficulties of coping with the trauma experienced by those who either survived or lost loved ones in the mass murder.

In the book *The Spirit of Terrorism* (2002), Jean Baudrillard describes the 9/11 attacks as a symbolic event on a global scale, stating that "the entire play of history and power is interrupted by this event, but so too are the conditions of analysis" (4). As a result, 9/11 emphasizes the necessity and inevitability of discourse, as the event would not have existed and could not have existed if it were not for the "interpretive schemes that have been imposed on it" (Versluys 3). The event we label 9/11 "as a result of economic or rhetorical need" (Borradori 86) transcends its basic facticity and is endowed with a polyphonic discursive potential that defies categorization and cannot be resolved entirely. It is a place, a rupture, that defies the pre-existing categories and classifications that have been established.

Societies have constantly been wracked by innumerable instances of horrifying violence, intolerance, and misery. Since September 11, 2001, terms like "terrorism" have sadly entered the mainstream lexicon, with cities all around the world experiencing their own share of terrorist attacks. The Bali bombings, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the Charlie Hebdo massacres, bomb attacks in Paris, Madrid, London, etc., and the ISIS atrocities, are just some of the examples of such news amid a global outpouring of it. It is not true that the terrorist assault on September 11, 2001, in the United States was the first or the most destructive terrorist attack on a nation. Many countries worldwide, particularly in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, are regularly plagued by these types of attacks. But September 11, 2001, ushered in a new era of global terrorism by launching it into the living rooms, schools and offices, and restaurants, and in the minds of the entire world population in an unprecedented manner, most likely due to its unique status as an unprecedented attack on the mightiest nation on earth, that is to say, the United States of America, which, whether one agrees with it or not, is indisputable in its political and cultural omnipresence.

In the aftermath, the world was transformed into a battleground, with disastrous repercussions for hundreds of thousands of people in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and other parts of the Middle East. The repercussions of the conflict continue to be felt today, two decades later, most notably in extremely unstable and politically volatile areas of the Middle East and Afghanistan, beset by warring sectarian factions and terrorist groups striving for dominance in the region. It would be an understatement to suggest that the attacks of September 11 continue to reverberate in the collective memory of people all around the world.

The events of September 11 witnessed the reification of terror from a feeling of intense dread to something with which one is at war. Islamophobia erupted in the most heinous form after September 11, 2001, when 'Orientalism' was given a new lease of life, and many Muslims worldwide were forced to bear the burden of "collective guilt." Even Sikhs and Hindus have been the target of hate crimes

because of their physical appearance. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, fundamentalisms of all kinds, religious, racial, or neo-imperialist in origin, resurfaced. Still, it also prompted a reconsideration of the status quo, particularly within intellectual and academic circles. Derrida says in his chat with Borradori that, regardless of whether September 11 is viewed as a "big" event or not, such an "event" unquestionably necessitates a philosophical reaction on the part of the participants (31).

1.1 September 11, 2001 – Political Impact and Legacy

The lasting impact of September 11 terrorist attacks left behind a profound emotional impact and an enduring historic legacy. The country galvanized itself to avenge the dead and injured in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. The nation's military campaign in Afghanistan, which started almost immediately after 9/11, came to a brutal and chaotic climax nearly two decades later.

Most Americans who are old enough to recall the day remember where they were when they received the news of the attacks. Television was still the primary source of information for the general public during that period, and the pictures of devastation and death that were shown on television had a momentous effect on people. The assaults infuriated and confused the American public. A rattled country quickly united in mourning and patriotism, and the citizens initially supported the retaliatory wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The pervasive dread and uncertainty in the days immediately after the attacks continued throughout the remaining months of 2001. Even after the initial shock of the events of September 11, 2001, had passed, fears over terrorism lingered at greater levels in big cities, particularly in New York City and Washington. In the cities that were directly targeted by the 9/11 assaults, residents experienced the personal toll of the strikes and the death and destruction that followed more intensely.

World markets were shaky. Damage to Lower Manhattan's infrastructure and worries of stock market panic shut the New York markets for four days. When it reopened, as expected the markets plunged. Tens of thousands of travellers were stuck in the United States after the attacks as the U.S. airspace was blocked for commercial aircraft. When regular service resumed several days later, it came with stricter security measures.

The 9/11 attacks had long-lasting effects. It spanned age, gender, geography, and politics. When asked to explain in a Pew Research Survey how their lives had altered in a significant manner a year later, about half of all people said that they felt more fearful, more watchful, more suspicious, or more vulnerable as a direct consequence of the attacks. Most Americans old enough to remember 9/11 have vivid recollections of the attacks, and the historical significance of the incident exceeds any other event in people's lives.

The 9/11 attacks drastically changed U.S. public perception in numerous ways. The months following 9/11 were characterized by a unique atmosphere of civic solidarity and boosted patriotism. The American people put aside their political disagreements to render bipartisan support to the nation's key institutions and leadership. Early in the U.S. military response, the people supported military involvement and intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan. Americans felt military action overseas was the best way to prevent future acts of terrorism than building up domestic defences.

The US military involvement in the conflict in Afghanistan received widespread support for many years. As the fight stretched on, first under President Bush and then under President Obama, support waned, and more Americans backed withdrawing from Afghanistan. And in May 2011, U.S. Navy SEALs finally captured and killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. Over the following decade, as the broad support for using force in Afghanistan waned, Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden steadily reduced U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. The public's opinion toward the U.S. war in Iraq, part of President Bush's "war on terror," followed a similar path. Before

the U.S. invaded Iraq, Americans favoured using military action to remove Saddam Hussein's authority, as most Americans believed that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was behind the 9/11 attacks.

There have been no 9/11scale terrorist assaults in the United States in twenty years. Nevertheless, concerns about the possibility of another similar type of attack remained strong after 9/11, and the issue of terrorism has been regularly listed as a top priority by Republicans and Democrats throughout the previous two decades. However, an increasing percentage of Americans have no personal recollection of that day, either because they were too young to remember it or were not yet born at the time. And in recent years, more Americans see the state of the economy, the long-term economic impact of COVID-19, race-related conflicts resulting in the Black Lives Matter movement, increasing instances of gun violence, and the debates over abortion rights as serious national concerns than the issue of terrorism.

1.2 Trauma Theory – Origins and Later Developments

The ancient Greeks used the word ‘trauma’ to mean a wound, a hurt. It merely implied an external, easily visible harm that had occurred to the body of the individual. The concept of trauma as a psychological wound, which may refer to anything that undermines an individual's or even a group's sense of self-worth, emerged as a result of later developments.

Trauma often refers to emotional or psychological damage produced by a physical injury or excessive mental stress. The first description of the idea of trauma may be found in the works of neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot, while Sigmund Freud expanded upon it. Charcot's views were based on psychoanalysis, and he defined psychological trauma as a kind of damage to the mind caused by a deeply distressing incident. In the 1890s, Charcot investigated mental illness, particularly hysteria, and is regarded as a pioneer in the study of psychological trauma. Through Freud's work, however, the term came to be used to describe an event in a person's life that is so painful and powerful that his or her consciousness cannot fully deal with it, hence generating a deep psychological disturbance.

In addition, the psychoanalytic work of Jacques Lacan added a new facet to the concept of trauma, which later served as the foundation for debate among modern theorists working in the field of trauma studies. Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Jeffrey C. Alexander, and Neil J. Smelser, among others, developed the modern trauma theory. These theorists attempted to turn the understanding of trauma into a condition that has an intrusive effect on an individual's awareness and also to study its invasive impact on the consciousness of a community or society. Though they borrowed from Freud and Lacan, these theorists expanded trauma studies beyond their clinical and psychoanalytic discourse.

Trauma studies examine psychological trauma, its representation in language, and the role of memory in creating individual and group identities. Postcolonial theories are used to understand traumatic events and their effects on individual identity and memory. Trauma disrupts a person’s emotional organization and outward perception. Trauma studies additionally also investigate the psychological and cultural impact of trauma on literature and society. Psychologists and sociologists also explore how language affects a person's interpretation of a traumatic incident. Formal developments in print and digital texts reveal how extreme events influence the identity, the unconscious, and the memory of an individual.

Trauma research started in the 1990s and relied on Freudian philosophy to develop a challenging model. Initial studies implied that suffering cannot be represented by the trauma paradigm. A more pluralistic definition of trauma swiftly followed the conventional paradigm, emphasizing that the unspeakability of trauma is not its defining quality. The idea that trauma poses a challenge to language, breaks apart the psyche, and rips apart meaning established the fundamental boundaries of the study area and continues to guide the critical discourse even as alternative approaches have begun to replace it.

Freud's views on trauma and memory govern psychology. Psychoanalytic ideas about the origins of trauma and its effects were developed in the 19th century by Freud. His ideas expounded in works like *Studies in Hysteria,* published in 1895, and

Beyond the Pleasure Principle in 1920, dominate literary trauma critics' conceptual use of trauma today. Freud's early work claims that traumatic hysteria originates from sexual abuse. In *Studies in Hysteria*, Freud and Breuer contend that any initial incident is not traumatic, merely its memory. Because the initial incident continues to produce damage, a verbal treatment or abreaction is needed to comprehend its ramifications and escape its symptom-causing grip.

Freud believes trauma generates dissociation or a psychological gap. The concept of the incubation time between the incident and its destructive repercussions, as well as the notion that trauma splits the psyche, may induce disconnection, and continually wreaks havoc, are ideas that Freud modifies later in his work but continue to affect literary critics' present understanding of trauma. The 1980 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IIIrd edition categorization of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by the American Psychiatric Association solidified the medicalization of trauma. External stressors for PTSD are "psychologically distressing events outside the range of usual human experience" that generate "significant distress in most people" (DSM-III: 236–8, 248). PTSD is not an anxiety disorder but a trauma-related one in the DSM-IV.

1.3 Literary Trauma Theory

Freud's theories about traumatic events being repeated obsessively impacting the psyche and memory differently than other experiences and that it can only be experienced in a narrative reproduction of the past formed the basis of the earliest development in trauma studies literature that addresses the theory of trauma and the ways trauma affects memory and identity. Psychoanalytic approaches are used to study mental distress in texts and the language of grief, rupture, and fragmentation. In this paradigm, trauma theories are used to analyze the individual experience of a communal traumatic event in a book, providing a connection between the political and personal domains. The first or standard Freudian trauma model claims trauma is an unrepresentable occurrence that fractures the mind.

In the 1990s, Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman examined trauma in literature and culture. This initial wave of critique promoted trauma as an unrepresentable phenomenon revealing language and experience conflicts. Trauma is fragmented awareness and inhibits direct language expression in Cathy Caruth's classic trauma paradigm. The paradigm suggests that traumatic experiences irreversibly alter the psyche. Trauma demolishes identity and is beyond regular memory and narrative expression. Traumatic experience and dissociation prevent assigning a value to it since panic undermines the mind's capacity to interpret and process it. Although the event may never be told or acknowledged, it damages the self. Trauma has a detrimental and even pathological influence on awareness and memory, preventing the past from forming a life story. This approach stresses external pain that transforms the mind and identity. Extreme experience fractures language and consciousness, creating enduring harm and requiring distinct narrative expressions. The incident is missing from everyday awareness but remains in a timeless, wordless condition and causes psychiatric distress.

Cathy Caruth's work in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History*, initially published in 1996, employs Freud's trauma theories to study language and history. This approach leads the way for a critical exploration of trauma in literature and individual and societal trauma. Caruth believes delay and separation hamper comprehension and representation. Individual traumas and communal historical events are never known directly but rather via an interrupted referentiality that points to the past as reproduction or performance (11). Trauma is dissociative and linguistically abnormal; therefore, it manifests as a repetitive absence.

Caruth argues that trauma is not in the initial violent incident but in how it returns to torment the survivor after the original experience of it (17). Trauma generates a double paradox in awareness and language: the longing to grasp the past but the inability to do so and the crisis between death and survival in the traumatic narrative (7). Traumatic experience generates an unforgettable memory that resists narrative representation, resulting in approximate remembrance but never definite knowledge. Trauma is inaccessible to language and it views memory as a repository

of experience, a place where traumatic memory is stored uniquely and is available for regular narrative recall. Narrative memory, however, is crucial to comprehending the past.

The unrepresentability of trauma remains a central theme in the wave of studies that followed in Caruth's wake over the next two decades. The classic model's conceptual foundation is maintained, but the theoretical framework is expanded to incorporate feminism, racial, and postcolonial theory. Later formulations like the pluralistic model of trauma attempted to understand trauma's structural, historical, and narrative dimensions and expose new linkages between sensation, language, and knowledge. Trauma affects perception and identity, yet its aftermath produces new self- and external-world knowledge. The Psychoanalytic trauma theory emphasizes trauma's personal or historical character. While using the idea of trauma in literary representations of the individual and social, the psyche risks essentializing trauma's consequences. The pluralistic approach highlights the determined values of the traumatic experience and memory. This method depends on external stressors to illustrate that trauma happens in certain bodies, historical periods, cultures, and locations, each impacting the meaning and depiction of traumatic experiences.

Trauma impacts identity and memory as an interaction of external and internal forces, individual character qualities, and cultural variables to better understand the unique and collective traumatic experience. Memory remains important to the representation of trauma. When the cultural context of a person's or a group's experience of trauma is investigated, it is possible to pay more attention to depictions of horrific incidents such as terrorism, war, racism and slavery, colonialism, etc. Trauma studies examine a variety of social and cultural elements that shape trauma representation. Academic studies that examine the role of trauma in literature and society continue to extend and alter the underlying post-structural approach while also including new views from postcolonialism, ethnic and gender studies, ecocriticism, etc.

1.4 9/11 Novels – An Overview

More than twenty years have gone by since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, which irrevocably altered the world. Those who were there as direct witnesses or those whose loved ones did not make it through the ordeal alive may not reflect on the events of the day as much as they used to. After a few years had passed after the assaults, a collection of creative works about the terrorist attacks was beginning to take the form of a genre. While emergency construction personnel were still working nightly shifts at Ground Zero, a number of writers started publishing essays, short tales, and poems about their experiences. It took some more time, but novelists eventually began to address the circumstances surrounding the terrorist attacks.

Many periodicals, including newspapers and magazines, compile yearly rankings of "how well," "how accurately," and "how subtly" various books represent 9/11 and its aftermath. However, this sort of experiment fails to account for a significant divide. It may be helpful to make a difference between "9/11 literature" and "post-9/11 literature" in order to comprehend how the literary responses to the 9/11 attacks have evolved over the last two decades since they happened. Perhaps, the literature written about the events of September 11 and the literature written after those events can be seen as two distinct phases when we try and analyze the manner in which the readers responded to the expectations in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Post-9/11 literature helps us begin to think about what comes next by depicting the mental and emotional circumstances that develop as people adjust to new political and social situations. 9/11 literature collectively reflects the impact of cultural trauma, and Post-9/11 literature focuses on individuals impacted by these conditions.

Since it is a well-established fact that literature serves as a mirror for society and is also recognized as a reservoir for all of humanity's scientific, historical, cultural, and customary knowledge, it follows that this terrorist incident also has a meaning for literature. After the incident, a large number of writers began exploring

the possibility of writing about the 9/11 attacks, and as a result, this subgenre of writing became known as 9/11 literature. As the incident had such a wide-reaching impact, the majority of the writers decided to focus their works on the repercussions it had on national, economic, and political viewpoints. The literary writings make it possible to comprehend the genuine anguish that the victims of 9/11 experienced. To quote what Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn observe in their work *Literature After 9/11*: “If literature expresses what remains unrepresentable,” then “it also raises persistent questions about how we interpret and represent 9/11.” These questions were sparked by debates both inside and outside of the United States regarding the impact of and the consequences of the "war on terror" (2).

Kristiaan Versluys divides post-9/11 novels into four categories: “the book of recovery, the novel of first-hand witnessing, the great New York novel, and the outsider novel” (48). By writing about the events of September 11, many authors were able to uncover new narratives about trauma, violence, and terror, as well as the psychological and physical effects these events had not only on the people of the United States but also on the people of the whole world. Novels written on the events of September 11 help readers comprehend the terrorist attacks and their social, psychological, and political repercussions from a variety of perspectives. The brutality, horror, and pain of the post-9/11 era are reframed and reconfigured in the 9/11 books that have been written all over the world. In other words, the 9/11 works depict the relationship between history and storytelling, in addition to being the revelation of artistic and political viewpoints. The writings that were published by these authors provide a detailed description of the actual effect of the assault on the psyche of the nation, its politics, the strategic and political impact, and the long-term economic consequences for the United States.

Literature after September 11 investigates the ways in which written works have contributed to the more critical cultural process of expressing and making sense of the events of September 11, 2001 (Keniston and Quinn 2). The graphic novels, diaries, dramas, and novels all reflect and interpret the horrifying events of the terrorist attacks in compelling ways. The literature surrounding the events of

September 11 is dense and multifaceted because it symbolizes several levels of political influences as well as socio-religious and economic repercussions. All of the literary outpourings relating to 9/11 serve as sources for the first experiences of elapsed narratives formed as a response to the unprecedented events of 9/11. It goes without saying that all these narratives cannot be compared to one another. Such traumatic events demand a broad contemplation for their effect to be reproduced, but they also require a "wide need for explanatory narratives, not simply as a means for countering the trauma, but also as a means for refusing incommensurability prompting attempt to place 9/11 into a historical framework" (3).

Numerous categories have been established for the 9/11 literature that was produced both before and after the event. Essays, poetry, and short personal reminiscences were among the first kinds of 9/11 literature to be created, whereas other genres, such as novels, comic books, and memoirs, were not written about the event until after a lengthy gap. And these initial works often “attempted to directly capture and convey the events of 9/11 and emotional responses to the events; as time has passed, the approach to the attacks has become more nuanced” (3). Anonymous poets contributed to the early 9/11 literature, and their writings were seen as serving as a source that connects a bridge between the personal grief and political conspiracies that existed at the time. After the events of September 11, 2001, several well-known writers of varying ages and from a variety of various backgrounds have dealt with the attacks in their writings. This section discusses a few 9/11-related works written by authors originating from a variety of geographic regions and cultural traditions. These texts serve to demonstrate that literature is the form of expression that is most suited to depicting the events of 9/11 and its aftermath.

Times Books released a collection of thousand nine hundred and ten *Portraits of Grief* in the summer of 2002. Each day a chosen profile was published in the newspaper, and the portrait pieces chronicle what readers had eaten along with their seventy-nine daily breakfast or morning commutes were gathered into a digestible collection and classified alphabetically (Miller 19). "*Portraits*" were saved from the daily paper and the internet and bound in hardcover. In their introduction to the

volume, editors and reporters describe how they created this popular piece of journalism. Their commentary outlines how the genre developed and frames how to interpret "*Portraits*" (Miller 19). The series transcended race, gender, sexuality, and economic class by attributing equality to the departed. “Such individuation would have long been considered anti-democratic, allowing private grief to intrude on anonymous public mourning” (Stow 224). This book is crucial to 9/11 literature because it bridges the gap between 9/11 survivors and the dead and the missing.

The comic strip, *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004) by the American cartoonist Art Spiegelman was an early 9/11 literary piece. In the months after the attacks, American editors were unwilling to print the comics, so Spiegelman completed the ten broadsheets for Die Zeit in 2002 and 2003. The comics were collected and released in the US a year after the final episode.

The memoir chronicles Spiegelman's experiences as a 9/11 witness while struggling with the lasting mental and emotional effects of trauma. Spiegelman says in the collection's preface that the picture "remains burned into my eyelids years later." The comics are an effort to depict what he calls the "looming north tower's glowing bones just before it vaporized." This theme is repeatedly portrayed throughout the comic strip. Spiegelman felt stranded after 9/11, and this was an effort to depict his own feelings of time standing still. He spends much of his time making attempts to “reset time” and escape his PTSD.

Patriotic rhetoric following 9/11 affected Spiegelman extremely profoundly, making it harder for him to go back to his previous life. He was vehemently against the efforts by the administration that was underway to use the shock and helplessness felt by the citizens over the magnitude of the attacks to construct a sense of national unity in the name of 9/11. Spiegelman realized that this collective feeling of unity was being used by the government in its efforts to involve the nation in new conflicts around the world. Paradoxically, Spiegelman also feels "equally terrorized by Al-Qaeda and his own government" since he cannot oppose the measures that the Bush Government came up with following the attacks. Trauma heaps on trauma, but

"everyone's too scared, stupefied, or demoralized" to complain. The patriotic imagery everywhere makes Spiegelman feel worse.

Spiegelman suggests that even as we forget the buildings, they will always be a part of our future aspirations. The final part of the strip has him clutching a 9/11 memorial clock in the shape of a miniature WTC. On 9/11/01, time stopped, he says, and on 9/12/01, clocks started ticking again. Everyone knew it was a time bomb. The towers change into explosives and explode in his face in the third panel. This succession of pictures emphasizes our impossibility of escaping from the consequences of the attack and its immediate and long-term effects—any effort to move on risks inviting fresh violence. Spiegelman says the buildings “seem to get smaller every day,” but they pale in comparison to new tragedies made conceivable by 9/11. Once the political and personal are intertwined, it's hard to tell which events were before 9/11 and which after. This may explain the reason why the "Comic Supplement" in *In the Shadow of No Towers* feels like an effort to connect the past and present.

It is precisely because it tries to make this connection that, *Twilight of the Superheroes* (2007) by Deborah Eisenberg stands out as a classic example of the writing that emerged in the wake of the September 11 attacks. The title tale recounts Lucien and his nephew Nathaniel's neuroses as they watch 9/11 from Lucien's balcony with friends. Even though the events of the novel take place three years after the attacks, the people of New York continue to be hampered by the same issues that Spiegelman investigates in his work. Eisenberg deftly depicts the agony of New Yorkers as they struggle with their trauma and “get back to normal.” While Nathaniel is looking to his family's history for guidance on how to respond to the tragedy of September 11, Lucien is concerned about the ability of his generation to heal from the trauma caused by the event. Both of these characters are stuck in the past because they are preoccupied with politics and history.

In the tales that follow, none of the characters are depicted as being directly touched by the events of 9/11. The readers continue to hunt for proof of the attacks because we were influenced by the way 9/11 was depicted in the first story in the book. In practice, what Eisenberg does is to draw a trail from the frenzy that followed immediately after 9/11 to a situation in which the pain of tragedy has been interwoven into the everyday life of the characters. The assaults do not seem to be the significant source of stress in Eisenberg's characters' lives anymore, just as readers have moved on to the issue of relationships and the traumas that we inflict upon one another as part of our everyday lives. Yet it must be stressed that the traumatic experience of the terrorist attacks of September 11 does not fade from the memories as time goes on. Instead, as Eisenberg's selection reveals, they ricochet and echo quietly while gradually fading into the background. That is to say, Eisenberg demonstrates to us not how we returned to normal but rather how a different historical context led to the formation of a new normal.

Twilight of the Superheroes presents a new viewpoint on 9/11. It's from the protagonist Kate. She just went through a divorce and is finding it difficult to cope with the information that her ex-husband is in his last days. Her perspective on loss is written in a way that makes it easy to see how even the most emotionally taxing aspects of daily living may be pushed to the background when a bigger tragedy strikes.

The characters in the story *Revenge of the Dinosaurs* reflect the concerns that have developed in the years after the events of September 11, 2001. Lulu ponders, "Flying is not a laughing matter at all these days," and she is right. She further refers to "interrogations at the airport and worrying about the nail scissors," as well as “her reflections on footage from war protests, place us unmistakably in the context of the Iraq War”; however, these events appear to be more of a nuisance for her than a significant risk to her mental health. The events of September 11 are not the primary focus of the narrative's attention; instead, it is Lulu's grandmother's imminent passing that is of the most concern.

In her book *Harbor* published in 2004, journalist Lorraine Adams takes readers inside an Algerian immigrant neighborhood in the greater Boston region. It was set in 1999, and the FBI is on high alert for potential terrorist attacks, but these aspirants have no need for jihad. Beginning with the arduous trip that Aziz endured on his way from Algeria, Adams serves as a reminder to us that new immigrants are often running from something far more severe. The fact that Aziz and his associates are under FBI monitoring serves to further incite our contempt for the government. But then Adams changes the story so that it is told from their point of view, emphasizing how difficult it is to track down terrorists. It's a universe unto itself, where everyone competes, yet no one ever comes out on top. It is intricate in terms of detail yet comprehensive in terms of breadth. The culmination is an example of a structure that often appears in 9/11 novels.

The storyline of *Harbor* gradually builds up to the terrible day that serves as the work's conclusion, with the goal of highlighting how the catastrophe affects individual lives while also using it to serve the novel's dramatic purpose. One shining example of a 9/11 work is *The Emperor's Children* by Claire Messud, which was published in 2006. Her book centers on three New Yorkers who are in their thirties and are trying to figure out what they want to accomplish with the rest of their lives. They are unaware that their lives are about to be irrevocably altered, and their attempts to advance their social standing are brought into harsh light.

Until the day when disaster knocks on their door, these questionable heroes put on their own comedy of manners. The juxtaposition of lightheartedness and solemnity in Messud's work is daring, and the fact that it is successful is a direct result of the community nature of the event. The suffering caused by that day was dispersed in a manner that was grossly disproportionate, reaching all the way from Afghanistan to the neighborhoods of New Jersey. But its repercussions were felt all around, particularly in a city that, for many years, had carelessly rode a wave of riches and uncontested dominance.

The book *Let the Great World Spin*, written by Colum McCann, portrays the stunt that Philippe Petit performed as a defining point in New York's history. But the author makes use of this transcendence to ponder on everyday lives and to imply that, in reality, there is no such thing as an average existence. An Irish immigrant provides spiritual guidance to prostitutes living in a South Bronx housing complex. Women who have lost sons in Vietnam get together for a cup of tea and a moment of shared mourning. A creative couple struggles to come to terms with the possibility that they were responsible for a tragic vehicle accident. The city is pulled closer together as Petit makes his way into the air. Its crumbling towers will have to be rebuilt one day so that they can function normally again. However, the city will make it through this; it has no choice. This is a book about the 9/11 attacks, but it covers a lot more ground than that. It serves as a timely reminder of our shared humanity. That is precisely what the finest fiction manages to achieve. It forces us to think and feel together, and it doesn't let up on us until we go forward.

The Zero is a political thriller with an absurd premise written by Jess Walter. It is a highly innovative dark humor about the events of September 11, 2001. His protagonist is a member of the New York Police Department who, after accidentally shooting himself in the head, is left with severe amnesia and is tasked with guiding famous people on tours of Ground Zero.

Home Boy by the British Pakistani author HM Naqvi, who for a period was a significant player on the slam poetry scene in the United States. This first book is a novel that is part immigrant fiction and part coming-of-age story set in New York City. It is a blend of the original and the classic. The three young men of Pakistani descent who serve as the book's central characters not only provide Naqvi with a vehicle through which he can investigate the post-9/11 Muslim experience, but they also shed light on what it means to be an American.

Oblivion, written by David Foster Wallace, is a book that is depressing, unrelenting, challenging, excruciating, and magnificent. Some of the short tales were released before September 11, 2001, while others seem to have been written by a

post-9/11 version of Wallace, who is even more pessimistic about life in the United States. The novella “The Suffering Channel,” which is about a magazine that has its offices in the World Trade Center and is set in the months before the assault, is the one that stands out the most in the reader's mind. It has the gloomy sheen of the unavoidable about it, but not in the manner that you would necessarily anticipate totally.

Heidi Julavits' *The Effect of Living Backwards* is one of the craziest and oddest of the bunch, with persistent originality and chutzpah. When their aircraft is hijacked, two sisters who are traveling through Morocco are among the passengers. It is impressive to see how Julavits deals with the passengers' thoughts, the operational details of the aircraft, the dialogue, as well as the past and the future.

Written by Chris Adrian, in *A Better Angel,* the events of 9/11 are discussed in a series of stories. The novel is gloomy, haunting, profoundly sad, and very touching throughout. Ethical and moral issues are given a significant amount of thought by Adrian, as is his custom, via the lens of an engaging group of characters, both heavenly and earthly.

In the novel *Saturday*, written by Ian McEwan, a comfortable existence collides with a terrible catastrophe in the aftermath of 9/11 and the Iraq war. The date in question is February 15, 2003, a Saturday, and it was on that day that there was a demonstration against the war in London. The majority of the aforementioned works take place in the years leading up to 9/11, while Ian McEwan's novel *Saturday* is set in the years following the event. McEwan's book was set in 2003. The main character, Henry Perowne, is happy with his life, but the looming threat of war and the aftereffects of a previous traumatic event suggest that Henry's future may not be as bright as it now seems to be. *Saturday* garnered a lot of attention and acclaim in the United States, where many people held the opinion that it was superior to anything produced locally. Even though there was no twisted metal, no suffocating clouds of poisonous smoke, and no corpses falling from the sky, Saturday nevertheless managed to convey a message that was understandable, compassionate, and vital. The

work shows us how we may live in different periods, and it never loses sight of the odd truth that despite all we go through, we are able to persevere, find ways to deal with it, and yet have perfectly happy Saturdays.

Netherland, by Joseph O'Neill, traces the story of a financial analyst and cricket fan, Hans van den Broek as he faces societal and personal crises after the 9/11 attacks. His family falls apart soon after the incident. His wife Rachel leaves her husband and New York City and, taking their kid Jake with her, departs for London. A lonely Hans is deeply hurt, and his sense of self-worth is in tatters. Hans feels that he has lost his sense of identity and tries to rediscover himself. A depressed Hans wanders around New York and finally finds solace in cricket when he strikes up a friendship with a Trinidadian, Chuck Ramkissoon, who introduces cricket to America. *Netherland* is a classic tale of the impact of a tragic crisis on individuals and questions on identity and belonging.

Amani Al-book Khatahtbeh's *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age* offers her viewpoint on the events that transpired in the years following 9/11. She describes what it was like for her to grow up in the aftermath of the attacks as a young Muslim lady in the United States. This book details the Islamophobic harassment that Al-Khatahtbeh experienced, her eventual creation of a website known as Muslim Girl, and the activism that followed.

Ottessa Moshfegh's highly acclaimed book *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* is a satirical fiction about the months before 9/11. The endeavor to recover via her own kind of hibernation is described by the narrator as taking place during the year that she self-medicated with a wide variety of different medicines. The events of September 11, 2001, are gradually brought into the focus of the story, which does so with both a grim sense of comedy and compassion as September 2001 draws near.

Jay McInerney's *The Good Life*, published in 2007, is a compelling and captivating novel set against the backdrop of September 11, 2001. McInerney has always been a sensitive social observer, and *The Good Life* is a very thought-

provoking work set in the background of post-September 11 New York. The novel delves into the domestic, as is typical of many post-9/11 works, and trains its lens on life, love, loss, marriage, parenthood, and betrayal in the months after the attacks. Exceptionally bright and artistically crafted, this is 9/11 fiction, and while it addresses 9/11 as an event, the focus is primarily on interpersonal interactions.

Exit Ghost, which came out in the same year by Philip Roth, is set in New York after 9/11 and relates to the event and its impact. Roth analyses what it means to be a novelist in the United States at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and specifically in New York City in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11.

The Colossus of New York, published in 2007, is Colson Whitehead's thirteen-vignette portrayal of New York City. This work addresses 9/11's identity dilemma. Whitehead describes 9/11 to emphasize the loss that has always been a part of New York City and that the attacks have not fundamentally changed its connection to locals.

Terrorist by John Updike is another attempt to represent the phenomena of jihadist violence. This book is undeniably a more direct reaction to the events of September 11. Another excellent 9/11 fiction is *The Third Brother*, which was written by Nick McDonell. It is a poignant story of sibling love, family sorrow, and the nation's grief at the loss of a loved one. *The Harbinger* is another 9/11 fiction written by Rabbi Jonathan Cahn. In this book, the author describes how the terrorist attacks of September 11 serve as a cautionary tale for the United States.

The novel *Transmission* by Hari Kunzru documents the post-9/11 hatred and crimes committed in the United States against South Asians in general and Muslims in particular. These crimes highlight the racialized fabric of the country as well as the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 incident. Transmission is mainly concerned with following the story of an Indian computer programmer named Arjun Mehta, who moves to the United States in the hope of improving his financial situation. In Transmission, Kunzru explores the connection between anti-immigration sentiment

and bio-politics in the wake of the September 11 attacks and the moving figure of the computer virus and the migrant identity of its developer as a source of fear, suspicion, and rivalry. An Indian computer programmer in the United States is identified as the virus's inventor and is forced to flee the country as a homeless criminal in Kunzru's story. The novel depicts his growing anxiety about the obfuscation of the political world after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

This spine-tingling tale of contemporary terrorism comes to us from the maestro of international intrigue, Frederick Forsyth, and it is titled *The Afghan*. The events that take place in the book focus on the British and American intelligence services uncovering a top-secret Al-Qaeda plan to carry out an attack that is both more severe and more devastating than 9/11.

When the United States closed its airspace soon after the terrorist strikes, thirty-eight aircraft headed initially for the United States was forced to land at the Canadian airport of Gander International Airport. The Canadians embraced the stranded travelers with kindness and generosity in an exceptional situation. As the passengers continued to be stranded over the course of many days, many of them formed connections with the locals of Gander and eventually thanked them by providing financial assistance in the form of scholarships and gifts. *The Day the World came to Town: 9/11 in Gander* is an extraordinary book that examines the events of September 11 from a variety of angles that are not often covered in books on the subject. The author focuses on how people came together even in areas that were not directly affected by the terrorist attacks, and he shows how difficult it was for those participating in the events to be doing the right thing while they were under such a great deal of stress.

By 2011, it was not feasible for a prominent author to publish a book set in the United States that scarcely touched on the events of September 11 at all. *Freedom,* written in 2013 by Jonathan Franzen, is another 9/11 book that has received widespread praise for its depiction of the long-term effects of the terrorist attacks of that day.

Despite the fact that *Freedom* by Jonathan Franzen is focused on the political and social environment in the country that was created by the American Government immediately after the attacks, the book also succeeds in drawing the attention of the readers to the impact of the 9/11 incident on domestic life as well. The assaults are not prominently portrayed in the work, but it serves as a background throughout both for the characters in the novel and for the readers of the book - a technique that we have become used to in post-9/11 works over the course of the previous two decades. The book makes the implicit argument that there is a distinction between aircraft crashing into buildings and the gradual fatigue of the American political establishment throughout the time period that followed. However, the horrific one-off attacks and mundane everyday life are inextricably linked to one another, and it is not possible to comprehend one without experiencing the other.

The works of literature written after the assaults of September 11 point inexorably toward the day when people will no longer consider the attacks of September 11 to be their primary focus of attention. Thematic content, rather than chronological order, is what differentiates literature written after 9/11. The writers of literary works written after September 11 do not waste time ruminating on the destabilizing repercussions of 9/11; instead, they are concerned with how other variables are beginning to drown out the din of crashing planes, the screams of the terrified onlookers and the wailing of ambulances. To borrow a straightforward metaphor from the language of trauma, they want to know what it means for the wound caused by 9/11 to turn into a scar. The majority of the works that are deemed to be 9/11 novels are not only focused on the specific events that occurred on September 11, 2001. They are about the feeling of being alive after seeing a large-scale murder in public, as well as the desperation and the will to survive both physically and emotionally. They also remind us about the resilience of a city that has been knocked to its knees but not completely leveled off. They are discussions pertaining to social politics, the politics of identity, and the politics of remembrance.

1.5 The Novel After 9/11 – Some Critical Perspectives

The ascent of 9/11 fiction merits the attention it has received in the years following the attacks. When discussing works published after September 11, 2001, the term "post-9/11 literature" is used to refer to these works more as a thematic identifier than a chronological one. As a result, this designation does not represent the entirety of the literary work that was produced in the wake of the terrorist attacks; instead, it refers to a curated collection of texts, more specifically, those that explicitly grapple with the attacks and the emotional and political ramifications they caused.

The literary exploration of the post-9/11 condition in English-language literature has been quite diverse, and not all 9/11 fiction is "Ground Zero Fiction" (Dawes 2011). Birgit Dawes, in her analysis of the post 9/11works produced in the first decade of the attacks, defines 9/11 writes:

> As of late June 2011, at least 231 novels from around the world are available in print that can be classified as 9/11 novels — that is, the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington provide the entire or a part of the setting, they feature more or less prominently as a historical context (establishing a particular atmosphere or set of themes), or they have a decisive role in of these fictional responses were written by U.S.-American novelists. (6)

As Susana Araújo notes, “the majority of the so-called 9/11 novels were also written during the military ‘interventions’ in Afghanistan and Iraq” (4), with the readers having “to confront violent realities promoted, not only by the US government at the time, but also by its political and military allies, particularly those in Europe” (5). Though the attack had international ramifications, with the US and its allies embarking on what President bush termed a “war on terror” in Afghanistan and Iraq, it was not Afghanistan or Iraq that the post-9/11 fiction writers were focusing on. The focus was on “the ways that literature has participated in the larger cultural process of representing and interpreting” (Keniston & Quinn 2) the events of 9/11. Despite

differences in method, scope, and focus, however, most studies relating to post-9/11 literature have a similar interest in analyzing how these works and authors have attempted to “understand the meaning of 9/11” (Randall 4) and acknowledged “the profound difficulties that writers have had in representing the events of 9/11” (8).

The initial wave of scholarly criticism focused on how the works of fiction represented the immediate impact of the assaults on America, acknowledging that these novelists had different “means of representing the supposedly unrepresentable events of 9/11” (Michael 5).

Richard Gray’s study *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11* critiques the initial post-9/11 writers for their exclusive focus on the domestic lives of their protagonists, thereby offering “a response to the crisis that is eerily analogous to the reaction of many politicians and the mainstream American media after 9/11: a desperate retreat into old sureties.” Critiquing them for what he termed as failing to “get it right” (17) Gray contends that these works lack "encounters with strangeness" (32).

According to critics such as Kristiaan Versluys, 9/11, from a trauma stand point, was a "traumatic event" for not just victims, survivors, and witnesses but also for hundreds of millions around the world who witnessed the attacks on television. In his 2009 work, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel*, Versluys put forth his argument asserting that “in a time of globalized witnessing and shared vicarious experience, an event like 9/11 is a rupture for everybody” (4).

Later studies, however, expressly transcended this trauma paradigm by taking a more holistic perspective on the various fictional works acknowledging their role in the “shaping and installation of 9/11's cultural memory" (Dawes 6) and moving into a “more overtly globalized understanding of the 9/11 events” (Banita 1).

1.6 Primary Works Taken for Study

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (2005) – Jonathan Safran Foer

Oskar Schell is a nine-year-old kid lamenting the death of his Dad, Thomas Schell, who died on September 11, 2001, during terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. Oskar is a highly precocious boy: he's incredibly brilliant and interested, dreaming up all kinds of arcane inventions, but he also is terrified and scarred. Oskar feels terribly guilty because his Dad had left five phone messages on the morning of September 11, but he did not inform anybody about them; more crucially, Oskar hadn't told anyone that he was actually in the apartment when the last time his Dad phoned, but he was too terrified to pick up the phone. Oskar, who was never as connected with his Mom as with his Dad, moves even more away from her after the loss of his father. He is close to his grandmother, yet he's lonely and depressed.

Oskar discovers a "Black" envelope with a key in his Dad's closet. A puzzled Oskar resolves to track down every individual with the last name "Black" in New York City to attempt to discover what the key unlocks. One of the persons Oskar contacts happens to reside in Oskar's apartment complex. Mr. Black hasn't left his flat in 24 years, yet he goes with Oskar. As the novel progresses, Oskar explores New York City. Despite his worries, he takes the train, eats non-vegan cuisine, crosses bridges, and trusts others. Oskar and Mr. Black visit Ruth Black, whose husband has been deceased for years and who hasn't left the Empire State Building since. Mr. Black departs the expedition after that, leaving Oskar as lonely and abandoned as ever.

Oskar's grandparents had a parallel tale. Thomas Schell's grandfather was in Dresden, Germany, when it was firebombed during World War II. The explosion killed Grandpa's sweetheart, Anna, his unborn son, and his parents. He also lost his voice following the tragedy. Grandpa Schell has the words "YES" and "NO" tattooed on his hands and carries a daybook. Several chapters of the book are letters written by Grandpa to his "unborn son"; this "son" might be Oskar's Dad or Anna's kid, as his girlfriend was pregnant when she died in the Dresden bombing.

Oskar’s Grandpa joins his Grandma in New York after Dresden is bombed. His Grandma is, incidentally, Anna's sister. They connect with Grandpa using gestures and his daybook. Grandpa, a sculptor, sculpts Grandma naked, but she looks like Anna. Grandpa and Grandma later get married though he is still in love with the dead Anna. They divide the apartment into "Nothing" and "Something" zones and create rules to limit their contact. Grandma conceives despite their rules about not having any physical intimacy between them. So, an upset Grandpa returns to Dresden before his son’s birth.

Decades later, Grandpa watches the 9/11 bombings and reads Dad's obituary in the newspaper. He soon flies to Manhattan even though he hasn't been in the United States in forty years. Grandma lets him move back into the apartment, but only in the guest room after he calls and leaves her notes. In addition to Grandpa's letters, Jonathan Safran Foer includes Grandma's letter to Oskar. Grandma tells Oskar her own story. Grandma resides in the next building over from Oskar, so they see each other every day. The letter at the conclusion of the book explains that Grandma and Grandpa are now living at the airport after she encouraged him to remain with her after Oskar's adventure.

Oscar’s journey across the Burroughs of New York in search of the mysterious Black and his grandparents' past merges when Oskar encounters “the renter” Grandpa and tells him about Dad and the quest for the key. Oskar checks his phone messages for the first time in eight months and finds a text from Abby Black. She believes William understands the key's purpose. When Oskar visits Abby, he finds out why the letter breaks off in the middle. Abby has informed her mom. Mom and Grandpa have apparently been watching the whole excursion. Oskar gives William the key to his dad's safety deposit box but refuses to help William open the package. Oskar and Grandpa dig up Dad's empty casket on his second death anniversary, and Grandpa buries his unsent letters to his son. Grandpa's letters typically include daybook passages. The story concludes with Oskar's reversed flipbook showing a man falling from a skyscraper.

***A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (2006) - Ken Kalfus**

Ken Kalfus's novel commences with images of the confusion and terror of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers. The two main characters- the estranged couple - Joyce and Marshall Harriman has a providential escape. Joyce was meant to be on board the United Flight 93 from Newark and Marshall in his office on the eighty-sixth floor of the World Trade Center's South Tower on September 11, 2001. However, luckily for Joyce, her business trip is canceled at the last minute. Her husband Marshall reports late for work, so they both emerge relatively unscathed from the 9/11 attacks. However, initially, the couple is unaware of what happened to the other, and both believe and desperately hope that their partner perished in the attacks.

It is at this point that Kalfus's story comically diverges from other representations of the 9/11 events in literature. Here the chaos of the burning and collapsing buildings and the shock of the attacks become the backdrop for the protagonists' experience of unparalleled happiness at the thought of their spouse's demise and the end of their protracted and bitter divorce. This introduction to the characters and 9/11 sets the tone for the novel, which chronicles the first two years after the attacks.

Joyce Harriman, a New York City working mother, fantasizes that her husband Marshall is among the WTC dead. He, however, survives and returns to the luxurious apartment that they both live in with their children, Viola and Victor. Their married life is a series of endless bickering, but neither of them is willing to move out or is ready to give up the apartment. Kalfus chronicles the couple's anger, loneliness, and search for replacement love and sex in numerous unsuitable locations as their relationship disintegrates. Joyce's attempt to seduce her friend's miserable husband appears pathetic and tragic, while Marshall attempts elaborate destruction of his sister-in-law's wedding. The situations get even more bizarre when Marshall, in a fit

of misery and anger, unsuccessfully tries to become a suicide bomber.

This cleverly written novel's strengths and weaknesses lie in the parallels Kalfus draws between the Harrimans' escalating domestic war and the beleaguered Middle East. Ken Kalfus, throughout the book, tries to link the Harrimans' life through parallels with the terrorist bombings in the United States, the US invasion of Iraq, and a possible alternative in the future that mocks America's and the Harrimans' sense of idealism.

***Falling Man* (2007) – Don DeLillo**

The events in *The Falling Man* begin on September 11, 2001. Keith, an attorney who works in New York City's World Trade Center, survives the September World Trade Center attacks with minor injuries and subsequently visits his estranged wife, Lianne, and their son Justin at their apartment. When Lianne consents to Keith moving back in with them, the pair resolves to recommit to their marriage. Lianne is a freelance editor and writer, as well as a volunteer who helps Alzheimer's patients express themselves via writing. Her father committed himself after he was diagnosed with age-related dementia. Her mother, Nina, had dated Martin, a European art trader, for almost twenty years.

On September 11, 2001, two of Keith's frequent poker partners died in the terrorist attacks. Keith soon recognizes that the briefcase he carried with him during the evacuation of the World Trade Center is not his and returns it to its owner, Florence. Their shared experiences of surviving the 9/11 attacks unite them. Justin, their son, becomes enamored with and afraid of a guy named Bill Lawton. Keith and Lianne ultimately realize that they misheard Bin Laden's name as Bill Lawton. The narrative briefly focuses on a man named Hammad, who was intimately involved in the September 11 attacks, and portrays him as conflicted about his goal during his training.

As Lianne becomes increasingly anxious and insecure about the future, she lashes out at a neighbor, even hitting her. Keith, who has a sexual connection with Florence at this point, has a similar thrill while shopping with her. He aggressively attacks a stranger. When the bulk of Alzheimer's sufferers begins to lose their memories, Lianne discontinues her writing group for them. Lianne one day meets the 'falling man' on the streets of New York City. He is a performance artist who dives from buildings while tied to them by a leash and safety equipment, imitating the pose shown in a picture obtained by an Associated Press photographer of a man diving from one of the WTC towers after it was struck on September 11, 2001. Lianne confronts a personal crisis when she is diagnosed with signs of neurological illness, and her mother dies soon. The action momentarily returns to Florida, where Hammad undergoes flying training in preparation for his involvement in the September 11 attacks.

Keith, enticed by his need for a sense of risk, begins to spend most of his time in Las Vegas playing poker. He sometimes travels to New York City to spend time with his wife, Lianne, and son, Justin, after having terminated his relationship with Florence. Lianne began attending church despite her lack of religious inclination. She values religion because it gives her a sense of security and even inner comfort. Hammad is seen aiding in the hijacking of the first plane used to strike the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Before being evacuated, Keith observes the death of one of his friends and co-workers during the assaults.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist **(2007) – Mohsin Hamid**

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is the story of Changez, a Pakistani man who undergoes an ideological and political transformation while he studies and works in America. Changez, a New Yorker at the time of the World Trade Center attacks, decides not to pursue the American Dream and instead shifts his ideals and allegiance closer to home. The tale is a framing narrative in which Changez narrates his experience to an American he encounters outside a café in Lahore, Pakistan. The intentions of Changez and the American are progressively exposed in an integrated storyline.

Changez tells the American stranger his transformation tale over many hours of café dining. Changez was a top student at Princeton. He applied to a prominent valuation business, Underwood Samson, and after a difficult interview, was employed and on his road to reaching financial success. Changez met Erica while on vacation in Greece with fellow Princeton alumni. Their romance continued and grew after they returned to New York, but there were problems as well since Erica was still emotionally linked to her dead lover, Chris. Meanwhile, Changez made excellent achievements at work. His work at Underwood Samson pleased the company's senior executives. He visited Manila with an appraisal team and received expensive transportation, lodgings, and respect. But a quick meeting with a jeep driver in the street reminded Changez of the world from which he came, and he felt a greater connection with the impoverished worker than with his distant and entitled American colleagues.

Changez struggled to suppress his joy when hearing about the World Trade Center attacks. He was not delighted with the loss of life but was glad that someone was able to bring mighty America to her knees. Because of the man's racial and ethnic heritage, airport security gave him a great deal of attention at the airport on his return to the United States. Changez sought to reunite with Erica. The previous occurrences had pushed her into despair at Chris’s death, and she was cold despite their time together. They were only able to establish a physical connection when Changez advised that Erica imagine that he is actually Chris. The experience appeared to drive Erica into another downward spiral rather than bringing the two lovers closer together as they had hoped it would. Her mother talked to Changez and urged that he act as a steady friend and not a lover. Shortly afterward, Erica entered a facility to recuperate and rediscover who she was.

Changez visited his family during winter vacation. He feared for their safety during the political turmoil between Pakistan and India. The holiday allowed him to appreciate the history and cultural beauty of his home, and he started to rethink his allegiance to American principles and corporate basics of success and power. Despite

his mother's advice, he returned to America with a beard. The move got him unpleasant glances, and angry remarks from people on the streets since the beard made him seem significantly more Muslim. However, Changez wore it with respect and as an act of resistance to America and unity with his people.

Changez's next project was to analyze a publishing firm in Valparaiso, Chile. His meetings with the manager, Juan-Bautista, were the last impetus that prompted Changez to entirely shift his ideological outlook. In Chile, he was unable to concentrate on his profession, constantly checking on the political occurrences across the world and particularly worried about the potential that conflict may come to his nation. He was also attracted by the simple beauty of Valparaiso. The historic city reminded him of his homeland, Lahore, and he felt unhappy that both had lost their economic luster. Juan-Bautista was aware that Changez was different from his American co-worker and utilized this to his own benefit. He took Changez to lunch and informed him about the janissaries, who were young Christian children seized and taught to fight against their own people in the Ottoman army. He compared Changez to these youths - indoctrinated to foreign ideologies and exploited to cause the economic destruction of others. Changez understood the reality of this comparison and immediately resolved to leave it all behind — resigning his job, saying farewell to Erica, and leaving America. Before leaving New York, Changez sought to see Erica and learned that she had vanished from the facility where she was residing. It was unclear whether she had killed herself, but Changez was saddened by the news. Her mother handed him Erica's manuscript as a memento. Although he has no genuine expectation of ever seeing her again, Changez hangs on passionately to the memory of Erica for several years.

While Changez is relating this anecdote to the American, the evening wears on, and the two men eventually sit down to dinner and then drink tea together. Changez engages in playful banter with the American during the course of their supper, suggesting in oblique ways that he is privy to the American's background and the reason for his visit to Lahore. As the café shuts and the two men go to a hotel, Changez speaks about his job as a university instructor and his efforts in guiding the

students in their political activists. He claims that he has been advised by his colleagues to keep his actions in control as his anti-American sentiments are bringing him to the attention of the American administration and that an envoy could be dispatched to deal with him. The streets grow dark and empty save for a few guys hiding in the shadows who soon enough swarm the American, who reaches under his jacket for a possible gun, as Changez attempts to flee the situation. The novelist leaves it at that prompting the readers to draw their own conclusions about what will happen to each character.

Once in a Promised Land (2007) – Laila Halaby

The novel, *Once in a Promised Land* is about Jassim and Salwa, who fled Jordan for Arizona in search of freedom and opportunity. Even though the couple lives quite a distance from the World Trade Center, they are unable to escape the fog of suspicion that has settled over the country post the 9/11 incident. In her second book, Jordanian-American author Laila Halaby transports readers to a period of strife with the rhetoric “either on our side or against us,” and people flew American flags from the antennas of their cars as a demonstration of loyalty and defiance. She does this so that she may investigate how the hijackings on the other side of the vast country made such a crucial impact the lives of her protagonists, a prosperous Arab couple living in Tucson, and how their lives are adversely impacted.

After they moved to America, Jassim and Salwa Haddad now enjoy a far higher standard of living than they did in Jordan. They enjoy highly paid occupations they drive flashy automobiles and enjoy the increased freedom, space and privacy the country offers. Jassim is a devoted hydrologist, passionate about his profession. He has made it his life's work to ensure that all have access to clean drinking water, and a man whose daily ritual consists of going for a swim first thing in the morning. Having a penchant for opulence, Salwa works in banking and the real estate industry. Because of her preoccupation with luxurious pajamas, her family has given her the nickname "Queen of Pajamas." However, their position in the world is precarious, and the

pressures that they face, both from the outside and from within themselves, are beginning to destabilize their lives.

The couple's marriage has been rocked by a series of devastating occurrences, deceptions, and cover-ups. Salwa keeps the news of her pregnancy a secret from Jassim, even when the pregnancy ends in miscarriage since Jassim does not want any more children. She allows her sadness to lead to her engaging in an affair with a co-worker who cannot be trusted. Jassim causes injury to a teenage kid by driving his automobile into him. Jassim does not want to make his unhappy wife any more distraught, so he does not inform her that he accidentally murdered the teenager and instead deals with the guilt on his own.

However, Salwa and Jassim are not entirely blameless for the downfall of their comfortable existence. These characters are primarily responsible for making their lives as miserable as they ultimately turn out to be. Both Salwa and Jassim suffer as a result of Salwa's decision to have an affair with a co-worker, and it is difficult to feel sympathy for Salwa as her mental health deteriorates. Because Jassim is presented as being so wooden and disciplined, the reader doesn't start to feel genuine emotion for him until the very end of the novel. Both parties go outside the relationship for solace and companionship, which contributes to the tension that exists in their marriage. September 11 returns in the novel's last half, worsening Jassim's situation. Jassim’s coworkers misunderstand his weird conduct and report him to the FBI. When the agency opens an inquiry, it becomes impossible to justify Salwa's September 12 money transfer to Jordan.

Regardless of how well Jassim and Salwa have adapted to life in the United States, they are still considered aliens in a country that has become hostile against those who share their appearance. After having their ideal American life ripped out from beneath them, Salwa concludes that their adoptive nation is just too vulgar and corrupt for them to continue living there. *Once in a Promised Land* is a work that is both dramatic and heartbreakingly honest in its examination of what it is like to cross cultures, be eyed with mistrust, and try to find a safe refuge. Being and looking like a Muslim in the United States in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11

meant that you were a possible target of suspicion and prone to retribution from an angry public searching for outlets for its fear or wrath. This was especially true if you were an Arab.

The Submission (2011) – Amy Waldman

The story starts around two years after the terrorist events on September 11, 2001. A jury committee has been established to choose a layout for the 9/11 monument, which is now under construction, and they invite anonymous submissions. Paul Rubin, a wealthy New Yorker, is leading the charge as head of the group. Claire Burwell is the only person on the committee who lost a family member or friend in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, having lost her husband, who had a job at the World Trade Center. In the end, the committee decides to vote for a particular design centered on a garden, which Claire supports. When the committee finds out that the chosen winner who submitted the design has the name Mohammad Khan and is of Muslim descent, they are astounded. Mohammad "Mo" Khan is an accomplished architect who resides in New York City. Nicknamed "Mo." it was in the United States that he started his career. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he has been subjected to a great deal of prejudice, and he has been overlooked for advancements at work.

A journalist by the name of Alyssa Spier discovers that the winner of the competition is a Muslim, and she writes a piece for the New York Post indicating this despite the fact that the committee has decided to keep the pick a secret for the time being. Following the committee's announcement of their choice of Mo's design, there was a massive backlash from the general public due to the fact that Mo is a Muslim. As Mo's design was selected, he decided to seek the assistance of a Muslim advocacy organization to fight for his rights. The committee is in a great deal of discomfort, and they wonder whether or not it will be feasible to garner support for a design that was created by a Muslim architect. On the other hand, Claire is an ardent supporter of Mo. When others start to accuse Mo of being anti-American, Claire and Mo are of the

belief that Mo does not have to respond to these xenophobic allegations in order to avoid giving them the dignity that they do not deserve.

Mo and his design are opposed by Sean Gallagher, a man whose brother was killed in the 9/11 attacks. He decides to become a member of an organization that is opposed to Muslims in order to assist in their demonstrations against Mo's selection. In the meanwhile, a Muslim Bangladeshi immigrant by the name of Asma Anwar, whose husband was killed in the terrorist attacks of September 11 and who is now bringing up her kid by herself, is particularly disturbed about the growing tide of Islamophobia in the United States. Mo's primary concern is that he be shown due respect as the competition's victor, but he is very opposed to the notion that he should become a public champion for the rights of Muslims in general.

Later the memorial committee has a public hearing to discuss the problem of the monument. Mo begins to deliver a speech in which he intends to explain his idea, but the mob furiously stops him. The majority of the other speakers have expressed opinions that are xenophobic. When asked to speak, Asma, who had already chosen to attend the hearing, delivered a passionate statement on behalf of all the Muslim minorities who are discriminated against in the United States. Shortly after Alyssa Spier publishes a report revealing Asma's personal details, a crowd attacks Asma in front of her apartment. She is stabbed and dies of internal bleeding. Sean Gallagher is so horrified by what has happened he decides to stop protesting against Mo's memorial design.

At this point, Claire's perspective has started to shift as a result of the growing backlash against Mo. Mo is asked by Claire, in the context of an exclusive interview, to comment on the claims of xenophobia that have been made against him. Mo argues that he is not obligated to respond to bigotry since it is beneath his dignity to do so. Despite this, Mo ultimately feels disheartened by the reaction from the public and decides to withdraw his proposal. Mo has developed a pessimistic outlook on the United States of America, and he is concerned that the nation will never be able to emerge victorious over its destructive tendencies.

1.7 Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to obtain the following objectives: -

1. To understand the historical significance of the 9/11 attacks, the American experience of it, and the resultant sense of vulnerability that it inflicted upon American national identity and its political and cultural status.

2. To identify the nature of post-9/11 literature and the various themes depicted in the post-9/11 novels.

3. To understand the basic tenets of trauma theory as applied to literary works.

4. To explore and undertake a critical analysis of the literary representations of the traumatic experience of 11 September 2001 in the novels selected for the study.

5. To examine how the events of 9/11 create an intricate and far-reaching effect on the lives of characters and how the resultant grief and trauma impact relationships – both within the family and the community.

1.8 Scope of the study

The two decades that have passed since the assaults on September 11 have seen an explosion in the amount of written material that addresses the terrorist attacks and the political, security, and diplomatic consequences that have resulted from them. Studies have also been conducted on the portrayal of the attacks in the media coverage that ensued, the examination of the vocabulary used in the discourse that followed, and the security analysis that followed. As the World Trade Centre attacks were the most prominent terrorist assault on United States territory during peacetime, the implications were not confined to the military or the security services. Because of this, one is able to comprehend the repercussions that surprise terrorist attacks on a

large number of people have on society, culture, and the psyche, as well as the effects that these assaults have on human behavior.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of this study are the following:

- This investigation is restricted to the literary depictions of the terrorist attacks on the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001.
- The subject matter of this research is limited to a select group of writers who had as their primary theme the effect of the attacks of September 11 and how they impacted the lives of individuals in the United States.
- The primary texts were selected based on the recurring topics that appeared throughout the early novels that came out, which had the attacks as the central theme.
- Only books with central themes related to the effects of the 9/11 attacks on individuals living in the United States have been selected for this research study.
- The effects of the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, 2001, were felt not only in the United States but all around the world. Fictional works have been generated all around the globe in many languages, with the attacks and their aftermath serving as the central focus of these works. However, this research does not take for analysis any novels written by authors from Europe, Asia, or the Pacific, nor does it examine the effects of the 9/11 assaults on any nation other than the United States.

1.10 Methodology

The primary texts have been thoroughly examined in order to undertake a critical analysis of the reoccurring themes and motifs in the post-9/11 novels selected for the study. Some of the characteristics of trauma theory as applied to literary works are used in this research. A brief overview of the political impact and legacy of the events sets the context and assists in understanding the implications and impact of the 9/11 attack on individuals and the community.

1.11 Plan of the Thesis

This thesis attempts to undertake a critical analysis of the depiction of the impact of the 9/11incident, especially the terror and trauma depicted in six novels published after the attacks and has the incident and its aftermath as the primary focus. The novels *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer, Ken Kalfus' satirical work, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country,* and Don DeLillo's *Falling* Man are all set in the United States and look at the attacks from the perspective of troubled domesticity in white American households. Laila Halaby and Mohsin Hamid, whose works include *Once in a Promised Land* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist,* respectively, provide the Arab and Muslim perspectives. Amy Waldman's novel *The Submission* depicts issues relating to the collective trauma experienced by the citizens as they engage in the process of trying to construct a memorial at the site of the attack.

This thesis contends that the lives of the 9/11 trauma sufferers are intimately intertwined with the lives of the characters in these six novels. It tries to not only examine the aftermath of the September 11 attacks but also to identify the ways in which fiction reflects its traumatic aftermath. The purpose is to examine the individual and communal trauma in their quest for meaning and survival experienced by the characters in the primary novels undertaken for the study. The following discussions will take place in each chapter in the order listed below.

1.12 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1- Introduction

Chapter 1 gives a broad introduction and context to the events of the 9/11attacks and explores the immediate and long-term political consequences for the United States and the impact of the attacks domestically and worldwide, even after it has been twenty years since they occurred. This chapter also discusses the origins of the Trauma Theory and how it has been applied to many works of literature over the years. Along with a collection of some of the novels published after 9/11, the chapter also examines the many critical viewpoints that have surfaced as a result of research into the themes explored in some of the critically and popularly acclaimed American novels published in the years after 9/11.

Chapter 2- Trauma and Disrupted Domesticity

The second chapter is titled 'Trauma and Disrupted Domesticity,' and it discusses the trauma that individual characters, specifically the White Americans, have experienced, as well as the impact that trauma has had not only on those individual characters but also the impact on children and the family unit. Among the works that will be examined in this chapter are *Falling Man*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, and *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*.

Chapter 3- Trauma and the Death of the American Dream

The third chapter, titled 'Trauma and the Death of the American Dream,' examines issues such as trauma, representation, and identity that immigrants to the United States faced following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and how the hijackers' Muslim identities impacted the lives of the Muslim characters in novels, even those who in pursuit of the 'American Dream' were well-integrated into American society. The works taken for analysis in this chapter are Mohsin Hamid's

The Reluctant Fundamentalist and Laila Halabi's *Once in a Promised Land*.

Chapter 4 - The Collective Trauma -The Nation, Identity and Memorialization

The fourth chapter, titled 'The Collective Trauma -The Nation, Identity and Memorialization,' investigates the connection between the collective trauma felt by New York City and the issues of American identity in *The Submission*. As a representation of global capitalism, the World Trade Center has become a symbol of American might and national pride. This book documents the efforts to heal a traumatized community and accepts that the community's founding ideals are at the core of the endeavor to create a memorial to honor the victims of the September 11 attacks.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The final chapter, the conclusion, provides a summary of the arguments made in the thesis regarding how the characters in the novels chosen for this study navigate the disruption to their daily lives as a result of the attacks, as well as how they attempt to negotiate the resultant trauma in their struggle to overcome it.

CHAPTER TWO

TRAUMA AND DISRUPTED DOMESTICITY

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of terrorism is to strike dread into the hearts and minds of innocent people. These concerns may swiftly spread and are not limited to individuals who were directly engaged in the incident; additional stakeholders include family members of the dead and the injured and survivors who would have been witnesses, as well as others who were exposed to images of the tragic event. The psychological damage caused by a terrorist attack often surpasses any physical injuries that may have been sustained. When it comes to national attempts to establish intervention methods for the pre-event, the event, and the post-event phases that will lessen the negative psychological impacts of terrorism, it is crucial to have a solid understanding of these psychological effects and how they play out.

Often, a traumatic incident is so intense and destructive to the surrounding environment that it cannot be accounted for by the observational frameworks that are already in place. As a direct consequence of this, people who have survived traumatic experiences are unable to appreciate the gravity of what has occurred to them. The victim's memory failed to record the incident at the time it took place since the full amount of the event's brutality was not yet understood at the time. A survivor does not record or consolidate the memory (effect) of the catastrophe as a result of the complicated process of isolation, which is the defense mechanism of the human brain. However, the survivor is also unable to entirely delete the memory of the incident from their mind. The trauma that occurs all at once is impervious to punishment and may be wholly forgotten.

There is a process that occurs during separation in which occurrences stemming from a traumatic experience that ordinarily would not bring the memory up are allowed to do so (Coates et al. 3). The one who has been devastated by the act of separation is the only one who can find the traumatic past (Greenberg 31), and as a result, the experience of the other side of awareness will happen vividly. This articulated presentation of symptoms does not take place in the form of a parallel report or in the consistent effort of the persons who are afflicted by the condition. Instead, experiencing trauma permits them to be known in an irrepressible and extremely divisive manner, in the form of, for example, deterioration or nightmares. This makes it possible for them to be recognized by others. Since 1980, the American Psychiatric Association has recognized this cluster of signs and symptoms as constituting Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, more often referred to simply as PTSD (Leys 2).

While William Brown was conducting his research on veterans of World War I during the early 1920s, he discovered that many of his troubled patients were generally unable to find a place to pinpoint or articulate the powerful emotions connected with their traumatic experiences. Instead, service members might express their sentiments in a casual manner about their physical or mental ailments. (Brown & Pisetsky 285). However, his patients were unable to access any memories of the experiences that had contributed to the development of their present condition.

The condition of traumatic memory is where there are a few modifications inside the victim's awareness that allow him to segregate a portion of his memory where the victim may temporarily terminate any horrific occurrence. These alterations lead the victim to deal with the aftermath of the trauma. Monitoring the victim of the tragedy as he or she transitions from a painful recollection to a memory that is structured consistently is the solution to overcoming this divide. To put it another way, persons who have been traumatized should be conscious of the need to be specific about their sentiments and try to frame their experiences in a more comprehensive and consistent manner.

The distinction that Freud makes between melancholy and sorrow, in addition to LaCapra's position on the problematic nature of that separation of 'imitation' and 'total performance,' are ways of recalling traumatic experiences. Imitation or melancholia may be a state of mind at some point throughout the course of the condition in which the patient's imagination is enhanced and the reality that their traumatic experience connects their past, present, and future. That is to say, a suffering man or woman will eventually come to the awareness that they are continuously caught in a terrible recollection of their sad past while also coming to the realization that their tragic past is a painful gift. The patient, it was discovered, covers all of the prospects for a far better future by insisting on holding straight on to the past (LaCapra 1994 21).

The survivors of any traumatic event are forced to imitate or 'perform' those experiences and are incapable of describing what they feel since imitation paralyzes them. Thus, they cannot put their distressing memory into a story by being prevented from doing so. They have the impression that their existence in the midst of death and tragedy, especially on a large scale, is usually a massive betrayal of those who were killed due to the incident, especially the loved ones of those who have lost their lives. On the other hand, 'performance' is what LaCapra refers to as a "defining activity," which requires a concentrated effort on the part of the 'performer.' The bereaved are given the ability, although gradually but inexorably, to conjure up a challenging memory of a traumatic experience as they go through the mourning process.

It enables them to remember the traumatic events that took place many years ago while also helping them realize that, however, the past has been, they are still alive now. Their thoughts are critical to imagine a picture of the challenging past to successfully cope with the demanding future, and this lessens the likelihood of slipping into trauma and stress-associated behaviors. If the process of acknowledging an extremely painful occurrence is hindered by the concept of "imitation," then the concept of "purity" of the imitation with regard to the imitation later of the initial experience also comes into play.

According to the narratives by trauma theorists, there is no such thing as a purely medical process. Because of this perspective, it is difficult to see the therapy process as an abrupt movement from one mental state to a different one. Instead, theorists of trauma believe that the "best" way to compensate for the effects of trauma is via a combination of imitation and performance. The first might also serve as a necessary preparation for the second, during which time the short simulations often provide the bereaved mind some respite. A diminished capacity for dreaming is both a necessary and sufficient response to the heart-breaking fact that those cherished individuals are no longer there with them.

One of the most prominent acts of terrorism occurred around the beginning of the new millennium. The North and the South towers of the World Trade Centre in New York were attacked in an interval of minutes when two aircraft were intentionally smashed into the iconic buildings. As millions of people watched on television, the United States and the world remained captivated as other stories of similar assaults surfaced. In the end, more than three thousand lives were lost, and the trajectory of countless others' lives was forever changed in ways that were both apparent and unfathomable.

Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man*, which was published in 2007, has emerged as one of the most popular and most anticipated trauma novels written with the attacks and their aftermath as its theme. It is part of an expanding list of fictional works that deal directly or otherwise with the terrorist attacks on September 11, and it is one of the most prominent and critically acclaimed additions to this list. DeLillo’s contribution was much anticipated because he had previously written on conspiracies and terrorism topics and on the effects of global capitalism. Both readers and reviewers expected from him an epic take that would be both political and, at the same time, a work providing a panoramic view of and putting the tragic event in perspective, especially for those who could not make sense of the unprecedented event.

Critics like Richard Gray were disappointed in *Falling Man*. In his critique of post-9/11 novels *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/1*, Gray states that DeLillo's work "[do] not add anything to our knowledge of trauma... In fact, it evades that trauma, it suppresses its urgency and disguises its difference through putting it in a sequence of familiar tropes" (28). However, one has to note that the fundamental differences between psychic trauma novels and cultural trauma novels are that while the former focuses on the effect of the suffering of individual characters and cultural trauma novels concentrate on the social and cultural impact of the traumatic event.

In order to understand the difference between the different types of trauma that form the subject matter of so many post-9/11 works, it is crucial to appreciate that the terrorist attacks on September 11 in the United States may be considered both a cultural trauma that shattered the nation's sense of identity and also a psychic trauma that specifically affected so many individuals and their sense of well-being. Cultural trauma happens when members of a group, society, community, or country are exposed to a terrible event that has such a drastic effect on their sense of self to the degree that it leaves an indelible impression in their memories and alters their future identity in significant ways.

Cultural trauma is socially mediated, and power structures and social institutions play a significant role in the method of its formation. Cathy Caruth, in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, mentions that when there is a terrible injury to the group as a whole, victims are connected to one another, and responsibility is assigned (22). As a consequence of this kind of trauma, the sense of identification that the group has with itself might either become more consolidated or become more disorganized. However, the terrorist attacks of September 11 were more than just a symbolic cultural trauma for the United States; they were also psychological trauma for a large number of people in New York City.

Psychic trauma, as defined by Cathy Caruth, is a wound that is inflicted upon the mind and causes the sufferer to lose their sense of time, themselves, and the world. This results in the character experiencing extreme emotional pain (3-4). In the

instance of the attacks on September 11, those who saw it on TV, people who experienced it lived outside the buildings, and people who were within the towers all had varying degrees of complicated psychological and emotional reactions to the events. It is essential to keep in mind that individual/psychic trauma and collective/cultural trauma both work in distinct ways and include various characteristics. Whereas psychic trauma is more of a wound to the minds and thoughts of individuals, cultural trauma is a wound on a collective entity like a nation as a whole.

Trauma in *Falling Man* is not presented by DeLillo as a cultural problem. Instead, he re-enacts the workings of the demanding minds of the victims using a variety of selections of their traumatic experiences and completes the narrative in the manner of a trauma novel. Earlier novels like Toni Morrisons *Beloved* (1987) had elements of trauma narrative in them; however, it wasn't until the scientific elaboration of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the late 1980s that the general public became interested in trauma. This led to the development of trauma research and inevitably found its reflection in the field of literary criticism.

The literary techniques that have the propensity to repeat in trauma narratives replicate, at an appropriate degree, the consequences of trauma and include repetition and fragmentation. These literary strategies tend to recur in trauma narratives because they mirror the impacts of trauma. These works, as Laurie Vickroy, who has also conducted extensive research on the topic of trauma fiction, explains in the 2015 work *Reading Trauma Narratives: The Contemporary Novel and the Psychology of Oppression*, present trauma by means of internalizing "the rhythms, procedures, and uncertainties of trying experience inside of their underlying sensibilities and systems" (4). The disorganized aspects of the trauma are emphasized by transitions in time and recollections, a large number of voices and challenging placing, visual imagery, textual gaps and repetitions, and shifting views. The reader is able to feel the unsettling postures of characters who are going through frustrating events because of this.

2.2. *Falling Man* - Trauma and the Crisis of Witnessing

The story of *Falling Man* is told in a third-person narrative, and the point of view shifts mainly between the protagonist couple, Keith and Lianne. However, it also includes Hammad, who is one of the terrorists, and Florence, who is the survivor. Other names appear in the narrative, like Bill Lawton (who stands for Bill Laden), Ernst Hechinger, and David Janiak are others who are referred. In each of the three parts, the narrative is divided into sections crisscrossing the viewpoints and actions that trouble the minds of the primary characters in the days and months following the assaults. These occurrences will take place in the aftermath of the events described in the prologue.

This narrative is not arranged in chronological order but as some pieces of a puzzle, most notably inside the passages that take place before September 11 that have the terrorist character Hammad. The story progresses in a manner that is somewhat repetitive. *Falling Man* starts right at the peak of the action – the terrorist attack. It begins with a confused Keith Neudecker wandering close to the towers shortly after the central portions of the tower have been destroyed, and it continues with him fleeing the burning building in order to rescue himself.

The broken minds of the central characters, Keith and Lianne Neudecker, are the source of the novel's fractured narrative, and the rate at which it unfolds provides the novel's substance. When DeLillo is striving to convey what it is like to experience psychological trauma when he narrates Keith's disoriented condition as he flees from the towers immediately after it was hit:

> He used to want to fly out of self-awareness, day and night, a body in raw motion. Now he finds himself drifting into spells of reflection, thinking not in clear units, hard and linked, but only absorbing what comes, drawing things out of time and memory and into some dim space that bears his collected experience. (66)

Dominick La Capra has taken the concepts of "Acting out" and "Working through" from Freud and psychoanalysis and developed them further within the framework of studies of trauma and historical studies. "Acting out" is the propensity to replay the past by means of having flashbacks and nightmares related to the traumatic event. These characters also obsessively repeat words and images of the experience and other similar actions that are related to the event in question. There is a compulsive repeating of the traumatic event or a reenactment of the event. The process of "working through" is when a person attempts to obtain critical distance from a traumatic experience, becomes capable of differentiating between the past, present, and future, and takes responsibility for themselves (La Capra 141-153). Keith from the *Falling Man* finds it unable to undertake this process of "acting out" and "working through."

In the first few pages of the book *Falling Man*, time and space give the impression of having been warped. It shows that Keith has just escaped the attacks and is rushing for safety. It is familiar terrain for him as he has been working in the North Tower of the World Trade Centre for ten years as a lawyer. But Keith is confused about what is around him. To Keith, the place does not resemble the familiar streets. It looked like a different world, "a time and space of falling ash and near night" (FM 3).

Every chronological reference in *Falling Man* can be traced back to that fateful day. Keith's life continues to progress, and there are repeated references to certain days in ascending order. First, it is about six days, then ten, and later fifteen days. It progresses to thirty-six days and three years after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. Everything that happens now in his life is measured in reference to that fateful day of the attacks.

The *Falling Man* is a tale of disrupted domesticity. Keith is severely traumatized after his experiences on the day of the attacks. His home is in a comparable state. Keith's son, Justin, lives with his mother, Lianne, his ex-wife.

Justin is not a witness to the attacks, unlike his father, Keith. But he, too, cannot escape the trauma that has consumed his father. Justin is also acutely affected by the attacks on the twin towers. Lianne as well struggles with similar trauma, and the readers get the distinct impression that the terrorist attacks have profoundly altered her perception of the passage of time as well. She recalls a time when the World Trade Centre was attacked previously when a bomb had gone off (a clear reference to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre when Ramzi Yousef and his conspirators detonated a truck bomb below the North Tower of the WTC complex killing six people and injuring thousands). Lianne draws a connection between the previous bomb attack and the present destruction of the towers:

> Nothing is next. There is no next. This was next. Eight years ago, they planted a bomb in one of the towers. Nobody said what was next. This was next. The time to be afraid is when there's no reason to be afraid. Too late now. (10)

As a consequence of this, Keith and Lianne struggle to get over their traumatic experiences, and they are unable to make sense of time in chronological order. They find it impossible to discriminate between what has happened in the past, their present condition, and what the future holds. The narratives of the character's experiences, which cross over and back into each other, play a significant role in the reader's understanding of the trauma that the family experience. According to Vickroy, their actions, particularly those of "re-enactment, repetition, symbolization, and suffering bodies may replace memory in trauma fiction" (30).

The story, and particularly Keith and Lianne's characters, is built around a number of recurring themes and ideas. For his postsurgical wrist, for instance, Keith has to closely follow a fitness regimen he has been given. He performs the required exercises four times a day without putting any tension on his forearm. He does it ten times for each instance and for five seconds each time. It gives him a boost of energy, and this, in turn, enables him to take control of the disparate pictures that pop into his head, such as "the chaos, the levitation of ceilings and floors, the voices choking in

smoke" (FM 40). Despite the fact that his wrist is no longer in pain, he continues to do the exercises two or three times each day as he finds the repetition therapeutic. Keith feels that his disoriented condition requires discipline to heal, and he needs “a form of controlled behavior, voluntary, that kept him from shambling into the house hating everybody” (143).

Three years after the disturbing and violent terrorist attacks that he survived, Keith is in Las Vegas. Though years have passed, he still performs the old exercises as a part of the rehabilitation program. He does his old wrist extensions twice a day. Like during the old times, immediately after the attacks, he counts the number of times he performs each exercise. These repetitive actions calm him. But the days of the traumatic incident are not far away from his mind. So, he continues to count the days since the collapse of the Twin Towers.

Memory lapses have started to appear for Lianne, and she has a nagging fear that she may get Alzheimer's disease as her father did; yet, her brain activity is typical for someone of her age. Since the repetitions helped her find peace, the doctor advised her to count backward from one hundred to seven while she was in the hospital, and she has continued to do so ever since she got home. Just like Keith, Lianne finds these calming and a form of therapy. She continues this as she goes about her daily activities, and the exercise makes her “feel good, the counting down, and she did it sometimesin the day’s familiar drift, walking down a street, riding in a taxi. It was her form of lyric verse, subjective and unrhymed, a little song-like but with rigor, a tradition of fixed order” (88). Because of these exercises, Keith and Lianne are able to bring some order to the chaos that is in their minds. Keith Neudecker and Lianne and Justin here are a symbol of the American family that has experienced traumatic times and has to now observe and adjust to this oppressed reality that is now their lives.

This domestic situation of the white American family serves as a point of comparison to the solitary and detached mental landscape that Hammad, DeLilo’s lone militant, inhabits. This naive fundamentalist, who has been tasked with the

responsibility of taking the aircraft, moves closer and closer to the event with each passing second. Hammad will, in some fashion or another, be able to put an end to the crippling solitude that he has been through for the whole of his life as a result of this. Hammad is one of the few characters in the book who is not interested in watching the fall of the Towers, although the other characters in the book do. As his plot fruitions to reality, we find him the lone individual who is emotionally detached from the situation. It is the other characters that suffer the consequences of Hammad's actions.

The title of *Falling Man* and the character of Petit has its allusion to a photograph taken on the day of the 9/11 attacks. Richard Drew of the Associated Press captured the image of a guy falling from one of the World Trade Center buildings on fire during the September 11 attacks. The man in the photograph was stuck on the higher levels of the North Tower, and either dropped in search of safety or leaped to escape the smoke and flames. The image was captured at 9:41:15 a.m. on the day of the 9/11 attack. After discovering that a series of loud cracking noises were not the result of collapsing concrete but rather the corpses of those who had leaped, striking the ground, he shot eight images in succession. Before evacuating the site due to the fall of the south tower, he captured between ten and twelve distinct sequences of photos depicting individuals plunging from the skyscraper. A series of images taken of the man's descent reveals that he tumbled through the air rather than plummeting straight down.

Readers labelled the shot "disturbing, cold-blooded, ghoulish, and sadistic" following its release in the media on September 12, 2001. After the initial criticism, the image has been hailed as a "touching work of art" and a "masterpiece in photojournalism." Don DeLillo's book *Falling Man* has a performance artist reproducing the photograph's events. DeLillo claims he did not know about the existence of the picture while naming his novel. The artist in the novel dons a harness and leaps from an elevated building in a highly visible place, such as a freeway overpass, while assuming the falling man position.

Lianne encounters Petit, the man who goes around the city, mimicking the position of the falling man in the September 11 photograph. Though it brings back memories of the day of the attack on the city, the macabre act is fascinating as well. It is possible that his ‘invitation to dance in the face of death is what makes the vision of Petit's high-wire performance so appealing, particularly when compared to the helplessness that's ascribed to the "falling man" of the photograph. Petit seemed to have emerged from the roof of the structure where he was hanging from, though with the safety of the harness wire. He spends forty-five minutes on the wire thirteen hundred and fifty feet above the ground each time. The suspension was not only beautiful but also perilous and breathtaking. Even after finishing the act, Petit had the impression that the buildings seemed different from how he remembered seeing them in the past. The eyes of a great number of onlookers were filled with tears. He went back to the secure ground of the World Trade Center rooftop after escaping from his precarious position on the wire, only to be apprehended there. Lianne does, in fact, meet the falling man as she passes through a back entrance. The falling man is a depiction of death, namely death by bouncing or falling. We do not know if this man is playing out his trauma by constantly repeating his act all through the city, but it is very much possible that his actions and those like the repetitive gestures that Keith and Lianne find much solace in.

If you change "Petit" to "Falling Man," the readers will be able to have a better understanding of an alternative kind of death that involves witnesses all the way through to the end. The falling man takes you further into an encounter with death, while Petit's presentation was more of a “hit the dance floor with death” kind of thing. Despite the fact that one might argue that Petit's presentation was an act of defiance in the face of death, the real falling man unquestionably carries out his performance as a direct consequence of the act of terror. It is agreed upon that it would also be said that the falling man brings his audience even with it.

One of the falling man's goals is to give his audience a taste of what it's like to die via the experience he provides them. However, in order to get started, the

falling man has to test his mettle against death on his own. For instance, Lianne sees the second leap that the falling man makes: “The train comes slamming through and he turns his head and looks into it and then brings his head back around and jumps” (167).

In this particular incident of the performance of the falling man, the demonstration pertains to two of the several ways that victims passed away on 9/11 — one by fire and the other by falling off from the burning buildings. Nevertheless, in contrast to the numerous other (real) victims that day, the performer does not surrender to the fire and instead totally masters the skills necessary for his role as the falling man. It would seem that the people who jumped from the buildings recognized the possibility of being engulfed by flames and made the decision to turn their heads back around and turn away from the flaming hallways. Because they have turned their heads away, the falling man and the other jumpers will not perish in flames but will instead attempt to hop themselves to their deaths.

The connotation that is being conveyed here by DeLillo is of a single person - a man - who stays perched on a ledge while hearing the rumble of fire behind him. He is aware that if he remains, his body will be overcome by flares and that this will be the method by which he will meet his end. If he does not leave, he will die in this fashion. What ends up happening is that he comes to the realization that the only two alternatives open to him are to either suffocate and die in flames or put his life in jeopardy by falling. The falling man need only choose the option, and he unquestionably comes to grips with it by the end of the book.

Since Lianne has been hurt by the reliving of her trauma, it is difficult for her to figure out how to integrate the experience of witnessing the falling man perform into her life. This is a problem because watching the performance of the falling man was both confusing and challenging. She is not the only one in his audience who thinks his execution is revolting and offensive; thus, she is not alone in her opinion. Unknown to him, the falling man might do much more harm to the people in his audience. The theme of *Falling Man* is an investigation of how the events of

September 11 affected the people who witnessed them. In spite of the fact that he is seemingly being arrogant and hurtful, it is possible that the falling man is seeking to ease the suffering of the onlookers, who make up his audience. The image of the falling man actually falling, on the other hand, as has been said before, is not often redemptive and, instead, typically causes the viewer to relive their traumatic experience.

Throughout both of her encounters with the falling man, Lianne repeatedly brings up the possibility of traumatizing herself all over again. This is especially true of the second encounter. After questioning him, Lianne feels her body becoming numb and flees away from the venue where he is enacting his latest falling act. Other than anxiety, fear, a flashback to her father's suicide attempt, and the physical feeling of blood gushing out her brain, Lianne has side symptoms connected with PTSD on a consistent basis. She is unable to go forward since time continues to move faster and slower simultaneously; she is unable to escape either the past or the present, and she notices another viewer.

The falling man in Drew's photograph is not rendered helpless in the falling man's interpretation of the image. In spite of the fact that his show replicates the helplessness of the people who fell or jumped that day from the flaming towers, his presentation is, in truth, more similar to photography. Both Drew's photograph, which captures the falling guy at the right moment, and the falling man's presentation achieve the same effect. He is safely attached to a bridle and rope, which enables the onlookers to experience the shock of witnessing a man fall while simultaneously providing them with the satisfactory experience of watching the man arrive at his destination unharmed.

This makes us ponder over the true nature of his act. Instead of just a performance that is intended to shock the onlookers, is it possible that the actions of the falling man aren't really re-traumatizing but rather assisting those who are unaware of what's going on? In order to recover from an injury, the victim must

first acknowledge the existence of the damage. The viewer, in this case, Lianne, is coerced into seeing the disturbing image as a result of having to witness the act of the falling man. As a result of her actions, Lianne is driven to reconcile the older recollections of the images that caused her the trauma with the more recent depiction of the falling man, who is shown as falling, then hanging, and ultimately not passing away. On the other hand, one may question whether or not it was in poor taste for the falling man to force Lianne to confront the source of her trauma. Shouldn't it be left to Lianne to be able to choose whether or not to be a spectator to such acts?

Should Petit's performance be seen from a different perspective? Acts that are dedicated to misery enable people to notice the elements of their world from a different point of view. The photograph taken by the Associated Press photographer Drew its viewers with just one point of view: that of a man falling freely through the air, oblivious to his surroundings, unmoved by the passage of time, and nevertheless determined to keep his appointment. As a result of the falling man's presentation, his audience members will be exposed to several perspectives, including those of death, falling, and craftsmanship.

Philippe Petit is a body that is gambling with death in the hope that he will not be thrown and that he will not pull himself down from the pinnacles. He is a body that is swaying back and forth in response to the wind. He makes the decision to be there. His audience encounters a point of view that is about the person who is in touch with death rather than with the actual execution of the act. The audience can see him suspended while he performs his act. However, on the inside, he is aware that his display is a precursor to death.

The character of the falling man is an individual that makes the conscious decision to fall. He throws his body, knowing the fact that he will survive. This is the opposite sensation of those who jumped from the World Trade Center on 9/11. The significance of creating such a character by DeLillo might be attributed to his actions

and their influence on Lianne. The way that Lianne understands his performance is that she recognizes the figure of Keith in the falling man's act. The novel starts with Keith within a few minutes of the central tower of the World Trade Center collapsing and falling to the ground. Keith, Lianne's significant other, emerges from the rubble of the World Trade Center unharmed physically. Struck in the towers, he finally manages to escape from the towers by descending a large number of stairwells and showing up at Lianne's front door, "all blood and slag, reeking of burnt matter, with pinpoint glints of silvered glass in his face" (87).

Hovanes and Rumsey, both of whom were friends of Keith and individual poker players, were killed in the attack. Lianne witnesses both of their deaths, as well as the escape of her husband from the rubble. The falling man, on the other hand, likely perceives a great deal more than Lianne does. She believes that "she thought the empty space he stared into must be his own, not some grim vision of others falling," is how DeLillo describes it (167).

Maybe, at that point, DeLillo proposes that the best way to re-enact the trauma of witnessing falling bodies is to accept that they won't ever occur again. There is a nonappearance of death in the falling man's exhibition—the shortfall of death. By imagining that the passing never happened, the falling man can supplant the image of the jumpers falling to their death from the World Trade Center with his own body. By re-enacting the trauma for his spectators, he conceivably eradicates the death of the individuals who died in the attacks and instead offered his body as a substitute for his audience to picture. There is no brutality in his exhibition— it is just a demonstration performed to motivate thought and significance.

However, the witnesses see the horrendous events and should look beyond their own pain in order to see the meaning in his example. For those who are interested in watching the performance of the falling man, the best way to discover the meaning behind his actions is to investigate it on their own. They can draw a few conclusions from his presentation, and one of those conclusions is that they should be able to resist death and damage. There are many approaches to talking about death

that can ease the pain of the subject. The incongruity of not having a discussion about dying is the issue that the falling man hopes to investigate and resolve. His audience, on the other hand, is less equipped to take part in open and direct cooperation with death, particularly the death that comes from falling. They find the exhibition peculiar due to the fact that it forces them, as well as the viewers of the show, to consider their own mortality and the possibility of dying. The viewers of the photograph taken by Richard Drew are presented with a very unusual and tough interpretational challenge. In contrast to Petit and the actual falling man in the shot captured on a fateful day, the picture tells the story of a man — or rather, a corpse — that was placed there by circumstance. Even though he did not want to be there, he went ahead and did, nonetheless. The viewers need to confront the horrifying events that unfold. A refusal to do so enhances the possibility of being consumed by the trauma of witnessing, as it does for Keith and Lianne.

The snapshot that the photographer Drew took depicts a man who is "at peace" with his impending death. The image and the manner in which it was disseminated came under fire from a variety of news outlets and commentators, who criticized both the photograph and the way in which it was distributed as dishonest and meaningless, devilish and cruel. Because of the concept of the image, it was instantly unofficially banned from being published, and as a result, the general public was deprived of the opportunity to acknowledge and reflect on the death of the person who had jumped from the towers.

In the book *Falling Man*, Lianne sees the man on two separate occasions. When it occurs a second time, she is alone by herself and is able to watch out for him setting up his act. Lianne is able to observe him not just as the person responsible for the falling man stunt but also as a man, an individual. This is just a temporary reprieve since Lianne is unable to comprehend the full extent of the suffering she has experienced. She is attempting to make sense of what she is witnessing in front of her by saying that she wanted to think this was some type of “absurdist drama that provokes onlookers to share a comic understanding of what is irrational…This was too near and deep, too personal” (163).

Lianne's shock and confusion over how she should react to the actions of the suspended falling man in the novel is a typical example of the condition of traumatized survivors who have witnessed violent acts like terrorist strikes. The traumatized brain is fractured, and as a result, the individual is now experiencing a warped perception of reality, such as flashbacks. The confused mind of the victim is already attempting to make sense of seemingly everyday occurrences; as a result, the irritation that the victim experiences, when presented with anything odd might be challenging to quantify. Richard Gray explains in his work *After the Fall – American Literature Since 9/11* that a traumatized person has a "confusion of feeling" but is unable to articulate the sensation that is being experienced." Gray refers to this experience as "the groping after a language with which to say the unsayable" (27).

As the absurdist spectacle that is taking place in front of her is too much for her to handle, Lianne runs away from the man who is hanging there on the road. Lianne is, in a sense, attempting to get away from her own injuries by trying to get away from seeing the falling man standing up to her with death and her previous injuries. These include her father's suicide, her enraged spouse's traumatized condition after escaping the remains of the Twin Towers, and her possibility of being beset with Alzheimer's, especially after her mother's diagnosis of the condition. On the other hand, we are aware that even after an injury has healed completely, it will reappear at some point in the future. The event is continuously storing itself away, waiting at the back doorway of the mind, where it may be forgotten so that it might appear again.

However, the mind sometimes reverts to a more irrational state if the traumatic memories have been repressed for an extended period of time. In other situations, it stares directly at the individual in question, much as the falling man does to Lianne the second time she encounters him when he is alone. Lianne is able to see the falling man despite the fact that she sustained traumatic memories; nevertheless, she has not yet arrived at the stage that is typical for trauma victims, which is the ability to

articulate what it is that plagues her. Lianne gets away from the burdens of her injuries by running, so she can get away from them. Lianne is the only one of the characters whose perspective we are able to see, and she is the one who watches the exhibition of the falling man as he goes about with his actions. When she sees the falling man for the first time, Lianne is there with her son Justin. She had:

> …heard of him, a performance artist known as falling man. He'd appeared several times in the last week, unannounced, in various parts of the city, suspended from one or another structure, always upside down, wearing a suit, a tie, and dress shoes. (33).

What she witnesses is another reminder of the terrible tragedy that occurred on September 11 for Lianne. The tragic events of September 11, 2001, are continually fresh in Lianne's mind, and the experience of seeing the falling man enables her to recall the people who were thrown from the buildings or fell off of them on that day. "He brought it back, of course, those stark moments in the burning towers when people fell or were forced to jump…" (33).

Lianne is forced to finally avoid going to see the falling man since she is constantly confronted with the visions of the victims of the attack. Because of him, she is forced to confront a significant number of distressing memories, from which she desperately wants to flee. Lianne is transformed into a member of the audience of the falling man's exhibition at the very moment that she makes her first discovery of the location of the falling man.

The falling man is the figure that retraumatizes the traumatized because, as Duvall and Marzec conclude in "Narrating 9/11," "he is simply the repulsiveness of 9/11" (390). He transforms before the viewers' eyes into the bodies of those who were killed on 9/11 by acting out the events of that day as a body falling from the World Trade Center, particularly for Lianne. The depiction of the falling man on 9/11 warmly acknowledges the presence of the spectator. In spite of the fact that he appreciates this moment of introspection, Lianne does not experience it. Her trauma

has made it more difficult for her to think clearly about the effects of her condition. Lianne is now experiencing feelings of fear and sickness as a direct result of the distressing sight of the falling man.

The audience usually would not be upset if they got to witness a man put on a show of any skilled craftsmanship because that's just fair. The subjects that are being addressed by the protest are the source of the unease that the onlookers are feeling as a consequence of the demonstration. The falling man, by virtue of his ability to coerce people into becoming unwilling participants in his presentation. He does more damage to the already damaged brains of the people like Lianne who live in New York. “There were people shouting up at him, outraged at the spectacle” (FM 33).

In her work titled "Art/Trauma/Representation," Griselda Pollock explains, “the purpose of art attempting to engage in any way with trauma is different for the traumatized victim who may well wish to be delivered of the unbearable presence of the traumatic experience” (43).

The actions of the falling man may very easily distract viewers from the fact that they are constantly and now in danger of being hurt. Unfortunately, his performance is so inextricably linked to the injury relating to 9/11 that it is impossible to even grasp or consider the perspectives of those who have been traumatized as a result of his actions. If one has never been through a traumatic event, particularly the trauma of seeing another person fall to their death, then the performance of the falling man will have an entirely new and different importance for them. Since he plays near Manhattan, it is safe to assume that the majority of the people he appears in front of have been retraumatized 9/11 since the events occurred in Manhattan.

Trauma survivors often turn to repetition as a treatment for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and they often wonder how likely it is that their unique traumatic experience may be resolved via the use of repetition. There is the injury, and then there is the working through of that injury, which the falling man delivers

when he rehashes the trauma of the event by actually reenacting it. This "working through" of the damage is what the falling man refers to as "the working through of that injury." Some people believe the falling man is not just a presenting artisan but also the symbol of all of the damaged minds and terrible unhealed wounds that 9/11 caused in Manhattan, like Keith and Lianne. This is a common interpretation of his work.

The purpose of the falling man's actions is to force viewers like Lianne to confront the challenging memories that they have previously faced and, for the most part, pushed to the back of their minds. In some ways, his actions mirror Keith and Lianne's – repetition of actions as a process of healing the injured mind. It becomes pretty apparent that the viewers see the replay and consumption of 9/11-related information as what the act of the falling man ultimately means.

Despite the fact that Keith and Lianne, the victims of the 9/11 incident, are living together, they are nonetheless isolated owing to the trauma and terror they experienced and their fear of the uncertain future. Even when he moves back to his family, Keith quickly becomes aware that he is all by himself. He chooses to go out of New York since his family life isn't letting him find any tranquility. Shifting to Las Vegas is Keith's method of dealing with the tragedy caused by the terrorist strikes. In spite of the fact that they try to reconnect with one another more than once, Keith and Lianne's relationship is doomed to collapse at the conclusion of the book due to the fact that both of their traumatized brains prevent and obstruct them from coming together. By physically establishing space on the pages of the text via the use of white space and speech, the author is able to convey the idea that there is still some physical distance between the characters. Even though Keith goes back to Lianne immediately after the attacks out of pure instinct, their connection evolves into a sexual one rather than a romantic or emotional relationship.

The barrier between Keith and Lianne that was caused by the trauma continues to exist, despite the fact that they desperately want and try to find an intimate connection with one another. In the *Falling Man*, we see a disrupted American family

struggling to go back to their everyday life in the aftermath of 9/11, but they are unable to do so due to the horrific and painful memories they are forced to confront. Their domestic lives are acutely disrupted as they battle the crisis of witnessing and reliving their traumatic events – Keith experiencing the real 9/1 attacks and Lianne mainly due to repeatedly coming across the performance of the falling man on the streets.

2.3. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* – Trauma, Guilt, and Redemption

Dominick LaCapra is one of the most respected authorities on the topic of trauma and trauma studies. In his research, he tries to study trauma by combining the fields of psychology and history studies. His acclaimed work *Writing History, Writing Trauma* is on trauma resulting from the Holocaust on individual survivors and communities LaCapra argues that trauma is virtually never entirely conquered. Trauma sufferers, therefore, frequently relive the horrific incident in their minds, as they can never forget what they have endured. Taking the concept from psychoanalysis, LaCapra posits two main types of remembering traumatic experiences, namely "acting out" and "working through." Yet, he stresses the fact that there is no absolute separation between both kinds.

Richard Rubenstein, in his study of La Capra in “Review of Writing History, Writing Trauma,” explains the process of “working through” and “acting out” as expounded by La Capra:

> …no absolute distinction exists between acting out and working through. In acting out, one compulsively relives the traumatic event(s) of the past in the present. Loyalty to deceased family members or friends, for example, can sometimes prevent survivors and their offspring from moving beyond repetition… LaCapra regards working through as a process in which a person seeks to gain "critical distance on a problem" (pp. 143-44). Working through is never complete, but it does enable the individual, whether victim or secondary observer, to

> distinguish between the experience that overwhelmed him/her and his/her present life. Such a person is never wholly trapped in the past. (159)

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (ELIC), by Jonathan Safran Foer, published in 2005, explores the impact of trauma on those who have been affected by the incident through the perspective of a little boy from New York named Oskar Schell. Oskar's father was among the victims of those attacks. The novel is about Oskar's efforts to find peace and closure as he agonizes over the loss of his beloved father, who is believed to have passed away in the unprecedented attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. Throughout the novel, Foer explores the interwoven cycles of "acting out" and "working through" with subtle political and moral complexity.

Although it is clear that the hero of the story, nine-year-old Oskar Schell, is not alone in his journey of coming to terms with his loss. Oskar lives with his paternal grandfather and grandmother, both of whom show signs of post-traumatic stress related to 9/11. The grandfather, Thomas Schell Sr, and Grandma Schell, however, have to battle two separate incidents of trauma. Apart from 9/11, Oskar's grandparents were witnesses to the Allied firebombing of Dresden in 1945 during the Second World War. They were one of the few survivors of the joint British and American bombing of civilians. Their entire family was killed in the attacks, and soon after, they made their way to New York. The principal theme of the story is focused on these three traumatized characters and the aftermath of their experiences of the 9/11 attacks and the Dresden incident and their journey to get back to their lives – successfully or not. It is a tale of the journey from guilt to redemption.

Oskar Schell is a precocious child, too mature for his age. Though only nine years old, he exhibits intelligence and curiosity far above the children of his generation. Unlike children of his age, Oskar is interested in the adult world, and this is apparent in his choice of books. Stephen Hawkins's *A Brief History of Time* is his favorite book (2). He is also aware that his favorite author has a condition known as

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a medical condition that prevents him from using his hands. Oskar has this habit of writing letters to famous people, and when he receives a reply from Hawkins though it is in the standard format, he is overjoyed.

Oskar is also a self-aware child and so is fully conscious of his intelligence and his difference from children of his age. For example, in an incident in his Jujitsu class, he tells the trainer that he is a "pacifist" and then goes on to immediately explain it for the sake of others who might not be aware of such a 'difficult word' (2). Oskar's vocabulary is peppered with words like 'etymology' and 'raison d'être.'

Foer's work is the tale of this intelligent little boy of nine years old who embarks on a seemingly impossible quest to find out what caused his father to pass away in New York on September 11, 2001. This serves as the central focus of the storyline of the book. Oskar Schell returns home from school just in time during the 9/11 attacks two years before the beginning of the narrative to find a few notes in the answering mail from his father, who is stuck in the World Trade Center, but he is paralyzed from fear and is unable to pick up the call. Oskar is tormented by an overwhelming sense of blame and betrayal as a result of the fact that he did not answer the last call from his father. His father's body was never recovered from the 9/11 rubble, and the family had to conduct a symbolic funeral by burying an empty casket.

Oskar's intellectual and emotional relationship with his father is the crux to understanding the depth of the trauma that he experiences. His father is the calm in his life. "Being with him makes my brain quiet. I didn't have to invent a thing" (12). To Oskar, his father is the perfect man with an intelligence rivaling anything in the world:

> One thing that was so great was how he could find a mistake in every single article we looked at. Sometimes they were grammar mistakes; sometimes, they were mistakes with geography or facts; and

> sometimes, the article just didn't tell the whole story. I loved having a dad who was smarter than the New York Times. (11)

Oskar's father challenges his son every day, coming up with riddles and clues to solve them. This "Expedition Mission" is what Oskar looks forward to every Sunday. The father knew perfectly how his son ought to be intellectually stimulated:

> A great game that Dad and I would sometimes play on Sundays was Reconnaissance Expedition. Sometimes the Reconnaissance Expeditions were extremely simple, like when he told me to bring back something from every decade in the twentieth century – I was clever and brought back a rock – and sometimes, they were incredibly complicated and would go on for a couple of weeks. For the last one, after we ever did, which never finished, he gave me a map of Central Park. I said, 'And?' And he said, 'And what?' I said, 'What are the clues?' He said, 'Who said there had to be clues?' 'There are always clues.' 'That doesn't, in itself, suggest anything.' 'Not a single clue?' He said, 'Unless no clue is a clue.' 'Is no clues a clue?' He shrugged his shoulders like he had no idea what I was talking about. I loved that. (8)

Their relationship is more of friends than a parent and child, as revealed by this tender exchange between the two that Oskar later recalls:

> 'Dad?'
>
> 'Yeah, buddy?'
>
> 'Nothing.' (11)

In an instant, 9/11 takes away the young boy's "friend, philosopher, and guide," leaving him helpless and terrified of facing the world. Their tender relationship is evident from the following interaction:

> After a while, Dad asked me if I was awake. I told him no because I knew that he didn't like to leave until I had fallen asleep, and I didn't

> want him to be tired for work in the morning. He kissed my forehead and said good night, and then he was at the door. (11)

After his father's death, Oskar keeps going back to how it felt when his father was around. "I loved how my cheek could feel the hairs on his chest" (11). Now he turns to come up with bizarre scientific inventions to deal with his father's absence. He wants to come up with a teakettle "that reads in Dad's voice, so I could fall asleep" (1). He also wants to invent a Birdseed vest to help people falling off buildings fly. "And also, there are so many times when you need to make a quick escape, but humans don't have their own wings, or not yet, anyway, so what about a birdseed shirt?" (3). His mind jumps from one idea to another, frantically searching for things to keep himself away from the traumatic memories haunting him. A few weeks after his Dad's death, Oskar starts writing letters and sends them using the rare stamps from his collection. Unknown to him, this is something he has in common with his Grandfather, who spends his whole life writing letters.

After his father's death, Oskar starts displaying symptoms typical of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He is not able to sleep at night and goes into depression. He is haunted by survivor's guilt. He even indulges in self-harm, and when his mother notices it, he is sent for therapy. Oskar's trauma manifests in ways that affect his everyday activities. Even after a year after the loss of his father, he finds it challenging to do the simplest of tasks. People, places, and even everyday objects like shoes make him scared:

> Even after a year, I still had an extremely difficult time doing certain things, like taking showers for some reason, and getting into elevators, obviously. There was a lot of stuff that made me panicky, like suspension bridges, germs, airplanes, fireworks, Arab people on the subway (even though I'm not racist), Arab people in restaurants and coffee shops and other public places, scaffolding, sewers, and subway grates, bags without owners, shoes, people with moustaches, smoke, knots, tall buildings, turbans. (18)

Oskar's "worst day," as he repeatedly refers to the day of the 9/11 attack, started like any other typical day. He was in school when the 9/11 attacks happened, but he was oblivious to it. The students are sent home, and when he is back, he "opened the apartment door, put down my bag, and took off my shoes, like everything was wonderful because I didn't know that in reality, everything was actually horrible, because how could I?" (28). He went to check the messages and listened to them:

> Message one: 8:52 A.M. Message two: 9:12 A.M. Message three: 9:31 A.M. Message four: 9:46 A.M. Message five: 10:04 A.M.…"The first message read - Message one. Tuesday, 8:52 A.M. Is anybody there? Hello? It's Dad. If you're there, pick up. I just tried the office, but no one was picking up. Listen, something's happened. I'm OK. They're telling us to stay in here we are and wait for the firemen. I'm sure it's fine. I'll give you another call when I have a better idea of what's going on. Just wanted to let you know that I'm OK, and not to worry. I'll call again soon. (12)

He had by then switched on the TV and knew what was happening. Oskar is paralyzed with fear and is unable to pick up the call, which goes to the answering machine. "I thought about running away and never talking to anyone again. I thought about hiding under my bed. I thought about rushing downtown to see if I could somehow rescue him myself. And then the phone rang. I looked at my watch. It was 10:22:27" (13).

Oskar is forced to confront his guilt all alone over not picking up his father's phone just before his death, as he is too scared to confide in anyone else. After the incident, Oskar even transfers his father's messages to a new phone, takes it home, and buries it deep in his closet. At night when he is all alone, he picks up the phone and listens to his father's voice message, and that is the last time he hears his father's voice. Oscar recalls his father's words once again:

> It's me again. Are you there? Hello? Sorry if. It's getting a bit. Smoky. I was hoping you would. Be. Home. I don't know if you've heard about what's happened. But. I. Just wanted you to know that I'm OK. Everything. Is. Fine. When you get this, give Grandma a call. Let her know that I'm OK. I'll call again in a few minutes. Hopefully, the firemen will be up here by then. I'll call. (15)

So, during a conversation with his grandmother using walkie-talkies, Oskar muses over the fact that he is unable to explain to his grandmother why he misses his father more than she (seemingly) does. This is because he is unable to confide in his grandmother what took place on what Oskar can only refer to as the "most noticeably awful day" (69). Oskar poignantly describes the effect of holding on to his secret and the consequence of it as "..that secret was a hole in the middle of me that every happy thing fell into" (71).

After his father's death, Oskar finds among his father's possessions a black envelope with a key inside. The envelope has the word "Black" written on it, ostensibly a clue to the identity of the one to which the key belongs. Consequently, Oskar goes in search of the mysterious Black. To him, this is a riddle left by his father that he has to solve. Oskar feels that he might get some answers to his father's death from this unknown Black. The young boy sets out on an adventure through the boroughs of New York. He finds this task extremely difficult at first. Oskar's fear of strangers and new places overwhelms him, but slowly things get better as he encounters people like him who are also suffering from trauma.

Oskar's trauma reflects itself in his repeated actions. Oskar constantly engages in systematized juvenile slang by dressing himself in "heavy boots," which is a metaphor for sad inactivity as one is weighed down by the mind with grief. His trauma manifests in the "wounds" he also causes himself, and he imagines outrageously impossible devices to accommodate his dizzying responsibility of keeping the secret of the phone call. For example, he designs a "birdseed shirt" to rescue people who fall from dangerous heights. This reveals a wish for Oskar to

regain his fatherly role, as Oskar states that "there are so many times when you need to make a quick escape, but humans don't have their own wings" (2 & 3).

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud describes a phenomenon that he calls the "redundancy impulse." This impulse consists of two tendencies: the tendency to self-harm and the propensity to innovate – both of which Oskar exhibits. Oskar engages in self-harming behaviors that are unnecessary and dumb, and he also replays the traumatic event of the phone call in order to "develop" strategies for transforming what happened on the fateful day. It is here that LaCapra's 'acting out' and 'working through' come into play. In acting out, an individual relives the trauma as Oskar does here. And in working through, he/she tries to acquire some critical distance which will help a person move on with life and assume responsibility for actions. (*Writing History* 22)

Articulating one's trauma as a narrative or some form of testimony is essential to overcoming trauma. But Oskar cannot reveal the secret of his father's phone call to either his grandmother or mother. "I couldn't explain to her that I missed him more, more than she or anyone else missed him, because I couldn't tell her about what happened with the phone." (32). It is not a coincidence that Oskar is eventually able to recall what took place on "the worst day" to a guy he hardly knows after his search comes to an unsuccessful conclusion. During his father's farewell message, Oskar speculates that he could have heard the sound of glass shattering, which leads him to "wonder if people were jumping" (301). The conversation continues with Oskar saying, "I've timed the message, and it comes out to one minute and twenty-seven seconds. This indicates that it was over at 10:28. That was the moment when the building collapsed. Then maybe it was the cause of his death" (302).

It is Oskar's journey that is more important than the ultimate conclusion of it. He finds that the lock that fits his key belongs to a particular William Black and the mystery of the lock and key has nothing to do with his father's death on 9/11. At the end of his adventure, Oskar is troubled not just due to the fact that his journey through

the Burroughs of NY has not produced any external answers but also due to the fact that it brings an end to the internal relationship he had with his father. Oskar's ability to show his injuries is unlocked by the key he carries around his neck, which is a metonym for his journey through New York. This enables Oskar's objective to become an inwardly focused one at long last. Instead of discovering the truth about the world outside of reality, Oskar discovers the truth about his father's death, which he has known all along but does not admit to until the end of the book.

This unexpected conclusion also disrupts the typical aspect of Oskar's entertaining detective work. Oskar's foray into the world of analytical criminal investigation backfires on him and forces him to do a psychological self-examination. The idea that he is traveling in a forward direction is a fabrication on his part because he wants to keep living through the same awful experience without changing anything. Since "searching for it let [Oskar] stay near [his father] for a brief period longer," Oskar tells the "tenant" that he wishes he had never discovered the lock. The "tenant" is actually Oskar's grandfather (304). At the end of the day, Oskar desires an adventure that never ends but yet finds a way to cling to the lost paternal object. It is comparable to a perplexing wish fulfillment that, because it is an improbable but acceptable finish, the journey itself turns into a source of predetermined fulfillment.

Oskar's delayed capacity to move from horrific to account memory in a way that avoids sentimental recovery should be understood within a more extensive set of forceful “carrying on” in the novel. Continuing and working through are inextricably linked in this instance, and Oskar's delayed capacity to move from the horrific reality to memory in this manner should be understood in this context.

However, before Oskar can really mourn the loss of his father, he acts in ways that are irresponsible and ethically ambiguous but which are also inadvertently accommodating as a first step in working with his emotions. In addition to inflicting pain on himself, Oskar either acts aggressively against his mother and grandmother or entertains the idea of “channeling” his out-of-control animosity onto other people. When Oskar's grandmother throws away a plate square full of stamps, he begins to

experience what he describes as "beginning to spaz, even though [he] was trying not to" (105).

As the story progresses, both the strength and the fleeting malevolence of Oskar's upheavals increase. Following the introduction of his mother to another guy called Ron, Oskar reveals to his mother that, given a choice, he would have rather that she moves on rather than remain with the memories of his father. It is here that the scene in which Oskar is addressed by a specialist named Dr. Fein, whose name connects him to the tale of his redemption, is the most illuminating. Dr. Fein asks Oskar, "Do you believe there is any possibility that something positive could come from the passing of your father?" Oskar's response is a casual shrug of the shoulder, despite the fact that he is mentally flipping chairs, hurling papers, and yelling in his head. "Are you kidding me, you fucking asshole? Of course not!" (203).

Oskar's behavior might be seen as self-destructive on the inside and unusually frightening to both his mother and his grandmother. This is one viewpoint. Oskar is aware that he does not have the ability to control his outbursts of anger, despite the fact that these outbursts prevent him from displaying empathetic behavior toward the people he loves in general.

Oskar, on the other hand, also exemplifies the concept that “acting on” and “working through” are two sides of the same coin. His gloomy daydreams and fantastic creations provide imaginative mental relief from the potentially overwhelming truth of his father's passing away. Oskar, in the manner of a writer of fiction, reimagines the world around him by concocting tales and enacting situations that he is well aware are not real but that, in any event, calm his everyday turbulence.

The aggravation that was put into Oscar’s trauma is useful in the sense that it disrupts “working through.” As the thoughts relating to the past dominate his mind, these accumulating thoughts risk any expectation of restoration. This may

give the appearance of being contradictory; nonetheless, it is advantageous. “acting on” and “working through” are not, in Oskar's view, mutually exclusive states of being; but they are, rather, odd cycles that are part of a more significant interaction that is, basically, figuring out the mystery of how his father passed away.

Oskar's conversation with William Black, the man who gave the jar to Oskar's father, provides an example of this type of fundamental disconnection from the past that is more thought-provoking than others. As Oskar is telling William Black that another guy had been yelling at Black's ex-girlfriend while Oskar was having a talk with her, Black becomes perturbed and asks Oskar when he observed this incident unfolding. Black's ex-girlfriend was Oskar's ex-girlfriend.

In the last chapters of the book, Oskar compiles a series of photographs depicting a man falling from the World Trade Center. He then inverts the collection, making it seem as if the individual is "coasting" his way back up into the building's apex as he looks at the photographs (325). Oskar speculates, "If I had more pictures, he would have flown through a window and back into the building... " (325). He doesn't stop thinking about changing the past until it brings his father back to him, which prompts Oskar to say in the last sentence of the book, "We would have been protected" if he had changed the past (326). As a matter of fact, Oskar's swapped flipbook confronts the false consolation of the redeeming 9/11 tale in the way that it really makes no sense.

Individuals are associated not with the certainty of origins but rather with the temperamental belief of participation. Complex internal experiences such as anguish and love may be beyond the grasp of explicit referential language; nonetheless, it is possible to imagine these encounters by engaging in a kind of act of absolute faith. Near the end of the book, Oskar captures the essence of this transition when he muses to himself, “I don't have faith in God, but I accept that things are very convoluted, and [my mom] investigating me was really confounded. However, it was equally

staggeringly uncomplicated. She was like a mother to me in my life of solitude, and I was like her kid" (324).

Foer skillfully explores the space between the potentially dangerous approach of reclamation and the catastrophic inevitability of renunciation. In addition to this, Oskar discovers a solution to the problem of "venturing back" from the effects of his little stain. He achieves fundamental detachment from his terrible experience without turning it into a fetishized nonattendance that causes endless mourning. He is able to do this because he is resilient. When Oskar concludes that "…we would have been protected", which is the final sentence of the book, he realizes that he is unable to reclaim either his father or the fatherly sense of protection that he had when he was younger and more naive (326). In this manner, Oskar's ability to begin working through his disability is in harmony with a renewed interest in his connection with his mother and a growing sense of moral duty on his part.

Instead of analyzing injuries in a factual vacuum, Foer uses this intricate interplay of grief to connect the Allied firebombing of Dresden during World War II and the 9/11attacks. This reminder of the horrific reminder of American cruelty to innocent, unsuspecting German civilians during the Second World War challenges post-9/11 American conceptions of brutal victimization of its civilians, as well as moral and political innocence. Thomas Sr., Oskar's grandfather, never talks about his terrible history or shares any of his own experiences of suffering with his grandson. Even though Thomas Sr. is able to survive the firebombing of Dresden, the woman he loves, Anna, who is the sister of Oskar's grandmother, passes away along with their unborn child.

These deaths force Thomas Sr. to gradually lose his ability to communicate: "I lost the ability to carry, I lost the things I carried—daybooks, pencils, pocket change, wallets—I even lost the ability to lose" (17). The injury renders Thomas Sr. completely silent, at which point he tattoos the words "YES" on one hand and "NO" on the other (17). After he was no longer able to communicate verbally, he attempted

to write a series of letters to his unborn kid, but in the end, he realized that the phonetic representation he had used was insufficient. While Thomas Sr. is working on writing his biography, he expresses a desire for the extraordinary by saying the following: “I want an infinitely long book and the rest of time” (279). When seen from this theoretical vantage point, the language of traumatic experiences is puzzling: the memory of trauma is clearly the most prominent part of reality, but to express that experience is to convey a contradicting tale that does not fit the core truth.

For instance, the fact that Thomas Sr. refers to his son as "my kid" and uses the second-person singular pronoun "you" while communicating with his son reveals confusion over “the surviving child and the youngster lost during [the Dresden firebombing]” (Codde 251). Thomas Sr. begins his letter, which elaborates on the actual experience of the bombardment, with the salutation "To my kid." However, it is unclear to whose child he is addressing his words. He continues, “Sometimes I think if I could just tell you what happened to me that evening, I could let that evening go, and maybe I could come back home to you, but that evening has no beginning and no end; it started before I was born, and it's still happening” (208). The primary argument is not only a fundamentally perceptive one that elaborates on a particular fair manner to deal with trauma—that is, his attempt to straightforwardly treat the trauma—but it is also an essential one.

The deeper flaw in Thomas Sr’s moral reasoning is that he fails to see the extraordinary humanity possessed by his own actual kid. Thomas Sr. discusses how he has placed his love in a connection that never existed and abandoned a relationship that did by saying "sorry" to his actual child while at the same time calling on his lost child. This shows how Thomas Sr. has put his affection into a relationship that has never been. Because Thomas Sr. is unable to communicate, he is only able to satisfy his own sentiments and semi-cognizant needs, to the prejudice of his kid (Oskar's dad) and his better half, whose real identity is, basically, never revealed.

Thomas Sr. attempts to recreate Anna via his art as a way of staying connected to the tragic event of Anna's loss and then uses this recreation as a focal point in his connection with his significant other. Several weeks after she discovers the truth about his identity, the two of them engage in sexual activity, during which she mistakenly identifies him as Thomas Jr., and then they are married. However, Thomas Sr. misrecognizes his wife's humanity in a general sense. This is because their marriage is not described by an 'I-and-You' relationship but rather by an 'I-and-It' relationship. The essence of Thomas Sr's relationship with Anna's sister may be gleaned from the fact that he stipulated two conditions before agreeing to marry Oscar's grandmother. One was that there would be no children and the other was that they were to never bring up the couple's shared history (85 &108).

Through these principles, Oscar's grandfather tries to crystallize his horrifying past experience in order to preserve it for the future. In the grand scheme of things, Thomas Sr's commitment to Anna's sister, who is still alive, conceals a more profound melancholic obligation to Anna and sees in her sister the image of Anna's deceased self. When Thomas Sr. abandons his wife and their kid, his actual, underlying goal in entering into the marriage is revealed. He says to his unborn kid, "... it's not because I'm immature that I'm going, but how am I supposed to express that? I've tried to live, but I can't, she sobbed. I can't" (135).

In the end, his commitment to Anna is a pledge to "not live," and his devotion to her prevents him from admitting his own close-mindedness, even when he inadvertently conjures up the image of being self-centered. By marrying Anna's sister, Thomas Sr. transforms nonattendance into unfortunate circumstances in a mind-boggling fashion. In one sense, there is no doubt that he lost the woman he loved, but he also feels as if he lost the naive belief of love as a deceitful image of emotional security. In other words, he feels as though he is no longer secure in his feelings of passion. He alludes to the unease that is caused by this absence when he writes:

> I wonder in my Nothingest moments if she's testing me, if she types nonsense all day long, or types nothing at all, just to see what I'll do in response; she wants to know if I love her, that's all anyone wants from anyone else, not love itself but the knowledge that love is there, like new batteries in the flashlight in the emergency kit in the hall closet. (130)

A result of the fact that Thomas Sr. mourns not only for an actual tragedy that occurred close to home but also for his desires and dreams. He views the past as a sentimental fantasy that can neither be totally attained nor successfully navigated through. In Thomas Sr's accounts of his horrific voyage across the bombed-out city of Dresden, the primary attention-getting approach that is emphasized throughout the narrative is as follows:

> I was terrified of my own image, my blood-spattered hair, my split and bleeding lips, and my red, pulsing palms, which, even as I write this, thirty-five years later, don't look like they should be at the ends of my arms. I remember losing my balance; I remember a single thought in my head: Keep thinking. (120)

Thomas Sr. marries Anna's sister in an effort to maintain a connection to the dead Anna. Half a month before they are married, Thomas Sr. asks his wife to be a model for one of his figures. Despite this, after a number of encounters, when Oskar's Grandmother takes a look at the figure and realizes "that he was chiseling Anna. He was trying to make the young girl he had known a very long time ago into someone else. He looked at me as he was carving, but he saw her instead" (83).

While it is inevitable that Thomas Sr. has problems working with the horrific experiences he has had, his significant other seems to use far better, non-lethal methods to deal with the somewhat terrible things that happened in her past.

A personal survivor of the firebombing in Dresden, she tries over a period of years to keep up with her journal, learns how to speak in English, and even creates a generally regularizing American existence for herself and her kid when Thomas Sr. departs for Germany.

In any event, in spite of the fact that these external signals suggest that she is working through something, Oskar's grandmother uncontrollably repeats the same destructive behavior as her spouse. She explains in her very first letter that she felt "more alone than if [she] had been separated from everyone else" while she was with Thomas Sr. and that she had the unexpected intention of jumping into the Hudson River with "the greatest stone [she] could bear and letting [her] lungs load up with water" (82). When she travels across the road carrying a large stone a few days after 9/11, she reenacts this self-destructive move that she did before. Oskar sees her and thinks about how she regularly gives him rocks for his collection, but he comments that “she never gave that one to me, and she never referenced it.” Oskar is comparing the size of the stone to that of a kid (104). After that, readers discover that she never considered writing her life story; she only punched the space bar without using a typewriter strip and lied to her boyfriend that her eyes were dirty because she “needed him to focus on [her]” (176).

These blank white sheets, similar to the pages of the notepad used by Thomas Sr., which were completely covered in ink, symbolize her fundamental inability to convert traumatic memories into account memories or testimony. Her depressive side effects are more subtle indications of implosion, and they frequently take the form of self-deprecating blame and self-inflicted injury. Despite the fact that Oskar's grandma appears to handle her terrible past better than her husband, her melancholic side effects are more obvious indications of unresolved trauma. During the time that she is working as Thomas Sr’s model, she feels uncomfortable about the letters that she had collected in her room in Dresden. She wonders, “If we hadn't gathered these letters, would [her] house have consumed less brilliantly?” (83). After punching the floor while watching the terrorist attacks on TV with her toddler while they were both inside the World Trade Center, she later expresses regret for being “too childish to

even think about breaking [her] hands for [her] lone kid” (231).

A few moments later, she makes her way into the restroom because she feels the urgent desire to “lie in [her] own waste... and be a pig in own foulness” (231). She finds herself suddenly feeling dreadful for not inclining herself to be as horrible as she should be because she is caught in a circuitous logic that replicates the repetition of desire. This astounding disintegration of the mind's relevance addresses the effects of harmful “working through” since her view on reality becomes more inward, and she engages in increasingly risky behavior as a result.

In any case, Oskar's grandmother discovers how to start operating despite her trauma while they are on this picture of ridiculous demonstration expedition. She realizes that her life "bodes well" when she takes a look at Oskar, despite the fact that she "needs so much for it to be [her] under the rubble [of the World Trade Center]" (232). In the middle of moving on with her life, she discovers the ability to see outside of herself and realizes how Oskar's suffering turns him into "an injured creature" (232). She achieves a fundamental level of detachment from the anguish that exists inside her, and she ultimately places her devotion to her grandson Oskar as a metaphorical kind of reinvestment after the loss of her son. This deconstruction of the functioning double is also shown by the physical space occupied by Thomas Sr. and his partner at the end of the book. Oskar's grandmother reveals in her last letter that she is writing from the airport while sitting next to Oskar's grandfather. The letter is written by Oskar's grandmother. Her interpretation of what the airport terminal stands for is "not coming or going... not something or nothing... not yes or no" (312).

They conclude that staying at the airport terminal will provide them with the particular double logic that they have been searching for throughout the whole of their partnership. The tattoos that say "Yes" and "No" that are on Thomas Sr’s hands are a perfect match for the "Something" and "Nothing" areas that they designate in their apartment shortly after they are married (110).

It is telling that Oskar's grandma is able to portray the most challenging part of her horrible past inside the middle room of the airport, admitting to Oskar that she never revealed to her sister Anna the amount that she adored Anna before Dresden was destroyed. This is a significant moment for Oskar because it shows that his grandma is able to overcome the most difficult aspect of her terrible past. Using a painting to outline the fundamental rationale for the redemptive tale. To get caught up in the short-sighted story of reclamation is to get caught up in the possibility that one simply needs to move away from a catastrophe in the same way that one should move away from artwork to see its excellence, for even the most excellent artistic creation would appear to be a "stain" on the off potential for success that one had excessively close. This concept of "venturing back" is, according to all accounts, the unique dilemma for Oskar, his grandfather, and his grandmother. They are unable to go back because the invasive and upsetting experience repeatedly forces them to watch the pointless images, and, to paraphrase Oskar, the closer you look at the stain, the less you can make out of it.

Oskar's dad Thomas had effectively acquired the jar that contained the key from a man whose father had just gone away since he was unaware of the key that was contained inside. Consequently, Oskar's disappointing journey has no more profound outside significance, which reveals one of the novel's genuinely uncomfortable themes. It is the disturbing acknowledgment that, as Dan McAdams puts it poignantly in his book *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By*, "suffering is an essential part of life, even when the suffering has no ultimate meaning [or] benefit [...] Suffering is to be endured, but not necessarily redeemed" (266).

According to Caruth, "to be damaged is unequivocally to be controlled by a picture or occasion" (Trauma 4-5). First-hand accounts of traumatic experiences will, in most cases, be extremely antagonistic, dishonest, and misleading due to the fact that the dreadful event is not recorded on a linguistic level. For example, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub have recorded how previous Auschwitz detainees describe verifiably mistaken stories (59-60).

On a few occasions, Foer's characters represent Cathy Caruth's argument that damage requires "a language that challenges, even as it guarantees, our agreement." Carruth made this argument in her work "The Art of the Personal Essay" (*Unclaimed Experience* 5). For instance, because Oskar cannot talk about his guilt, he spends nine hours making a wristband for his mother. It is a seemingly insignificant piece of jewelry until the audience discovers that the armband is really his father's final message changed over into Morse Code; however, Oskar's mother is unable to comprehend this non-etymological form of communication with her (35).

Another broken character, the mute Thomas Sr., tries to phone his significant other and reconnect, only to categorize his message by typing out an undecipherable mathematical message, implying that there is a lack of a fundamental, arithmetical understanding of mental anguish (269). In what is perhaps the most upsetting example of emptiness, Oskar's grandmother discusses how she has been forced to endure countless blank pages that she has typed, some of which happen to "appear" in the book. History is the way in which we are involved in one another's hurts (*Unclaimed Experience* 24).

These redemptive tales, and their end themes of recovery through trauma, are thrown into disarray by Foer's demonstration of the fraudulent nature of both reclamation and recovery via the terrible experiences that his characters have. During a particular portion of his conversation with William Black, Oskar had a thought that goes something like this: “about the pixels in the picture of the falling body, and how the closer you looked, the less you see” (293).

Foer demonstrates that the ambiguous opposite link between injury and seeing also persists for the redemptive tale; the more closely one looks at and studies versions that erase the initial injury of 9/11, the more unsure one is about those explanations that are reductive. Oskar is haunted by both the image of the men falling from the towers on the day of the attack that he witnessed on television and his guilt at not answering his father’s call on that fateful day. His grandmother, who is quoted as saying, “Any individual who accepts that a second is quicker than

ten years didn't carry on with my life," is haunted by the Dresden bombings (181).

The intriguing use of language is also conjured up by Oskar's grandmother at the end of the last letter she sent to her grandson. She admits to Oskar that she did not tell Anna that she loved her before the firebombing in Dresden, but she explains that doing so would have been "superfluous," and she ponders: "... how might you say I love you to somebody that you love?" (192). In spite of the fact that she is aware of the fundamental gap that exists between herself and her grandson, she confides in Oskar, saying, "Here is the point of everything I have been trying to tell you, Oskar. It's always necessary. I love you" (192). The grandmother's remarks partially conceal and partially reveal the essence of her feelings for Oskar.

Oskar's journey through the five boroughs of New York in search of the lock that fits the key becomes his process of "acting out." He is able to go out more comfortably, overcome his fear of talking to strangers, and Oskar meets on his adventure more people like him – those that are suffering from unresolved trauma and are involved in the process of healing. As Kai Erikson explains regarding the cause of trauma victims' meeting, "Indeed, it can happen that otherwise unconnected person who shares a traumatic experience seek one another out and develop a form of fellowship on the strength of that common tie" (486).

Oskar is an American victim of the 9/11 attacks, the death of his father throwing his peaceful life into confusion and disarray. But for his grandparents, it was the American forces' mindless bombing of the predominantly civilian areas of Dresden that destroyed their life as they knew before. In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close,* Foer brings together the trauma of an American victim and two victims of American violence to highlight the interesting parallels.

By drawing attention to the atrocities that occurred during World War II in Dresden and Hiroshima when the United States bombed civilian populations on purpose, Foer questions the eternal American victimhood that developed in the

wake of the September 11 attacks. The intention behind the disruption of William Black's self/other duality is to unsettle the wider we/them parallel that has evolved in the United States in the wake of 9/11.

The comparison that Foer makes between Dresden and Hiroshima debunks the false resemblance and sheds light on some disturbing similarities between the two cities. This is due to the fact that the usually paired binary of us/them—that is, Americans/terrorists, good/evil, and so on—relies on the rationale that we do not kill ordinary people. In other words, Americans do not murder regular citizens.

An actual Hiroshima victim was "brought" into Oskar's class (via a taped testimony) so that everyone could meet her. A stinging illustration of one of these parallels is provided by Ms. Kinue Tomoyasu's reply. After Tomoyasu had told the story of how her daughter had died while she was holding her, she clarified that it "doesn't matter at all what outfits the officers are wearing." It is irrelevant, from a practical standpoint, how potent the weapons are in this setting. "I was under the impression that if everyone else could see what I did, there would be no more need for war." (189). In order for the United States to be able to work with the events of September 11 in a way that does not promote terrorism-related violence, Foer recommends that the United States should become generally aware of its own violent history. Additionally, by bringing Hiroshima, Dresden, and 9/11 together, Foer highlights that traumatic experiences transcend cultures as the human potential for inflicting violence and suffering is universal.

Oskar's journey of overcoming the trauma of the death of his father and the guilt over his actions on that fateful day is finally completed on his father's second death anniversary. He goes along with his Grandpa, digs his father's grave, opens the (empty) casket, and his Grandpa places inside it all the letters he had written to his son, which had remained unsent – an act that gives him some sort of peace. In the process, Oskar gets his own closure, and he is finally in a state to accept his father's death as "the truth, and Dad loved the truth… That he's dead" (197).

2.4. *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*- Trauma and the War at Home

The theme that prevails through *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*: A Novel is a theatre of hatred, which is illustrated by the various ways in which Joyce and Marshall Harriman express their disgust for one another. When the World Trade Center was attacked on September 11, 2001, both the wife and the husband were overjoyed. Joyce is happy because her husband's business is located high in the South Tower, and Marshall is overjoyed because he believes his wife is on the highjacked flight Ninety-three. However, both have lived to tell the tale, and they have survived a tumultuous year before their divorce could be completed.

According to a Washington Post reviewer, Yardley had this to say about the novel: "Marriage as a symbol for wider conflict is not a new concept, but Ken Kalfus' has given it a unique and singularly inventive twist." Elizabeth Kiem, in an online review for the San Francisco Chronicle, finds that "… this narrative juxtaposes New York's anxiety in the months after the disaster with the downward spiral of a disintegrating marriage." The comparison made here is bold and uncompromising in its assertion.

In Kalfus' domestic world in the novel, the 9/11 assaults detonate into the world of an estranged Manhattan couple who, in spite of the fact that they currently live together, energetically disdain one another. They continue to share the same apartment, a "poorly lit, insufficiently kept up, splendidly found community in Brooklyn Heights" (Kalfus' Supra note 5) for just monetary reasons. The first response of each to the information on the fall of the Towers is the expectation that the other has been killed in the disaster is peculiar and entirely unfathomable, but it incites immediate curiosity and excitement in the readers.

Marshall, the husband, works in the Trade Towers, and Joyce, the wife, watches the news while among her stunned and alarmed colleagues. She "feels

something eject inside her, something warm, a lot of like, yes it was, a pang of pleasure, so intense it was nearly like the appeasement of hunger. She covered the lower part of her face to hide her fierce, protracted struggle against the emergence of a smile" (Kalfus' Supra note 3).

Marshall, as far as concerns him, dares to trust that Joyce was on one of the planes that flew into the Trade Center since he didn't realize she had changed her arrangements to travel to San Francisco at the last minute. When he got away from the structure, encircled by injured individual survivors, Marshall "head[s] for the bridge, nearly skipping" (Kalfus' Supra note 20).

Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* reads like a textbook case of the characters exhibiting Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The Harriman family experiences various symptoms of PTSD as they negotiate the aftermath of the impact of the 9/11 attacks on their family. The Harriman family is a troubled household even before the attacks. The husband and wife could barely stand each other and had already begun the process of acrimonious divorce proceedings. However, they stay together because neither of them is unwilling to give up their claim on the apartment. It is a virtual battle between them, and none of them is willing to hand over victory to the other. The daily occurrences of virtual war in their tiny household are a microscopic version of what is happening in the wider world – countries willing to endure pain and suffering but unwilling to give up territories. Just as nations, Marshall and Joyce are not willing to cede an inch.

This acrimony is not easy to sustain; however, committed the couple is to their stand. It comes at a cost to their sanity and the emotional well-being of their children. Joyce and Marshall and their two young children, Viola and Victor, are also victims of "double trauma." They have witnessed the September 11 attacks – the parents as eyewitnesses and survivors, and the children have watched the scenes of destruction of the WTC buildings on their TV screens countless times since the event.

Marshall Harriman was inside the towers when the planes hit the building. Along with others, he rushes out, running for safety. On the way out, he meets an injured man by the name of Lloyd. However, Marshall doesn't manage to succeed, leaving him traumatized with survivor's guilt for a long time. Marshall continuously thinks about his failure to save Lloyd and replays the scene throughout the novel.

The resultant trauma for Marshall from this incident even manifests itself in physical symptoms. He develops a rash on his skin that does not heal even after repeated treatment. Pierre Janet, in a study, describes the manner in which:

> The memories of these traumas tended to return not as stories of what had happened: they were re-enacted in the form of intense emotional reactions, aggressive behavior, physical pain, and bodily states that could all be understood as the return of elements of the traumatic experience. (56)

As the plot progresses, the family problems of the Harriman couple move beyond the confines of their apartment and onto their extended family, affecting those relationships as well. "Increased aggression against self and others" is considered a symptom of PTSD. Kalfus portrays for the readers an instance of this to reflect the manifestation of the effects of Marshall's trauma. Neal, who would be marrying Joyce's sister, invites Marshall to his bachelor's party. Marshall behaves appallingly there as a guest. He is unable to rein in his emotions and, to the horror of Neil and other guests, goes on an anti-Jewish rant touching upon America's foreign policy related to Israel, knowing fully well that Neil and his Jewish family would not find it pleasant, to say the least :

> What do you think makes people anti -Semites?... He answered himself …It's the way every dissent from Israeli foreign policy provokes an accusation of anti-Semitism. It's the fact that we are not permitted to talk about Israel in this country, even though it is our number one foreign problem. (99)

Marshall further exhibits his inability to conduct himself in public when he attends a party organized by his son's teacher Naomi. He feels out of place and uncomfortable in the surroundings and soon enough returns home. Marshall realizes that public gatherings have begun to bother him, and he no longer trusts himself to behave appropriately. However, sadly for Marshall, the other alternative of staying at home isn't appealing at all, as his house is virtually a battleground.

An embattled Marshall once in a while turns to alcohol when the stress of the 9/11 experiences and the constant war at home gets too much to bear. (Disorder 202). Van der Kolk, in his analysis of Posttraumatic stress disorder and the Nature of Trauma (2000), assesses a trauma victim's propensity to turn into an alcoholic:

> They often continue to dissociate in the face of threat, suffer from profound feelings of helplessness and have difficulty planning effective action. This makes them vulnerable to developing "emotion-focused coping," a coping style in which the goal is to alter one's emotional state rather than the circumstances that give rise to those emotional states. This emotion-focused coping accounts for the fact that people who develop PTSD are vulnerable to engage in alcohol and substance abuse.

Marshall is never able to completely forgive himself for not being able to help Lloyd during the escape after the 9/11 attacks. Survivor's guilt continues to haunt him, and in the process, he tries to compensate by trying to save anyone in trouble. For instance, at the party he attended at the invitation of Naomi, he finds a black youth getting assaulted. Marshall protests the abusive treatment vocally but immediately regrets it:

> It had been childish to think they would have made any difference. He sensed the other guests enduring animosity. He wondered what fantasies of self-righteousness and power had motivated him. The gesture had been as ridiculous as the one

made on September 11 when he had gone back for Lloyd. Why had he done that? What good had it done? He regretted that too. (87)

To quote Van der Kolk again - "Increased activation of traumatic memories may be associated with increased shame, guilt, and aggression" Marshall is here in these instances displaying another classic symptom of PTSD. As Marshall continues to try and cope with the after-effects of 9/11, he beings to feel a sense of shame of even being publicly identified as a 9/11 survivor and tries to casually brush aside the aftermath of his experience "No, no, don't worry, I'm not traumatized or anything like that"(89)

Just like her husband, Joyce also is deeply traumatized by the events of 9/11 and its impact on their even otherwise dysfunctional family. As ties to her husband Marshall reach a point of no return, Joyce tries to find comfort elsewhere. She begins a relationship with Marshall's friend Roger and has sex with him. For Joyce, it's a way of getting back at her husband "some terror sex. After everything that had happened, to her city and to her marriage, she deserved it" (23). Later, she muses, "her life hadn't changed. She was still not divorced, and she had lost hope of ever being divorced" (63)

Like her husband Marshall, Joyce also experiences a constant feeling of dread as a result of the PTSD caused by the trauma. She feels as if she is in danger constantly and walks around with a great sense of insecurity. Events in her office heighten this feeling. Her office was evacuated a second time when there was another anthrax scare. The FBI comes in and clears the misunderstanding. But Joyce isn't convinced and continues to be jittery over any unexpected event. She, in fact, here is convinced that it is her husband, Marshall, who is behind this anthrax scare.

The appearance of Bacillus anthracis was the subject of a second onslaught by Joyce against Marshall. Joyce initially investigates the letter that accompanied the

envelope containing a white powder, which is believed to be Bacillus anthracis, but it is subsequently revealed to be harmless baby powder and a hoax. In addition, a portion of the document's letters, specifically the letter g, aid her in recalling Marshall's handwriting. When she's with an FBI agent, she informs him:

> "Specialist Robbins," and pondered whether she could continue. She concluded after quick consideration that she could. You enquired as to whether some individuals harbor anger towards our firm. Also, I cannot think of anyone who does so. Despite this, I recognize who has anger against me: my spouse. I disclosed to you yesterday that we are separating; it is a tragic case. He was in the World Trade Centre on September 11 and endured; however, I have no idea why he has been somewhat agitated ever since. The events of September 11 may have pushed him over the edge. He may have done this to get even with me in some way. Additionally, that envelope was featured in the news the evening before. Have you a duplicate? I recognize my significant other's handwriting. We'll see. What is his name? Marshall Henry Harriman. (45)

In addition, Joyce is looking for ways to destroy Marshall financially and personally. For instance, she sleeps with their common friend Roger to spite Marshall and break the relationship between Linda and Roger. Linda and Roger stopped speaking with Joyce as a result of Marshall's repeated attacks against her. They believed Marshall's rumors about her. Roger, however, has his own reasons for engaging in this illicit affair. His own relationship with Linda isn't going well, and he, too, wants to get back at her. A disillusioned Joyce began to view every relationship as an intrigue:

> As she lay there, gazing at the roof, she realized she had not enticed Roger by any means. He had his own explanations behind having intercourse with her, something to do with Linda. She had considered him to be a pawn in her battle against Marshall, yet every individual had his own deplorable mystery history. Each human relationship was

> a scheme. Roger, as well, was working in the shadows, for his own endurance, against his own foes and companions of enemies. (88-89)

The children, Viola and Victor, are also victims of the situation arising out of both the 9/11 attacks and the atmosphere at home that is a virtual battlefield. Though young, they are perceptive enough to notice that things at their home are different from the other houses they know or have seen on TV. Their parents do not show any affection for each other as the children have seen on TV. Finally, the reality of their parents' situation dawns on them, especially Viola:

> For several minutes then, she stopped understanding what was being said. Her parents were talking at the same time, rushing out the words and damming them up and then yelling again to contradict each other… she heard a single word … a word she could comprehend immediately and completely. The word was this: divorce (143).

Viola is distressed at the implications of her parent's separation. She goes beyond what it means for her family, and her concerns go into how society would perceive her brother Victor and her post her parents' divorce:

> Viola knew what it meant: people talking about your parents being divorced; you were the kid with the divorced parents; divorce, divorce, divorce—as if you were a divorce yourself, which perhaps you were. (144)

Victor, their son, though too young to understand what the situation at home means for their future, is affected emotionally by the situation as well. Deprived of attention, the boy exhibits attention-seeking behavior:

> From once being no more than an annoyance, his misbehavior had grown in ambition until it was a danger to them all. He

> threw to the floor every glass, jar, and dish he could get his hands on. He spilled cleaning fluids from containers under the kitchen sink. He wasted expensive paper, scribbling. (134)

In the meanwhile, the two children create a game by believing that they are at the World Trade Center, using the patio as a substitute for the tower, and bouncing off it while holding hands. Joyce and Marshall are so engrossed in their vengeful assaults and schemes that they are blind to their children's actions. Viola is hurt during one of the bounces because Victor does not hold her hand correctly, and she goes: "This is a result of Victor! He let go! The World Trade Center is ablaze, and we needed to hop off together! But that as it may, he let go of my hand!" (114). Even what these youngsters have been playing doesn't seem to bother Joyce.

The Harriman couple creates a bizarre world for themselves and their children. Kalfus constructs a brilliant satire paralleling the events outside their home. The couple tries every possible way to annoy each other with a viciousness that can provide a match to the American response to the 9/11 attacks. It is single-minded and unrelenting in its planning and execution. In the farcical continuation of the unbelievable trend, Marshall wires himself with explosives and tries to detonate himself in the couple's kitchen, where Joyce is making lunch for the children and ignoring him. When the device fails to go off, they squabble over who can make it work:

> "God is great," he announced. He took a moment to inhale and brought the clips together.
>
> She looked up, annoyed that he had spoken to her, apparently without necessity. It was against their ground rules.
>
> …
>
> "God is great," he repeated, again touching the clips. He opened one and clipped it around the other, but it slipped off. He then squeezed both clips and snagged one in the other, jaw to jaw. They

held together.

"What are you doing? What is that?"

"A suicide bomb. I made it myself. I have enough dynamite to blow up half the block.

God is great."

"Why doesn't it work then?"

"I don't know," he said, irritated.

"The wiring is tricky."

"Did you follow the instructions?"

"They were in Arabic. But there was a

Diagram."

She put down the carrot and the peeler and sighed wearily.

"Let me see." "I can fix it myself," he declared. "Don't be an asshole". (188-89)

There is a utilization of parody here which fills in as an instrument to inspect the progressions 9/11 caused in American everyday life. Numerous anecdotal responses to 9/11 attempt to utilize individual lives as a method for communicating the condition of the country, Kalfus is no exception, yet he utilizes notwithstanding it. The parody in Kalfus' tale offers the readers a likelihood to see various parts of 9/11 in both genuine and comic ways. It likewise centers around different issues through his character's emotions, taunts, and questions about the security of the state. The sarcastic objective toward the start of the novel tosses the readers directly amidst the terror attacks, planes colliding with the World Trade Center, and how the two principal characters figure out how to maintain a strategic distance from death and endure

what is before them.

Joyce escapes in light of the fact that her trip to San Francisco is dropped promptly in the first part of the day that day, and Marshall survives because he is late to work. He needed to deal with the kids first and complete how every one of them was loaded up with satisfaction and alleviation at the idea that the other one died during the assault. Here is the place where the story starts to zero in additional on the connection between Joyce and Marshall and their difficulties with respect to the separation. This presentation of the 9/11 attacks and the actions of the two main characters establish a pace for the novel and keeps on recording it in an authentic and nitty gritty way the accompanying two years after the shocking 9/11 assault.

Clearly, the Harriman family is certainly not a typical American family, which filled in as a similitude for nationalism and solidarity. The individuals from the family are partitioned; there is little solace, and basically no reliability. Kalfus utilizes this in a parodic approach to connect it to the country and its security situation after the attacks.

When Joyce starts to scrutinize this security after the Bacillus anthracis episode in Joyce's office when a mysterious powder that arrives by mail is suspected to be anthrax powder, the police are called in, and the investigation begins. For the rest of her colleagues, this anthrax episode is one of the many similar incidents that have been happening around the country. But Joyce is expectedly more unsettled and feels unsafe as she suspects her estranged spouse of being the author of this incident. Joyce is convinced that it is she who has been the target, and it is her husband who is the culprit. "She resented her former belief that their lives had been secure. Someone had lied to them as shamelessly as a spouse" (84). The tale finishes along these lines as it started, with upsetting, comic incoherency, and at the area of the twin pinnacles before all else, and eventually at a similar spot, which is presently just a vacant site of where the twin towers

used to stand. The completion contains the depiction of how America has won the conflict rapidly and effectively and how it gets respect and appreciation as it was before the attacks.

The 9/11 incident is addressed here as a setting for the story and, furthermore, as a correlation with the connection between Joyce and Marshall. The private (anecdotal) account and the recorded (public) one is isolated, as they were, yet they supplement one another. The anecdotal story is described as it could happen to genuine individuals, and into this anecdotal story are added genuine recorded realities like the annihilation of the twin towers, the Bacillus anthracis episode, the conflict in Afghanistan, taking control of Iraq through a military invasion, etc.

Marshall, as a character, is not misrepresented. There is predominantly a reality to the crude depiction of the circumstance and surroundings as Marshall attempts to advance out of the obliterated south tower. He does not communicate a lot, and it is as if he has no feelings when there are dead individuals and human body parts scattered around. He even ridicules it at times. “He thought about a joke. Lovely people, this path to the departure!” (Disorder 13). When he was practically out of the structure, he halted and thought about it. It appeared briefly as though his endurance nature didn’t work ultimately:

> Marshall realized he should go, yet he waited. He pondered about his hesitance, this unexpected loss of intuition for his own safeguarding. It was the separation, the screwing divorce - he had been pounded so badly. (14)

What is additionally trademark for this kind of book is that it attempts to isolate reality from fiction to battle with the misfortune, the horrendous injury brought about by the assault on that day, and the consequence.

This episode is also an incredible illustration of comic exaggeration. For instance, at one time, Marshall, eavesdropping on a phone conversation from his bedroom in the apartment, hears Joyce refer to his presence in the apartment by saying, "I can't talk. Osama's holed up in Tora Bora" (76) implying that Marshall is covered up and hiding in his room. Marshall invests a ton of his energy throughout the novel coming up with bizarre ideas. He does this principally when Joyce is at home when she is either in the kitchen preparing dinner or in the parlor with the kids sitting in front of the TV - kid's shows or news about the conflict. Marshall's actions further provoke his wife to retaliate, vitiating the already charged-up atmosphere at their home and the unending parental conflict that traumatizes their children.

There is an association, a similitude, between the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan and the contentious marriage of Joyce and Marshall. Joyce and Marshall additionally so to say wage a "war on terror" against one another, transforming a typical separation into a literal battle, speculatively talking, and consequently, the comparison between countries is apt. Their two kids and their companions are trapped in the fight and are as innocent as regular citizens in a genuine conflict. At the point when they assume the other one has died during the attack, they are glad since it would mean a simple triumph, with not much, actually like in a genuine mismatched conflict.

As the U.S. expands its assaults against terrorists, so do Joyce and Marshall. Also, as in the genuine conflict, the two of them use strategies and practices to annihilate one another. Marshall is covered up in his room and uses guerrilla strategies, making quick, determined assaults to debilitate Joyce. A large portion of the occasions notwithstanding, their assaults on each other end in a huge disappointment:

> He plotted; she knew it. Marshall worked subtly, discovering partners among far-off colleagues and family; Nothing in her life

> was past his: even her dad had offered an innocent remark that recommended he had heard something in one way or another ominous to her, yet the assumed charge was too dubious to ever be challenged. Marshall talked discourteously to her associates when they called with important messages, which he won't ever pass on. He continued leaving the latrine seat up, his straight razor lathery and wet at the edge of the bowl, and his clothing on the restroom floor; all propensities she had exorcized from the family years prior. He was saying inappropriate things to the children; she heard their echoes in their inquiries at sleep time: Why do you look so old? Dislike Snuffles? Snuffles was the canine, a drooling, smelling, slack- steering instrument in Marshall's mission against her; a conflict battled in the shadows. (6)

The Harriman family continues to implode in a never-ending cycle, leaving home as embattled as any other conflict area in the world. This American family is not just a white family that needs to battle the trauma of being victims or survivors of a terror attack at the heart of America, but the Harriman family is America itself fighting dread, suspicion, hatred, and violence in the post 9/11 world. It is satirical, and the reality is as scary and violent as any other conflict in the wider world.

All three narratives selected for study in this chapter viz *The Falling man*, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*, and, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Clear* are at their core tales of disrupted domesticity in the background of 9/11. The attacks bring new trauma to the families here and, in some instances, increase conflicts and tensions that are already part of the family dynamic. But regardless, all the events remain within the family without much connection to the events unfolding outside – a few stories as tragedy and sometimes as parody.

As Richard Gray astutely comments in his critique *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11* that in post-9/11 American novels:

The crisis is, in every sense of the word, domesticated. ‘All life had become public,’ that observation made by a central character in *Falling Man*, is not underwritten by the novel in which it occurs, nor in any of these novels. On the contrary, all life here is personal; cataclysmic public events are measured purely and simply in terms of their impact on the emotional entanglements of their protagonists. (134)

CHAPTER THREE

TRAUMA AND THE DEATH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

3.1. Introduction

It has been more than two decades since the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. The unprecedented scale and scope of these attacks sparked a wave of anxiety and insecurity among a large number of people who were directly or indirectly affected by the viciousness in some manner, whether it was via direct contact or indirect repercussions. Others were able to experience the events of September 11 from a great distance away, thanks to the nearly constant television coverage that took place all over the world on that day. This may have resulted in extremely painful reactions for people who had previously been exposed either directly or through their families to traumatic events.

As a result of the fact that these attacks took place in one of the world's largest and most diverse metropolitan regions, the majority of the damage was brought on to a vast number of different people belonging to various religions and ethnicities. When the aircraft collided with the twin towers, the devastation did not only affect individuals; instead, it spread to whole communities, neighborhoods, and families. This was a terrorist attack that interacted with civilizations to such a large degree that it shed light on how our social environment continues to function even after an unimaginable tragedy. In spite of the fact that the events of September 11 dealt with a terrible tragedy, they also provided the opportunity to investigate the sociocultural responses to man-made disasters on a local and global scale.

Human beings are as governed by perceptions as they are by reality, and our physical and psychological well-being is shaped by how individuals and society

perceive us. A definition of disease proposed by Arthur Kleinman states that “illness is shaped by cultural factors governing perception, labeling, explanation, and valuation of the discomforting experience” (Kleinman et al. 141). As readers, we have this basic understanding that psychological maladjustments do not occur spontaneously. Alternately, it's possible that illnesses, such as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, are mitigated by aspects of a person that are socially constructed and associated with their core personality. The concept of a social character may be difficult to define and analyze due to its vagueness. In spite of this, an individual’s "social personality" can be based on and affected by factors such as race and ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, and financial position, as also the various experiences one goes through, such as suspicion, prejudice and societal judgments about ones perceived nature and character. These components interact with one another and come together to generate a social context. People and networks may be at a greater risk for experiencing mental trauma when a disaster such as 9/11 occurs because multiple aspects of social identities, such as nationality, color, gender, and socioeconomic class, come into play both in the perception and in response to the events.

In the aftermath of the attacks that took place on September 11, various factors, including media and legislative-backed decisions, have given impetus to more controversy. Therefore, topics such as religion, notably Islam, and Muslims have been portrayed as fundamentalist militants who are dangerous not just to those in positions of administrative authority but to ordinary individuals. In the battle of perceptions, the ordinary citizens are most impacted due to the effect of the media discourse since their foremost ability is to mold negative images, introduce specific misleading versions, and offer them to the world as genuine. After the September 11 attacks, the only "reality" that seemed to dominate the scene was the fact that the media portrayed Islam in a negative light by associating it with violence, extremism, and the oppression of women.

This negative stereotyping has profoundly influenced the way westerners view Arabs and Muslims, either considering them to be a genuine threat who needs

to be fought if deemed threatening or ignored if found otherwise. In addition to convincing people that Islam is a religion based on fear, the post-9/11 media has played a significant role in convincing the rest of the world to ethically support the United States in challenging the supposedly religiously inspired warfare, especially against western values by Muslims. This success demonstrates the power of the media in shaping opinions and perceptions, specifically in the discourse related to the 9/11incidents. In essence, it wasn't until the United States citizens themselves experienced an unprecedented act of violence on its own soil that people began to consider Islam in a more pessimistic light. Once again, this shift in emphasis was brought about as a result of the media's association of Islam with violence and their assertion that this religion poses a threat to civilization as a whole. As a consequence, it is possible to argue that anti-Muslim prejudice in the United States gradually became related to the perceptions arising out of the prejudiced Islam-related media discourse arising out of fear and ignorance following the 9/11 incident.

The attacks on September 11 had a profound effect on people all around the world, and it is essential to acknowledge the ways in which Western countries have incorporated ethnic and religious aspects and the social events that they cannot easily comprehend. These individuals go on with their lives according to the standards set by their own education, culture, and religion. In general, they view Muslims as those who have cut themselves apart from the rest of society in the hopes of destroying western civilization and the traits that define it in order to replace them with a strict form of Islam. They find the rationale for this thinking in many contemporary migration statistics that started after World War II and later as a result of globalization, which has unquestionably transformed the way modern man lives. The fear of Muslims in the West is pronounced today, especially in Europe, facilitating the rise of far-right political parties and the debates surrounding immigration and asylum issues.

After the militaristic President Bush years, when Barack Obama became president of the United States, the situation began to improve. Under the leadership of President Obama, the United States appears to have come to the realization that persistent conflicts with Islam cannot be won by employing military strategies. This is likely due to the understanding that fundamentalism and current prejudice against a religious philosophy and its adherents cannot be sustained using weapons alone. In addition to this, what is necessary is intelligent and appropriate communication with individuals who have an alternative social and cultural setup, as well as provide generous financial assistance to assimilate. The West has to keep in mind that the war against fanatical Islam does not have to take the shape of a fight against different predominantly Muslim countries; instead, it is a fight against individuals, their ideas, their personalities, and most importantly, not against their religion. The challenge, then, is to understand Islam, Islamism, and the meaning of concepts like jihad in order to appreciate the roots of Muslim grievance and, on this basis, craft a set of coordinated policies designed to foster a relationship between the West and Islam that is less antagonistic and more equitable. However, if a new strategy is not implemented that is founded on a clearer understanding of Islam, the conflict of the west with the Muslim communities in their midst and outside will continue for many more generations to come.

If we move beyond the United States to Europe, especially to the United Kingdom, the United States steadfast ally in the “War on Terror,” the situation is no different. Since the middle of the 1980s up until now, it has been a core pattern of the British press, notably after the attacks on the London Underground in 2005 and after 9/11, to present the Muslim world and the West as two opposing factions. The concept of "They" and "Us" is to blame for this situation, and it's easy to see why. This explicit opposition between Islam and Western culture has a long tradition behind it and, on top of that, a prejudiced base with all of its social implications. The perceived proximity of Islam to concepts such as fanaticism and radicalism has contributed to the development of a form of anxiety toward Islam that has reached another level of intensity.

Any investigation of the presentation of Islam in the media as a whole and the press in particular over the course of the last several decades demonstrates that this pattern has persisted. In this context, the essential part that the so-called Rushdie Affair played was undeniably the fact that it contributed to the generalized bigotry already, thereby contributing to the radicalization of younger Muslims. This radicalization is sometimes dependent on a substantial degree of joblessness, a rejection of Western and traditional values, and an apparent inadequacy of the police - all of which, when put together, are considered to be excellent grounds for a distorted perception in the media. The attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in 2001 also brought out great unease among the Muslim people population itself. This insecurity was a direct result of the attacks and the discourse that surrounded it, and this also happened in conjunction with the military involvement of Western nations during the Gulf Wars. Thus, in many different Muslim countries, a rise of extreme Islam could be noticed, and it consequently became the subject of new concerns.

Since the 9/11 attacks, it has been abundantly evident that the incident has brought a presentation of Islam in the media that is completely different from any other. The pattern began as passionate, but it later shifted into a design that is critical. This, once again, is the primary rationale for the prevalent fear of Islam, which is based on a combination of reality as they are viewed and the dread of things that cannot be comprehended. As a result of the creation of this prejudiced environment against Muslims, a parallel resistance has been formed among gatherings or social groups that are not comprised of Muslims. Not too much longer after that, Muslims were labeled as part of "them," and they were presented as a threat to "us." The depiction of Muslims in the media as a danger to "white estimations of popular government and opportunity" (Ahmed and Matthes 231) is one example of the reasons responsible for stoking tensions between "us" and "them." However, one must demonstrate that despite the media's distortion of Islam and Muslims and the profound effect they caused, numerous researchers have called for re-surveying the negative stigma given to Muslims and re-evaluating the religion as a threat to non-Muslim social orders. This is something that needs to be demonstrated.

In addition to the media, politicians had a significant role in the development of the public perception of Muslims in the United States as being associated with terror. This was, in some sense, the after-effect of the reaction of the United States government to the tragic events of September 11. For instance, as an instant reaction, President George W. Bush stated his intention to combat those who spread terror and proclaimed a virtual "Battle on Terrorism" (Graauwmans 3). This has had an effect on a large number of countries around the world based on their geographic and strategic locations. The allies perceived “the United States attack in Afghanistan and Iraq and the expanding U.S. military presence in Central Asia as the result of psychological warfare” (Graauwmans 3).

In the last several decades, works by Immigrant and Diasporic authors have become an essential component of current English literature. A significant part of this sort of literature has been intimately tied to subjects such as the trauma of moving to a different culture, interracial and religious conflicts, questions of identity, the migrant’s place in the diaspora, issues of cultural adjustments, etc. all of which have aspects to it that is indirectly or directly related to religion.

Writing and religion, which had lost their traditionally tight linkages in the past, were unexpectedly re-discovered after 9/11. Terrorism and religion and issues of identity and alienation provide immense scope for characters and themes to work upon. However, along with these themes, the dangers of misrepresentation are real. Terrorist activities, in which the events of September 11 are included, could be sympathetically portrayed in works as an investigation into the grievances or as an assault on an apparently tyrannizing state. Conversely, writers can also expressly focus on Islam and terrorism and tend to conflate the foreigner and the other as cruel, wicked, and capable of mindless violence.

However, it does indicate that the scope for the intricate portrayal of 9/11 in imaginative works is immense. It is a reality that because of 9/11 that authors and academics on the same topic have taken a stand against the barbaric crime of terrorism. However, the Islamic components in these works have contributed to their

inclusion in modern American literary works. The concept of "Otherness" itself has found a fixed point in these compositions. Therefore, discussing just the academic aspect of 9/11 does not encompass the whole breadth of what happened on 9/11. These two pieces are ultimately responsible for causing readers to reflect on the introduction of any Muslim characters to whom there is hatred, misperception, or sympathy, which writers describe in a variety of contexts and political situations.

The vast majority of Muslim writers are aware of this problematic aspect of incorporating 9/11 into their works, and it is in this area that they routinely work as postcolonial scholars. These individuals have invariably found themselves caught between the binary consisting of either Islam or the West. It is precisely in these areas that they need to place and introduce their characters who need to readjust their lives, and it is precisely this aspect that they find most challenging. Unfortunately, 9/11 can be used to perpetuate the stereotypes of the West as a place where people from all over are accepted as immigrants and refugees and the East as the source of violent individuals whose representatives carry bombs and blow up aircraft mindlessly. This foundation of aggression is what serves as a constant reminder to individuals that mistrust, contempt, and fear are the most natural emotions that life has to offer and that violent assaults are an acceptable technique that may serve as a manner of resolving complex international disputes as well as addressing individual grievances. This is also true for Westerners who continue to stereotype Muslims who commit violent acts either in real life or in fictional stories as being untrustworthy, thereby projecting group characteristics on individual actions.

The events of September 11, in addition to having an effect on society as a whole, have created a unique place in the world of literature as well. In this context, a few academics have also highlighted the American blamelessness and their exceptionalism owing to the attacks. As an example, the critic Martin Randall observes "that the dominant discourse has sacralized the 9/11 attacks and... that this discourse has affected 9/11 literature" (Eikonsalo 88). This serves as evidence of how prominently the attacks are presented and how much emphasis is given to this narrative. As a consequence, the

majority of works of fiction written after September 11 focus on some kind of harm to the nation - whether physical or psychological. It focuses primarily on broken people who, as a result of the traumas they have endured, have a difficult time adjusting to their lives.

The previous chapter in this study discussed the portrayal of domestic disruption in the lives of ordinary citizens as a result of trauma from being the survivors and witnesses of the 9/11 attacks. Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man,* for example, paints the character of Keith and his family as people whose domestic life has been severely impacted by the attack. Additionally, DeLillo's work, in a very brief instance, brings religion to the narrative providing an acute contrast between the characters of Lianne and Hammad. For example, Lianne, Keith's wife, searches for solace in her Christian faith to cope with the double trauma of the attacks and her own mother's recent diagnosis. But, despite her quest, which she has undertaken on her own and not guided by any external agency, Lianne is portrayed as being paralyzed with terror at the thought of being "consumed by God" (Derosa, 2013). But the Muslim Hammad, though presented as an unapologetic violent extremist, is sure of the path that he is set out to take and has none of the misgivings that come in the way of Lianne's quest. The contrast here couldn't be more telling. As Bounar points out through a linguistic binary in his work, "Representations of Islam, Terrorism, and Religious Extremism: Cosmopolitan Identity in Muslim Anglophone Novel," DeLillo is, by all accounts here through the characters of Lianne and Hammad, attempting to demonstrate to the readers the image of "reconstruction" and "destruction" (69)

Islam and Muslims are often spoken about in a way that suggests they may be possible threats to the solidity and democratic-based cohesiveness of traditional American society. The media in the United States has, for more than a century, "stereotyped and misrepresented Arabs and Muslims" (Alsultany 2). American media organizations, especially television channels, with their aggressive coverage, have contributed immensely to the escalation of hostility felt by Americans against Islam and Muslims, especially in the immediate days after the attacks. They continued to broadcast shows that painted Muslims in a negative light and portrayed them as terrorists, while at the same time, they highlighted the bravery and steadfastness exhibited by the American government, police,

and firefighters to rescue lives and protect the nation (McFarland & Yaqin 196). As a result, all Muslims are perceived to be fundamentalists till proven otherwise with evidence or until "they order our beer or their girls show up in miniskirts" (Reese 150).

As far as the tendency of the appropriation of the blame on Muslims post 9/11, it is essential to also note that the terrible attacks of September 11 have left individuals who share an ethnic or racial or any other outward manifestations of similarity in their external personality with the WTC attackers have also been the victims of suspicion, hostility and even murdered for mistakenly taken for Muslims. But Arabs and Muslim Americans in the United States have been the intended targets of suspicion, hatred, discrimination, tight governmental scrutiny, and racial profiling, as well as abuses of their civil rights. As a result of the events of September 11, 2001, many Muslims in the United States still feel alienated and anxious for their own safety and the safety of their family members both at home and abroad. However, in a country like the United States, which constantly prides itself on being of being “the land of the free” and demands that every one of its residents is treated equally under the watchful eye of the law, it seems to be a travesty of its own values to defame and target Muslims as the "Other." This is because the United States has a history of discrimination against Muslims. The majority rules electoral system is exclusively associated with the American way of life, while fundamentalist Islam is seen as alien and associated with psychological tyranny and viciousness. In Mohsin Hamid's and Laila Halaby’s works taken for study here viz *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Once in a Promised Land*, the authors depict mostly these feelings of fear, alienation, and the suspicion and scrutiny even the seemingly well-adjusted Muslim citizens experienced in the United States after the events of September 11, 2001.

This chapter takes a look at how the Muslim characters in Mohsin Hamid's novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and Laila Halabi's *Once in a Promised Land* are made to deal with the same issues as their real-life co-religionists after the attacks of September 11, 2001, and how they have become victims as a result of the attacks. They are subjected to suspicion, hostility, crimes, hostile media generalizations, physical and psychological tortures, racial profiling, and increased scrutiny at American airport terminals, as well as illegal detentions on mere suspicion.

In addition, the tendency to emphasize such treatment reveals an insight into the impact of 9/11 on American culture, citizenship, multiculturalism, and estrangement of communities and raises questions as to whether they have the same place in society and have the same freedom of public association. It also disrupts the prevalent dominant conversation, which approaches Islam with terror and demonstrates how Muslims are portrayed in the discourse of the American government and the media, which, as predicted, perceives the community as agents of violent behavior and those who are primarily responsible for threats and violence perpetrated upon the United States and the values of Western society.

Within the confines of this one-of-a-kind scenario, it is the manner in which Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* presents a "counter literary response" not just to the public assertions of freedom and equality but also to the preeminent literary discourses that emerged in the wake of 9/11. In addition to this, it marks a turning point in the canon of 9/11 fiction, carries "a sharp critical edge and offers one of the first meaningful representations of 'otherness' in the canon of 9/11 fiction" (Keeble 115). Following the events of September 11, 2001, the popular association has linked Islam with acts of terrorism, and it is this perceived association that has led to "the intermittent deportation of Muslim migrants and lent inevitability to the invasion not only of Afghanistan but also of Iraq" (Scanlan 22).

There have been literary works, some prominent such as the *Falling Man,* that have emphasized the prevailing dominant narratives post-9/11 attack. It is vital to highlight that these books emphasize, from an American point of view, and focuses on themes such as trauma, questions over American identity, loss of national security, feelings of terror, rage, distrust, and the compatibility of Islam with the West. These storylines have, at times, contributed to igniting the presumptions and generalizations about Islam and Muslims and perpetuating the already negative views that are already prevalent in the United States, which has subsequently encouraged Islamophobia. In the fiction produced after 9/11, Muslims from the East are often portrayed as either confused and unsettled people or as self-destructive extremists who look down on the United States and the West. The Islamic

world is discussed in a manner that is contradictory, and the East is portrayed in such a way as to be a safe haven for extremist views (Lanker 112).

3.2 The Outsider Within in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist.*

It is an indicator of a lengthy and successful history and culture of Western imperialism, subjugation through colonization, and maltreatment of the non-western world that is which has provided the main impetus behind the military attack on Afghanistan and Iraq under the Bush Administration's policy of the "war on terror." The topic of how the retaliation to 9/11 has affected the lives of Muslim immigrants who have left their home countries in search of opportunities in order to embrace and be a part of the American Dream that is the prime focus of Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

The novel focuses on how these individuals have left their homes in order to embrace the aspirational western values and be a part of the American Dream. September 11 dealt a devastating blow to the protagonist Changez's pursuit of the American Dream. Changez continues to serve as an example of a successful immigrant who has integrated seamlessly into American society and culture. He received his education at a prestigious American institution, Princeton University, and now works for one of the most well-known companies in Manhattan, Samson Underwood. Additionally, he is dating an American girl. Changez, at one point in the narrative, describes how immigrant students in the United States are selected through a rigorous screening process that includes interviews with people from all over the world. These students are "sifted not only by well-honed standardized tests but by painstakingly customized evaluations, interviews, essays, recommendations until the best and the brightest of us had been identified," according to Changez (RF 178).

As an outstanding student in his class, Changez, becomes the generous recipient of scholarships, his visa process gets expedited, and his way into the country is eased. Changez, like other immigrants, was eager to give back and contribute to American society as was expected of them. However, the 9/11 strikes

also struck at American multiculturalism as well. Post-9/11, America seemed to be turning its back on its Muslim minorities, even those "who have embraced the American dream and cultural values" (Khan 2011). As indicated by Anna Hartnell in her work, "Moving through America: Race, Place and Resistance in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," Mohsin Hamid successfully brings into focus the place of Muslims in post 9/11 American society and consciousness.

The 9/11 attacks additionally revealed insight into the inquiries of character, citizenship, and loyalty that Muslims in America had to confront post the attacks. The question was on what part of their identity they would remain loyal to in the event they had to make a choice. Would they choose the Muslim religious self or be the secular and political American? They likewise offer similar hostile conversation starters to American Muslims. Seemingly they had to go through another version of the "Norman Tebbit test of loyalty." Will their allegiance to America be unwavering, even if that means they have to go against their home country? In the "Us vs. Them" battle, their choices had to be prompt and unambiguous.

Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* analyses the mental, social, cultural, and moral complexities and challenges that went up against Muslims in post-9/11 America, especially for those who have occupied a comfortable place straddling two societies and cultures. For instance, Changez's immigrant position as a Pakistani in post-9/11 America is not the same as it was before the attacks disrupted it. He needed to find out if his comfort with and assimilation into the American culture had been complete or if he was disturbed by divided loyalties when it came to matters affecting Pakistan. Do Changez's lofty academic credentials and prestigious professional position leave any space for public association and enthusiastic celebration of the American way of life? These are questions that Changez has to be freshly content with.

Is there a conflict between the Pakistani and the American part in Changez? Is he a fundamentalist, and if so, what is the nature of this fundamentalism? Is he a

reluctant Pakistani, a reluctant American, or a reluctant Muslim? To expound, in the event that we inspect the title of the novel, we discover "fundamentalist" and "reluctant." However, there is neither any reference to religion nor to the principal character, Changez, who is certainly not even a devout man, let alone a fundamentalist. He is, indeed, a man who has accepted the American Dream with no hesitations.

However, as Susan Buck-Morss points out in her 2003 work *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left,* fundamentalism can take various structures since there can be economic and political fundamentalisms also. Hence, fundamentalism cannot just be automatically related to religious fundamentalism or, in this case, Islamic fanaticism, but more of a belief in and with the fundamentals of the American private enterprise. Put in another way, fundamentalism isn't saved exclusively for outrageous strict doctrine, yet incorporates different belief systems, for example, "the neo-progressivism that described the Bush organization" (Randall 16). Both fundamentalism and private enterprise support eagerness, control, authority, and viciousness (Young 2001).

For instance, regarding the central type of private enterprise, Changez's boss, Jim, urges his representatives to firmly "center around the basics." This term is utilized in Underwood Samson's doctrine, which implies a monetary guideline of "resolute thoughtfulness regarding monetary subtleties, coaxing out the real essence of those drivers that decide a resource's worth" (98). Afterward, Changez comes to know the genuine importance of stringent adherence to the financial essentials of his country. Changez is surprised to note that it has taken him such a long time to understand and arrive at a conclusion that he cannot be responsible for control over things both at the workplace and at his adopted home. "It was ideal for me to decline to partake anymore in working with this undertaking of control; the lone amazement was that I had required such a lot of time to show up at my decision" (177).

In a different set of circumstances, the readers could find it unfathomable that Changez is celebrating while looking at television and watching the unfolding

of the 9/11 attacks when on a business trip in Manila. As Hamid puts it in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*:

> The following evening was supposed to be our last in Manila. I was in my room, packing my things. I turned on the television and saw what, at first, I took to be a film. But as I continued to watch, I realized that it was not fiction but news. I stared as one and then the other of the twin towers of New York's World TradeCenter collapsed. And then I smiled. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased. (83)

Changez's reaction to the attacks on the twin towers, especially coming from a person who is virtually living the American Dream, is unexpected, shocking, and unfathomable. We wonder if he is oblivious to the implications of his own response. It is clearly in opposition to his obligation to his own American Dream, which he has successfully manifested by then. Changez has never been at battle with his American self, nor had he any grudges against America. He has had his education at the prestigious American University Princeton, works with an American financial organization, and is in love with a young American lady, Erica. He seems to be the model immigrant living his perfect and much-envied American dream. So, what causes his unexpected response to the attacks on his adopted land? A part of Changez is entirely amalgamated with the American immigrant values in him, and the other, apparently up till now unconscious part, is stimulated suddenly, at this moment of the attack on the buildings, and exults that finally "someone had so visibly brought America to her knees" (83). Changez is confused by his own reaction and probably is disturbed to discover what his subconscious has hidden for so long. He seems to have discovered a paradox within himself.

It is also significant that the buildings that were attacked on 9/11 are symbols of the 'American Economic Empire' and a very prominent symbol of its hegemony and economic predominance, and sovereignty. It has to be accepted that "The violent assaults were designed to be spectacular in their destruction of symbols of U.S. economic, military, and political power" (Peek 22). Picking these particular symbols

for a spectacular coordinated assault that required precision and planning on a massive scale was likewise intended to pass on a message - a message that the fort isn't impregnable, and the Empire can be assaulted and attacked in its very heart.

For Changez, the positive and negative outlook towards America, or what can be termed as "a reluctant animosity," is symbolic of the effect of 9/11 on Muslims and how ruthlessly the Muslims were treated. The new security measures were in full action during the administration of President George Bush. Though intended for all in practice, it wasn't uniform. Muslims undoubtedly went through systematically targeted profiling, and the Patriot Act authorized the confinement of suspects was enforced on them. Examination at American air terminals became more stringent, religious and cultural organizations were infiltrated to check for extremism, and American Muslim gatherings were watched very closely.

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist,* for instance, when Changez returns, along with his work group, after his excursion for work in Manila, to America, he shockingly experiences a country different from the one he had left, and the reality of the new post- 9/11 America hits him. At the air terminal, Changez feels horrified and later traumatized when he is interrogated and requested to strip down to his innerwear while his American associates are allowed to leave without having been subjected to any extra security formalities —an activity that causes Changez to feel that he is not exactly an American. The discussion that Changez has with the American immigration officer is enough to convince us that life has indeed changed for people like him. He narrates his ordeal:

> When we arrived, I was separated from my team at immigration. They joined the queue for American citizens; I joined the one for foreigners. The officer who inspected my passport was a solidly built woman with a pistol at her hip and a mastery of English inferior to mine; I attempted to disarm her with a smile. What is the purpose of your trip to the United States? she asked me. I live here, I replied. That

> is not what I asked you,sir, she said. What is the purpose of your trip to the United States? Our exchange continued in much this fashion for several minutes. In the end, I was dispatched for a secondary inspection in a room where I sat on a metal bench next to a tattooed man in handcuffs. (86)

Changez's American friends and colleagues, however, had an easy passage through. "My group didn't sit tight for me; when I entered the traditional lobby, they had gathered their bags and left…I rode to Manhattan that evening a lot of alone" (86). During this journey, Changez sees signs of the new post-9/11 America bursting with overwhelming feelings of patriotism and passion for the country. It is evident in the words of Mohan Ramanan in his analysis in his work "The West and its Other: Literary Responses to 9/11," where he says, "9/11 also manufactured a new American nationalism, which enabled the US to see itself as innocent in relation to the demonic other, but this was after all only a variation of the old theme of American exceptionalism" (126).

As he sees New York in post 9/11 bathed in a patriotic atmosphere, Changez strangely feels out of place and that he does not belong to the United States anymore. To Changez, it "was suddenly like living in a film about the Second World War" (130,131). Changez's feeling of having a place for American culture in his life goes through a change. He starts to wrestle to find his own character in the middle of his social ways of life as a Pakistani and a resident immigrant educated and working in America. As an understudy at Princeton, he acted out in the open like a youthful independent, liberal and happily maintaining three sources of income to stay aware of the external persona, which he concedes he performed too effectively. The vast majority he met was taken in by his public persona. In numerous events, Changez has made an endeavor to find a place with the outward American persona he needed to project. So, he admits that he did something different in Manila:

> I had never done this before: I attempted to act and speak, as much as my dignity would permit, more like an American. The Filipinos we worked with seemed to look up to my American colleagues, accepting them almost instinctively as members of the officer class of global business– and I wanted my share of that respect as well. (65)

From the very beginning to the end of the novel, the watchfulness of the hushed audience listening to this dramatic monologue by Changez is called attention to at numerous events. Changez's voice dupes the readers, concluding that it is indeed his character. The other self of Changez is quietly implying a void and a deep gorge in his universe of dreams after his experience as a Muslim in Post 9/11 America. 'American outsiders' like him are drawn as voiceless, mirroring Changez's own loss of voice. Regardless of whether his American listener, more unusually, out of enmity or out of doubt, vacillates to answer or professes to tune in to interrupt Changez's narration, in both cases, he is quietened immediately. Changez possibly wants the American to undergo the same situation that he found himself in America post 9/11 – the loss of his voice.

As revealed by Hamid, *The Fall* by Albert Camus is the motivation for him to record this marvelous novel. It very well may be dissected as the parallel to the fall of Changez, his way of life, his security, the assimilation, and, more importantly, his religion. This work, under examination, proposes transitory nuances which get missed. Therefore Hamid said that he would prefer his readers to read his book twice than just partially skim through. Changez is like Hamid, who is enmeshed between two societies, one being his native and the other his fantasy. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is Hamid's self-comforting for the split minds longing for solidarity. The protagonist observes a sudden and hated development of Islamophobia among Americans towards all Muslims, especially Pakistani Muslims. He is separated and estranged from his profound social and religious roots. Hamid contends, "An epic can regularly be an isolated man's discussion with himself."

Changez tries to emulate in specific ways the America that set up her own authoritative boundaries for the rest of the world to proclaim them mediocre and herself unrivaled and powerful. Changez similarly neglects to lure Erica in a way to impose his own authority. She is willing possibly to have intercourse with Changez when she fantasizes about him as Chris, her former American boyfriend. Among Changez and Chris Erica is like among Americans and Muslims- a parallel to Changaz's own dilemma. Changez could not delete the disjointedness between the two societies- the one he was born into and that will always remain a part of him and the other – a dream fulfilled and now seemingly lost.

Albeit third-world individuals dream of adjusting and fitting themselves into American culture, they are not allowed to change this new culture. There is so much solid dissimilarity between the two societies that even the sexual harmony of Changez and Erica does not tie them together. After this demonstration, they scatter for eternity. Doubt and dread made strides in America, and so individuals like Changez need to authenticate their personality in order for them to be accepted that they are dependable and harmless to America. As Changez tells his story, it becomes apparent that the fundamentals recommended in the title of the story are indeed the basics of American culture "He begins to question the fundamentals of aggressive capitalism in which he participates, and thus becomes ambiguously, a reluctant fundamentalist" (Aldalala 5).

In the world that has been altered by the events of September 11, Changez begins to connect to Afghanistan, a nation that has become a victim of the Bush doctrine of the "War on Terror." The Pakistan military has no choice but to assist American troops in their attacks on Afghanistan, which is Pakistan's immediate neighbor as well as a nation with whom it shares a similar culture and religion. The "War on Terror" makes Changez change his self-comprehension, and he uncovers:

> I was no longer capable of so thorough a self-deception. I did, however, tell myself that I had overreacted, that there was nothing I

> could do, and that all these worldevents were playing out on a stage of no relevance to my personal life. But I remainedaware of the embers glowing within me, and that day I found it difficult to concentrateon the pursuit– at which I was normally so capable– of fundamentals. (100)

The new post-9/11 America causes Changez to feel disillusioned and disappointed with the Americans that he has developed to appreciate over the years of interaction in his social life. Changez's words are a criticism of the American government's blind policy on the war against terrorism, which has caused lasting torment to millions of Muslim individuals in Afghanistan. They also allude to how America is insensitive to the sufferings and torment of civilians in the countries that they had attacked. Moreover, Hamid's novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, passes on a message that the individual is political and the political is close to home, and it is difficult to isolate them since both are entwined. For example, while riding home, Changez sees America covered with American banners, grieving with torment, dread, and outrage. He has all the while felt "the crumbling of the world around and the impending destruction of the American dream" (106).

It reflects the dread felt by Muslims about their interests and about their well-being ever since they become constantly targeted. Even though Changez makes a decent attempt to isolate what occurred on 9/11 from his own American Dream, the truth of post-9/11 America was quickly evolving. The readers notice that Changez would not even like to accept that his American Dream begins disintegrating as the world falls around him: "I prevented myself as much as was possible from making the obvious connection between the crumbling of the world around me and the impending destruction of my personal American dream" (106).

In spite of this, the shifting reality of post-9/11 America for people who share his ethnicity and religion can unquestionably be found, for example, in the unprecedented and inexplicable disappearance of Muslim Pakistani drivers from

locations such as the Pak-Punjab Deli in New York City, as reported by numerous news outlets. The unexplained absence of Pakistani drivers has given rise to the following speculation on their situation:

> Pakistani cab drivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI was raiding mosques, shops, and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centers for questioning or worse (107).

In the prevailing security situation in post-9/11 America, Muslim men were besieged, and here and there, they vanished with no trace. This might be credited to the Patriot Act, which is an enactment ordered by Congress to explore and indict suspected terrorists. It has given the power to the American forces to strengthen electronic surveillance on private correspondence, interrupt messages, wiretap calls, and screen and search suspects' homes with no earlier notice or court permission. This is a betrayal of constitutional rights and contrary to the American constitution, culture, and values. Activists who were reproachful of the American strategy and its relentless mission of the "War on Terror" pursued against Islam and Muslims were assured that it was for the sake of the security of the government and western civilization.

After 9/11, Changez winds up in a situation where he is caught in where Muslims are treated with suspicion and Islam is connected to terrorism and violence. These rapid transformations in American attitudes have made the American Muslim in Changez devalued, alienated, and even targeted. He undergoes a great inward turmoil to see where he should place his loyalties – to America, which looks at him with suspicion now, or to Pakistan, where he feels he will always be a part of.

But Changez feels he has unwittingly betrayed his home country serving America's interests. He thinks that he is the modern equivalent of a Muslim version

of a "Janissary." The Janissaries were young Christian men who served the Muslim Ottoman Empire and fought against fellow Christians. Changez sees himself in a similar position. He has become a traitor to his own religion and people.

Changez realizes the implications of his actions arising out of his worldview. He "had thrown in his lot with the officers of the empire, when all along I was disposed to feel compassion for those … whose lives the empire thought nothing of overturning for its own gains" (152). The business trip to Chile is the impetus that provokes a change in Changez. Having shown up in Valparaiso to decideon the resource estimation of an old unprofitable organization run by the more senior Juan- Bautista, Changez gets serious about the business and bends to the social and political impacts of his business. He realizes that the potential buyer of the publishing firm willnot be interested in subsidizing the loss-causing literary division from the profits of the lucrative trade arm of the company.

Changez observes a discussion between his chief and the publishing firm, which is incredibly enlightening. "Juan-Bautista asks, what do you know of books? to which Jim replies, I've valued a dozen publishers over two decades'" (141). This answer implies that he thinks about accounts books, not actual books. Juan Bautista is insightfully mindful of Changez's changing views of the world, brought on by an expanding feeling of separation from his American self since 9/11 and his experience of being looked at with suspicion and even hostility. In a resulting discussion between Juan-Bautista and Changez, the elderly person helps him to remember the janissaries. The meditative state of mind of Changez prompts an acknowledgment that "he is a local source, or rather an advanced janissary" (151).

In this snapshot of revelation, Changez addresses the basics of forceful free enterprise wherein he takes an interest and consequently turns out to be vague, a hesitant fundamentalist. Eminently, while reviewing his discussion with Juan Bautista, Changez, interestingly, makes interest for the American to trust him, which diverges from the certainty and control overall all throughout his story. The criticalness in this appeal to the American that follows his record of Juan-Bautista

recommends a more extensive evaluation of America can be perceived from the idea of its contention with the Muslim world:

> But your expression, sir, tells me that you think something is amiss. Did this conversation really happen, you ask? For that matter, did this so-called Juan Bautista even exist? I assure you, sir: you can trust me. I am not in the habit of inventing untruths! And moreover, even if I were, there is no reason why this incident would be more likely to be false than any of the others I have related to you. (151-152)

Bautista's words cause Changez to feel corrupted that he is simply a worker, serving and working with the American Empire to overwhelm and control the rest of the world, including the Muslim world, monetarily. This realization awakens in him unexpected sensations of rage and shame, and a feeling of disgrace overwhelms him. He regrets what he has contributed and is no longer "capable of going through a self-deception" (114).

Changez's changed character is shown through his outburst at what he has possibly long suppressed. He bursts forth with political assessments and emotions toward post-9/11 America. He tells the American guest how he disdains the American international strategies and how the United States has all along behaved as the solitary preeminent force enforcing its diktats through economic sanctions even in parts of the world far removed from its geographical immediacy:

> I had always resented the manner in which America conducted itself in the world; your country's constant interference in the affairs of others was insufferable. Vietnam, Korea, the straits of Taiwan, the Middle East, and now Afghanistan: in each of the major conflicts and standoffs that ringed my mother continent of Asia, America played a central role. (177)

Changez explains how the US has all along pursued its economic, strategic and military agenda by following a reward or punishment policy of financial assistance and security guarantee. This neo-colonial strategy has secured American interests, but it has also contributed to all-around resentment and alienation, especially in its relations with the Islamic world. He likewise shows how the American attitude has always encouraged a feeling of pre-eminence among the Americans and their sense of entitlement and pompous disposition towards the "Other." With Post-9/11 America turning out to be progressively narrow-minded toward the "Other," including individuals of various races, societies, and religions, Changez realizes "that it was right for me to refuse to participate any longer in facilitating this project of domination; the only surprise was that I had required so much time to arrive at my decision" (177).

Changez's individual and cultural links with America have significantly weakened in the wake of September 11, and he decides to reinforce his personal and societal relationship with Pakistan, where he was born and raised. The overwhelming desire he has to escape America in the wake of his disillusionment with post-9/11 America in view of its treatment of people who share his religion compels him to book a plane ticket and set out on an adventure away from home. Changez is more than simply a marginalized Muslim living in America in the aftermath of 9/11. He feels like an outsider – alienated and isolated. He is convinced that someone with his identity has no place in post-9/11 America "while stillacknowledging its potential to be an 'exceptional' melting pot" (Hartnell 346).

Since Changez first views all of that in Pakistan through the lens of his American upbringing, the process of his re-acclimatization to Pakistan has been a challenging one for him. For instance, when he saw the desolate and helpless condition of his family's ancient house, he felt nervous and humiliated about the whole situation. "I was struck at first by how shabby our house appeared, with cracks running through its ceilings and dry bubbles of paint…" (RF 141). Yet, with time, he comes to comprehend that such correlation is unreasonable and one

requires an alternate method of looking, considering the political, monetary, social, cultural, and other apparent contrasts between the two nations.

Returning back home after a prolonged period of time tends to make an individual look at things from a different perspective. Changez is self-aware here when he admits, “I recall the American ness of my own gaze when I returned to Lahore that winter when war was in the offing” (140). Changez is happy and grateful that his home has remained the same. “It occurred to me that the house had not changed in my absence. I had changed” (141). He has changed multiple times over his American sojourn – from a Pakistani to an American and then to the self-realization that perhaps he didn’t change at all. All it needed was external prompting, a challenge, a wound to his religious self, and trauma about his own identity to really understand who he was in reality. Changez comes to see the value in the rich social history that his home represents, a sensation that causes him to feel pleased with being a Pakistani. “It was a long way from devastated; in reality, it was rich with history” (142). Changezs’ transformation is now complete.

The fact that Changez is willing to leave his comfortable life in New York to try for a new life in Lahore and wishes to work as a revolutionary speaker at a college ostensibly denotes Changez’s complete transformation into his Pakistani self. The readers discover him advocating the separation of Pakistan from America and condemning the American- led international strategy toward Pakistan and the Muslim world.

For example, in Pakistan, Changez even dares to protest vehemently when one of his students goes missing. The boy is (mistakenly) suspected of being a terrorist, and the new Changez is aware of what the ‘disappearance’ entails - being taken to “a secret detention facility, no doubt, in some lawless limbo between our country and mine” (RF 206). The “War on Terror” has transformed him to no longer be willfully blinded to the realities around him and Changez welcomes his own awakening:

> I was no longer capable of so thorough a self-deception. I did, however, tell myself that I had overreacted, that there was nothing I could do, and that all these world events were playing out on a stage of no relevance to my personal life. But I remained aware of the embers glowing within me, and that day I found it difficult to concentrate on the pursuit– at which I was normally so capable– of fundamentals. (100)

This is a significant moment in the discussion between Changez and the American, and basically, the extent of fiction is registered as their dialogue mimics cultural (mis)understandings and the processes of international relations. His certification, 'I guarantee you, sir, you can confide in me,' is an affirmation of the apprehensive doubt by the U.S. government and its tensions about being subject to such 'fellowships.' In this way, the changing quality of the story voice between the self-governing 'I' of the novel's opening and the slow unfolding of the part by part of the natural character of 'Changez The Transient' is illustrative of the narrative development between the aggregate voices of a genuine universe of contemporary political and cultural issues and the peculiarity of human experience addressed in fiction.

This procedure authorizes a reality wherein there is an impulse to take one side or the other in the conflict on terror and its aftermath. In this manner, the planning of voice through the novel rises above the individual story to draw in the more extensive ramifications and worldwide associations. In that instance, the principal unique persona gives a spatial structure to this. The unhesitating admission by the speaker (Changez) that he is 'an admirer of America' is indeed a conclusion. It is more than the case that he was once a fan of America at the beginning of his narrative, but by the close of his tour, he has changed his mind considerably.

The enlivening feeling of social pride is additionally engraved when he tells his visitor that he was “a worker of the American domain when it was attacking a country with a family relationship to mine and was may be, in any event, conspiring to guarantee that my own nation confronted the danger of war ” (152). During this piece of the discussion, the American turns out to be progressively agitated, yet he remains as much a prisoner as the readers - an uninvolved audience.

The intelligent character of Changez is reconfigured as the genial voice of a speaker skeptically mindful of a political environment that requests joining one side or the other. The fear of the consequences of having an authoritative viewpoint eliminates the possibility of occupying an area that isn’t one of the extremes. A re-visitation of the initial sections of the novel backs this. The unknown American is depicted as one with a particular kind of extreme opinion and maybe, at that point, with a specific and prejudiced worldview. As noted, he has a particular bearing, and in this way, his singularity stands out and is quickly noticed by another character. Changez says, “It was your bearing that allowed me to identify you, and I do not mean that as an insult, for I see your face has hardened, but merely as an observation” (2). This foregrounding of the American as a specific cliché figure, reclining across from that of another – a Pakistani man with a beard – offers numerous conversation starters about the picture portrayal and the importance of identity markers.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist reacts to the inquiries it raises by investigating how specific positions are built, formed, and verified according to the ‘War on Terror. That is the manner by which one may turn into a fundamentalist, albeit hesitantly. Changez is angry and resentful towards the American government, which acts as though they are above the international laws and responsibilities and can abuse internationally respected conventions. The “land of the free” had no qualms, while and common freedoms of individual citizens around the world under the pretext of battling terror and intimidation from “non-state actors.”

Changez is not, at this point, ready to appreciate and maybe even deliberately ignore America's public and political expressed concerns over terrorism and security. He defiantly declares that "no nation perpetrates demise so promptly upon the occupants of different nations, contenders, such countless individuals so distant, as America" (RF 207). At this point, one cannot really disagree with Changez.

Other than his investigation of America's one-sided and double-dealing strategies, Changez requests Pakistan to stay far away from American strategic and political interests. Changez is aware that his open political activism against America and its policies related to Afghanistan and his vocal opposition to similar US policies against Iraq has made him a potential target of America.

In the concluding sections of the novel, as Changezs' narration comes to a close, he is quick to notice a "gleam of metal in the American's coat pocket" (209). Hamid leaves it to the reader to conclude about the listener's true identity- if the American listener of Changez's "dramatic monologue" is an innocent man or a dangerous CIA agent that his anti-American political activities have managed to attract. Friend or foe, Changez rushes to guarantee him that (unlike America) he doesn't put faith in violence and bloodshed. "I am a believer in non-violence; the spilling of blood is abhorrent to me, save in self-defense… I am no ally of killers" (206). He assures that he is essentially a college lecturer who has taken upon himself the task of exposing the reality of American activities and the consequences of such for Pakistan and the Muslim world.

Changez assures that he follows peaceful methods in his investigation of America, depending on a similar rationale and reason utilized in Western countries - that democracy is cherished in the country. In his revelation of Self as a Pakistani, Changez concedes to his American audience that he has consistently disliked how America has always been, continually meddling with other countries. He realizes that he, too, had inadvertently contributed to this economic domination of the world when he was an employee of Underwood Samson. He admits how the realization has

astounded him and that also the fact he has required such a lot of time to show up.

Changez makes several parallels between the two worlds in the novel, as nostalgia for Pakistan grows alongside the "impending destruction of the American dream." (92). Despite the narrator's awareness of the "dangers of nostalgia and exaggeration" (21), the ultimate goal is to provide a counter-narrative to the prevailing discourse. Changez says to his visitor, "I am, after all, telling you a history but, as an American especially, should understand it is the thrust of one's narrative that counts, not the accuracy of one's details" (118).

Since 9/11, the "war on terror" has transformed America's relationship with the Islamic world more conclusively into an encounter between the West and its "others," but it is the number of others that seems infinite. When Hamid explains how 9/11 changed his novel's concept from a personal tale of migrant experience to a consideration of the geopolitics that governs international relationships, he confirms this interpretation.

In a move that repositions the arrangement of American nerves within the context of Pakistan, Hamid restores the last part as a place for the transient. Besides, Changez affirms how he is everlastingly bound to America through his experience and memories that he still carries with him when he states, "I had gotten back to Pakistan; however, my inhabitation of your nation had not totally stopped" (172). Amazingly, this feeling of 'occupation' of America appears to be grounded in language instead of in any physical state. Changez's state of mind remained genuinely weaved with Erica, whom he physically left behind in America but: "I carried something of her with me to Lahore – or maybe it would be more exact to say that I lost something of myself to her that I couldn't situate in the city of my introduction to the world" (172).

The 'rationale' of his misfortune here is one of permanency. The speaker recommends that any compromise and remaking of this relationship in the physical world is impossible. However, language stays the property of Changez, and here he

utilizes a graceful register that withdraws from the predominant skeptical tone he uses. His barely concealed regret for the rigidity of social limits expresses his acceptance of the inconceivability of harmony in the shadow of the conflict and fear:

> We would have woken in my bedroom and breakfasted with my parents...we would have sat on our scooter and driven to campus … and I would have been both amused and annoyed by the stares she received from the students passing by because I would not have known how much those stares owed to her beauty and how much to her foreignness. (172-73)

The story being told by Changez at times catches the recurring pattern of the possible and impossible. A clash, especially a cultural clash between America and its Muslim other is to be sure to happen, and that is conceivable. Nonetheless, Changez's regret over 'what might have been of his beautifully conceived dreams of love and life with Erica can as well connote difficulty. It is this development in the tale – self-exile from the promised land, return to the homeland, a reflection of life 'as it would have been' 'if not for' that forms the crux of the novel. Changez's fantasies of breakfast with his folks and their endorsement of a union with his American sweetheart – a positive offense of a social assumption in Changezs' Pakistani culture – imply an experience of plausibility and implausibility.

The closing section of the novel is one that unravels the resonations of this experience of an individual in the construction of the idea of America and its development of the 'other.' Strain and vulnerability prevail. Edward Said in *Orientalism* expressed that the development of character, while clearly a store of unmistakable aggregate encounters, is at long last a development that includes building up contrary energies and "others" whose reality is consistently dependent upon the constant understanding and re-evaluation of their disparities from "us." It is pertinent to remember that each age and society reproduce its "Others" (Said 332).

Hence, remembering Said's thoughts on the development of personality in the event that we take a look at Changez's character. His personality is molded by America and his encounters with negative experiences after 9/11. His uncomfortable and, at times, humiliating social encounters thus are answerable for his feelings of antagonism and resentment against America–a country that he once cherished.

> Changez becomes a survivor of the "re-understanding of contrasts," and keeping in mind that enduring the worst part of the "War on Terror" and unexpected social hostility by the Americans towards his religion and race, he devises an origination of his Self which is a 'hesitant anti-American.' This hostility is present in him in spite of his reverence for America as a place where there are fresh new chances. Every one of the encounters he experienced in the United States after the incident of 9/11 and the mistreatment he went through for being a Muslim brought about a new personality. In this manner, the possibility of Changez absorbing into an American culture turns into a total inconceivability. The dormant Muslim-ness in him surfaces because of the consequential convulsions of 9/11, and as a result, he builds up some emotions regarding his own personality and accepts his own 'Otherness.'

Mohsin Hamid, through his protagonist, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, conveys a cautionary warning. Even those like Changez, who are favorably disposed to the United States and its future, may find themselves transformed into anti-American revolutionaries if the United States does not change its attitude toward the Islamic population and the faith they practice. The policy of indiscriminate 'othering' that was widely practiced during the post 9/11 period under the pretext of the "War on Terror" will alienate even those who may otherwise have a favorable attitude towards the country and the values it professes and therefore, such policies are against America's own strategic interest.

Since Americans have discriminated against others by the color of their skin, and Muslims are distanced by their skin color as well as by their external cultural markers like their facial hair too. In western ideology, the beard has become another symbol of fanaticism and fundamentalism. The personality of Muslims is linked to

identity markers like dress, beard, and turban and are immediately connected to radicalism. Changez migrated to America to give wings to his fantasies of a new life. However, his visions are scattered. Changez feels alienated; his romance with the white American doesn't save him. He is left to choose between America and Pakistan; however, it isn't easy. One culture doesn't get him, and his own doesn't leave him. Erica has become the image of the American dream; however, Changez uncovered the void of this fantasy. Their association is very short. She is once again to be unapproachable for eternity.

After 9/11, Changez is viewed as a threat to be feared for his faith. His self-pride is attacked. His personality is emptied. America has developed a prevalence divider for the rest of the world, especially for Muslims. Shaving facial hair has become the image of progress and keeping facial hair is seen as a characteristic of backwardness. The worldview offered is a meritocracy; however, it is ostensibly reserved for locals. Nativism is like fitness and insight. Changez is talented; however, he is not treated as an equal in business. He faces segregation. He is dealt with sub-par compared to different specialists. Changez is treated as a danger to America. He is attacked all over and is constrained to scrutinize his own personality. At long last, he leaves America to get back to his own home and have a space to go back to one and final saving grace for him.

Moreover, the American response toward Muslims after the 9/11 deplorable assaults has been confused, unpredictable, and unbalanced so much that even individuals of various identities were executed on the grounds that they looked like Muslims. As *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* portrays, by abusing, focusing on othering, and distancing Muslims, one is hitting hard at the idea of multiculturalism on which the American culture is based. Consequently, American culture will be inclined to be poorer if they neglect to acknowledge the "Other" and to quit apportioning blame to all Muslims for a couple of disconnected unfortunate occurrences that they are not really answerable for. It is additionally the ideal opportunity to stop focusing on Muslims after the reaction of 9/11, considering that Muslims comprise a significant segment of the American culture, especially and

Europe, by and large, presumes that the abuse of Muslims, advancement of Islamophobia, and the War on Terror that followed 9/11 may prompt the prohibition and distancing of Muslims. Finally, Hamid renders a message that numerous Muslims, such as Changez, need to live in harmony and thrive in their adopted societies.

3.3 No More a Promised Land- Being Muslim in Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land.*

Arab American characters who can't situate themselves in either Eastern or Western cultures are standard in numerous anecdotal records of post-9/11 America. And without a shadow of a doubt, this is highly relevant to the central characters in Laila Halaby's 9/11 work *Once in a Promised Land*.

Preceding the 9/11 assaults, Halaby's protagonists, Jassim and Salwa Haddad, dwell as affluent residents right outside of Tucson, Arizona, in the United States. After the assaults, Jassim turns into the focal point of an unconfirmed FBI examination, and Salwa begins to develop homesickness for her country of origin, Jordan, as she is totally convinced that in post 9/11 America she is being suddenly treated differently by the people who live in the nation which she now considers her home – the United States.

After the events of September 11, 2001, Jassim and Salwa find that they have become estranged from the way of life to which they were previously used to and find themselves hostile toward one another. As a result, their marriage begins to fail and progressively fall apart. Despite the hurdles that her main characters face as a result of the attacks, Halaby's story focuses more attention on the ignorance of the American people when they interact with her Arab American characters than it does on the personality issues that the couple themselves must face. When placed in a post-9/11 context, Halaby's Arab American characters become increasingly aware that many Americans have adopted the oppositional discourse adopted by the US

government officials at the beginning of the “war on terror,” which centered on the American misperception of Arabic and Islamic communities even though these communities were present in the United States even prior to 9/11.

As she depicts the stereotypical American view of Arabic countries, Halaby's story is a compelling record of America in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. In doing so, she uncovered Western radicalism and offered a seldom-seen picture of American culture as being filled to the brim with intrigue, hostile othering, and fundamentalism. According to Halaby, the events that took place on September 11, 2001, were an immediate consequence of the festering global issues, which cannot, in the end, be contained within the third world. Halaby also suggests that the inescapable American view of a world that is unmistakably split between the East and the West only intensifies worldwide emergencies like drought, poverty, and conflict. In this regard, her story serves as a practical example, instructing Americans to rise beyond bilateral conversations in order to prevent further crises from worsening either inside the United States or outside its borders.

According to Halaby, the United States is just as unable to respond to catastrophes as nations that are now considered to be from the third world. She does this by bringing attention to class inequities, natural calamities, and a volatile and restless youth populace existing inside the United States and proposing that, generally, the American public and the traditional press ignore and think little of pandemics occurring inside the US borders. Halaby’s appraisal of the 9/11 assaults as an outcome of a wide range of worldwide concerns is again proven in her use of methods and symbolism utilized by Leslie Marmon Silko in her pivotal 1977 work, *Ceremony*. Silko mixes conventional Native American fables with a contemporary verse to accentuate her subject of developing transnational fighting. Also, Halaby compares Arabic folklore and Western fantasies to uncover reasons for the contention among Eastern and Western countries that, as indicated by Halaby, are unapparent to numerous Americans and Arabs.

Halaby zeros in quite a bit in her novel on the developing worldwide issue of

water deficiency, focusing on districts in the Middle East (where her main characters were raised) and the southwestern United States (where her novel is set). Her suggestion that the potential for worldwide fiascos joins all worldwide residents in a typical destiny is suggestive of Silko's notice that the chance of nuclear annihilation destroys all cultures regardless of any race or nation. Both the writers, at that point, go against separation and instead inspire cooperation, putting forward that it is necessary for all civilizations to surpass national borders and cultural partitions in order to solve the global crisis.

In spite of the fact that the Bush administration and the conventional press in the United States were not the only parties to blame for the racialization of the post–September 11 period debates, Halaby focuses her narrative on these two particular channels of information. Georgiana Banita, in her article "Race, Risk, and Fiction in the War on Terror: Laila Halaby, Gayle Brandeis, and Michael Cunningham," looks at the "second wave" of post-9/11 literature—authors who prefer to concentrate on the long-term consequences of the war on terror rather than on the immediate aftermath of the attacks:

> The division of the world into good and evil as proposed by the Bush administration in the days leading up to the invasion of Afghanistan and the start of the war on terror, culminated in what may be called moral racialization, that is, the articulation of a racially suspicious enemy figure propagated through the visual media and intended to imbibe andredirect as much public resentment as possible. (245)

After the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, the Americans that Salwa and Jassim meet become more intolerant and suspicious of both of them. As a result of the policies of the United States government, even the American characters Halaby portrays as racially tolerant and open-minded earlier in the novel tend to mistrust Jassim and Salwa and participate in anti-Arab racism. For example, during a conversation with his wife, Jassim's boss, Marcus, who initially defended his friend of fifteen years when an FBI investigation began, starts to doubt Jassim's innocence:

> Something had been different in Jassim lately; something Jassim was not talking to him about. It could be anything, he had told himself over and over. It could be medical, or something in his marriage … Not for the first time, his wife had brought to the surface the very thing that wasnagging at him, harvested that vague doubt that had been lodged way back in his brain, undercutting the faith he had in others. (237)

Marcus initially has complete faith in his friend Jassim, but as he learns more about the FBI investigation, his mistrust increases, and Jassim's "otherness" becomes much more evident to him. A sales clerk at the mall called Amber follows Jassim and calls a security guard earlier in the book, shortly after the attacks. Amber is confronted by an angry Salwa.: "Excuse me, young lady … Why did you call that security guard on my husband?" (29). Amber retorts, "He just scared me … He just stood there and stared for a really long time, like he was high or something. And then I remembered all the stuff that's been going on" (30). Amber describes her behavior to Mandy, Amber's boss when she is asked why she called security: "You ordered us to report something suspicious, and I just thought he looked suspicious" (31). Amber's unfounded skepticism is focused solely on Jassim's non-Western appearance, and Salwa encounters anti-Arab bigotry in the form of suspicion for the first time since the attacks.

Even before the events of 9/11, other American characters in the novel can onlysee Jassim and Salwa as non-Western people. For example, shortly before the attacks, Jack Franks reveals his crushing ignorance of Islamic culture. Jack meets Jassim at the gym and is immediately suspicious of him based solely on his appearance. When Jack starts digging into Jassim's past, he discovers that he is from Jordan, to which Jack responds, "I went to Jordan once … followed my daughter there. She married a Jordanian. Not one like you, though. This one was from the sticks—or the sand, as thecase was … [s], he's converted. She's an Arab now" (6).

Unlike Jack and Marcus, Penny believes in Jassim and continues to do so, but Halaby reveals that Penny also has no sympathy for Arabic cultures as a whole. Penny reveals her knee-jerk response to Arabs after the World Trade Center attacks during a conversation with her roommate: “Jassim is a good guy—he’s not like them, shouldn’t be judged like them. But those people over there, they oppress women and kill each other. They’re the ones who should be bombed” (281). Penny does not include Jassim in her broad categorization of “them” because of his financial status, according to Halaby.

Laila Halaby portrays Americans as looking at the world through the prism of "Us" vs. "Them," and this duality separates the East from the West as well as the wealthy from the less fortunate. She does this by describing Americans using language that is rife with racial overtones, as opposed to concentrating only on the challenges that her Arab American characters have in identifying themselves in post-9/11 America. Halaby’s point is that unless Americans see themselves as global citizens, the Eastern and Western populations will remain alienated and estranged, perpetuating the world’s current significant concerns like drought, hunger, and various political conflicts.

Jassim and Salwa are affluent in contrast to the majority of Americans, and theyare represented as living in the woods, well removed from the underclass that resides both physically and metaphorically underneath them. However, as the novel progresses,Jassim realizes that poverty is not only a reality in America but also a crisis that manyAmericans are unaware of. After inadvertently hitting and killing a teenage skateboarder named Evan with his Mercedes, Jassim goes to the boy’s mother’s houseto offer his condolences. Jassim is taken aback by the circumstances in Evan’s neighborhood at first, and he develops a desire to learn more about the unexplored world:

> Daily he traveled … greedy to see into lives he knew nothing about. Somehowthis aspect of American culture had escaped him. The more

> he drove …, the more fascinated he became, amazed at the years he had spent without ever really seeing. (275)

Jassim is astounded that a nation with so much money, the kind of wealth he is used to, could tolerate such conditions. He notices everything for the first time: "pickup trucks and pink fences, shaved heads and snotty-nosed children, food stamps, tattered smiles, ill-fitting false teeth, tobacco-stained fingers, and fourteen-hour-shift bloodshot eyes" (275). Jassim realizes how widespread the global poverty crisis is as he sees a woman speaking Jordanian Arabic while shopping with Penny at Wal-Mart and has his own moment of realization:

> In one breath, he was in the souq in Amman, a place he couldn't stand, for the same reason he wouldn't have liked Wal-Mart if he hadn't been invited to go with Penny: too many poor people, too many products to sift through, all of the questionable quality. Too many people squish- squashing their overworked, coughing selves together. (278)

Halaby compares the plight of the poor in Western and Eastern countries by encouraging Jassim to run into a woman from his homeland when engaging with the American working class. In doing so, Halaby also argues that the World Trade Center attacks were an indirect outcome of a growing global poverty problem, despite being commonly misinterpreted as purely the result of Arab and Muslim extremism. As a result, extremism is a sign of poverty, with implications and reasons that extend well beyond the Arab world.

Salwa and Jassim, on the other hand, were astounded to learn of the 9/11attacks. They felt terrible for what had happened, but those around them, especially the other white Americans, were unaware of the strength of their emotions related to the attacks. When Joan, Salwa's co-worker, gives her an American flag sticker and tells her, "You should put one on your car, on the back windshield. You never know whatpeople are thinking, and having this will inform them of your position," (55) Salwa is hurt and astounded at the presumption. This

infact exemplifies the American perspective on Salwa, as she is advised to re-present herself as an American by wearing flag decals. Salwa was frightened because she was unsure whether or not this would have "repercussions against Arabs." She told Randa, Salwa's neighbor, who is Lebanese, about her concerns, and Randa agreed with her. As follows, Halaby skillfully explains this apprehension and foreshadows the impending transition for Arab Americans like them:

> Salwa had talked to her friend Randa several times as well, babbling about how horrible it was and how she feared for the repercussion toward Arabs in this country. “Randa is worried about her kids, thinks someone might try to hurt them,” she told him later. “Why would anyone hurt Randa’s kids? People are not so ignorant as to take revenge on a Lebanese family for the act of a few extremist Saudis who destroyed those buildings.” He had promptly been proved wrong when a Sikh gas station attendant in Phoenix was killed in retaliation. Salwa’s outrage and sadness was immense. “What does a Sikh have to do with anything? People are stupid. Stupid and macho,” she finished in English. (21)

Salwa has a close friend, another Jordanian, Randa, to whom she turns anytime she needs to express herself. Randa, unlike Salwa, seems to be content with her life in America. Jordan and her connection to her culture kept her “fingers stuffed with centuries of wisdom, knots of history and meaning” (91). She does not experience any feelings of homesickness or similar feelings relating to Jordan because she brought a piece of her country, her culture, with her when she made her journey to the United States. Unlike Salwa, she was able to maintain contact with her heritage through rice, coffee, Arabic television channels, and religious and traditional devotion. She tells Salwa: “You don’t know what you’re missing without satellite TV. It’s like being home” (283). As a result, she never feels lonely or cut off from her culture or country because coffee is one of the many things that keeps her soul at ease:

> Randa pulled the pot off the burner and added two spoonfuls of coffee, each heaped to the ceiling. She stirred them in, reached

> across the continental United States, stretched her arm across the Atlantic until she found Beirut, and ... the coffee boiled away thousands of miles of homesickness. (283,284)

As a result of these emotional experiences at Randa's home, Salwa finds her friend's house to be reminiscent of the home where she grew up. Randa gives her own interpretation of what it means to be happy in response to Salwa's question on whether or not she is happy since she seems to be content with her existence. She shares with Salwa that her life with her spouse and children has brought her the utmost joy. Living in America is "easier here than at home... But American life, as [she] sees it, lacks flavor, that tastiness you find at home" (283).

When Salwa informs Randa about her friendship with Jake, Rand advises her toreturn to Jordan and spend more time there: "You need to go home for a little while. You need to be with your mother and sisters" and your culture, where things like this can't happen..." (288). As a result, Rand believes that Salwa wants to feel more connected to her own heritage than to America in order to save her marriage and feel miserable for having an affair with Jake. Salwa goes to Jake's apartment to say her goodbyes before she leaves. She seesthree Mexican immigrants working on her way there; she "smiled as she walked by andgreeted her with an accented hello" (361). As she screams deep down in her heartto them, she begins to picture all the miles and struggles they went through "to have their clear shot at the American Dream," which turned out to be nothing but a myth (361).

Jake cannot take her goodbye and begins crying, "so you are running back to the pigsty you came from" (320) since he assumed she would abandon her husband and marry him. He had never considered her moving to Jordan. That was his strategy, which ultimately failed. He begins by accusing her, claiming that she just came for the money. "You came because you want sex. That's why. That's what all of this has been about. I've cared about you, and you've used me" (319). When it came down to it, Jake was the one who used Salwa because he never even desired her as a wife. As she walks over the threshold, he slams into her, yelling, "Bitch! Goddamn fucking Arab bitch" (332). Salwa tumbles down the stairwell, blood dripping from her head

all over the floor. The Mexican man then assists her by placing a handkerchief on her head and informing her that the cops are on their way. This minor incident, as described by Halaby in the book, has a deeper meaning: citizens of various nations or faiths can support one another because, at the end of the day, they are all humans, regardless of who they are or where they come from.

After experiencing so many instances of hardships and discrimination, the couple comes to know the truth that the winds of transformation continue to blow through their lives and their existence as a result of 9/11, and they begin to see clearly how the mainstream white American society views, and has been seeing, them solely because they are of Arab-Muslim origin. Through a series of depressing and painful events, they become painfully aware of their actual situation as Arabs in America. They are now subjected to increased scrutiny, as well as bigotry, racism, and animosity. These, to varying degrees, work against their American convictions. They slowly come to terms with the fact that they can no longer occupy a place in the United States that is pristine, secure, affluent, and equitable, and this realization progressively overwhelms them.

As Halaby depicts despondent American youngsters who have little regard for life, she turns the lens through which Americans see Arab and Muslim nations back on American society, thereby reversing the Western perception that Islam is a civilization that does not value loss of life. Teenagers from the United States are shown in the novel by Halaby as engaging in the acquisition and distribution of dangerous substances. In spite of the fact that Evan is aware of the dangers associated with opiate usage as well as the possibility of going to jail, he still gets thrilled when obtaining illegal substances.: “his heart pounded more when he left the apartment than it had when he had got there. Exhilarating and terrifying all at once to walk out into the possibility of being arrested” (73). As a consequence, Halaby makes the connection between the joy of using cocaine and the mentality of those who commit suicide bombs, so inverting the way in which the United States views the culture of Arabic youth.

Furthermore, when Evan's skateboard collides with Jassim's car, Halaby suspects that the boy purposefully turns his skateboard into Jassim's vehicle: "he then pushed off and ran, propelling himself right into the front of Jassim's car. Jassim swerved left, heard a sickening thud, and saw the boy flip over the hood" (117).Jassim contacts the FBI agents and agrees to meet with them. They ask him a series of questions before she gets to Evan's wreck, at which point he retells the story. The two of them have a chat that has an ominous undertone to it. This provides the reader with a clearer sense of the setting and tells them that FBI agents Noelle James and Fletcher were conducting an interview with a possible suspect. Because the FBI agents had obtained so much information on Jassim, his wife, and Evan's ideas, the inquiry did not seem to be a typical one. It seemed as though Jassim had been the subject of a formal complaint from someone.

Jassim inquires as to whether or not he did all he ought to have done at the time of the inquiry, such as reporting the incident to the authorities, summoning an ambulance, and being interrogated by the police over the accident. It was odd that they kept bringing up the accident scenario, despite the fact that there were at least three or four witnesses who testified about Evan's frantic sprint to the car. Jassim was concerned after seeing the boy's family for the first time since he was ignorant of the sticker that was on Evan's skateboard. The nature of the questioning confounds Jasim. But he had followed all the procedures in such a situation. He had called the police. They had conducted their investigations, and there were witnesses.

But the way the questioning was progressing was telling. Jassim's identity as an Arab was what mattered most .9/11 had changed his place in America. Jassim was well-prepared to answer the question to his response to the 9/11 attacks question. He truthfully answered that he was taken aback, that it made him sad, angry, and uneasy, quite comparable to the majority of individuals in America. It had come completely out of the blue. But Agent Fletcher wasn't over yet. When asked about his visits to the mosque, he truthfully answered that he had not been to a mosque to worship for quite some time. Inquiring about Jassim's mosque

attendance is clearly linked to his identity as an Arab and a Muslim. Any of this applies to Americans' perceptions of Muslims. It vividly depicts the horror and terror experienced by Arabs and Muslims. If there was any evidence needed to convince Arab Americans like Jassin that their lives in the US would now no more be as it was, this interrogation over a road accident was enough.

When asked to explain a typical day in his life, Jassim answers that it is "not unlike what most of America experiences. "Agent Fletcher makes a shrewd point out of the fact that Jassim has access to the whole city's water system and the ability to tamper with it" (332), which is something that the rest of the United States of America does not have. In this reference, Agent Fletcher portrays Jassim as someone who poses a risk to the water supply of the city. Since the comment made by Agent Fletcher, Jassim is now the subject of close surveillance because it portrays him as a danger to the city's water resources. Jassim could not take it anymore and expressed his displeasure with these forceful words:

> Means is one thing, motive is another. I am a scientist. I work to make water safe and available. I am a normal citizen who happens to be an Arab. Yes, I have access to the city's water supply, but I have no desireto abuse it. The mere fact that I am an Arab should not add suspicion tothe matter. His stomach tightened. He knew he should keep quiet, but the words were bursting from his mouth. I have spent my entire life trying to find ways to make water safe and accessible for everyone. Just because I am an Arab, because I was raised a Muslim, you want to believe that I am capable of doing evil. It is sometimes best to look within before casting such a broad net. The words got ahead of him, and he was not sure what he had just said. This righteousness was morein the style of his wife. He had never been prone to outrage. (232)

This shows how Jassim is seen by the FBI in the United States and complements Amber's and Evan's previous views, whereas the first two reflected

social views toward Muslims, while the FBI's view represented a more official view. As a result, Muslims are portrayed as having a feeling of fear and threat in the United States.Jassim claims that being an Arab and having been raised as a Muslim does not make him suspect. Arabs are shown explicitly in the inquiries as being involved in this unusual kind of investigation. Much of this was a result of the 9/11 attacks, for which all Arabs seemed to be under observation.

Halaby compares American adolescent obsession with potentially deadly action sports to the fanaticism that breeds suicide bombings among Middle Eastern teens. When one of the police officers who appear at the scene of Jassim's car crash, Officer Barkley, expresses unexpected concern for a visibly shaken Jassim, Halaby subverts her readers' perceptions. Since the American characters in Halaby's novel either mistrust Jassim and Salwa at first or later expose feelings of anti-Arab bigotry, readers might expect Officer Barkley to suspect Jassim of deliberate vehicular homicide. Officer Barkley, on the other hand, shows consideration for Jassim and is one of the few American characters in the novel who treats him without prejudice. Finally, by juxtaposing Jake's portrayal of Salwa with Jassim's obsession with Penny, Halaby transposes the Western depiction of Arab people.

Jake seduces Salwa by exoticizing her Arab personality and appealing to her in Arabic (127). When Jake thinks of Salwa, he thinks of her as "mature without seeming to be ancient. Her sophistication grew as a result of this, as well as her foreignness. It's exotic. Also, I'm married. The difficulty of this combination piqued his interest, and he wondered if all Arab women had this allure (physical and the shadow of a man behind them) and if that was why they wore veils" (171). Salwa finds Jake's presence comforting because she is handled poorly by American customers at the bank where she works.

Salwa's meeting with the white American woman who comes to open an account at the bank is also interesting. The American's face sinks when she learns that Salwa is a Palestinian from Jordan. She asks Salwa a question full of anger:

“What does that mean? What do you mean that you are Palestinian from Jordan? Does it mean youwill steal my money and blow up my world?” (113).

Salwa is an alien in the eyes of the white American woman, a potential account manipulator, money embezzler, and jihadist who would use the money to blow up America. The woman’s use of the phrase“my country” expresses her belief that America belongs to her, the white American, rather than Salwa, the non-white Arab American. The lady says that she does not want to be handled by Salwa and instead goes to speak with another white American figure. According to Halaby, the estrangement and isolation of Arab American Muslims are being hastened by racial discrimination as well as pervasive stereotyped characterization of Arab Muslims as being impoverished and immoral, as radicals and terrorists.

In addition, Jassim and Salwa's interaction while they are out shopping signals the beginning of the scene with a shift in tone towards them. Jassim was abruptly followed by a security guard due to the fact that the guard thought he looked suspicious. Salwa was livid and wanted to know from the clerk why the security guard had been sent to her husband in the first place. This gave a straightforward picture of how people in the United States started to see Arabs.

Amber, the clerk who dialed the police, merely states that she was terrified after seeing Jassim stand and stare for a long time. She recalled the assaults as soon as she saw him.She had the impression that every Arab had been suspect. When the reader learns that her uncle “died in the twin towers” (30), it becomes simpler. Amber’s vision of terror reflects an American perspective on Arabs and Americans, and her mistrust of Jassim stems from her becoming an Arab Muslim. Furthermore, Salwa suspected that something similar had happened to Amber, but she claims that it did not.

Amber’s vision of terror reflects an American perspective on Arabs and Americans, and her mistrust of Jassim stems from her becoming an Arab Muslim. Americans began to regard them as Muslims with a tribal affinity with the terrorists

who targeted the World Trade Center Twin Towers. The Jordanian couple's story here enters a new era of conflict, fuelled by the image of terror that has stayed with them since 9/11.

The fact that Salwa was already in America, dressing like an American and purchasing "smaller and sexier pajamas," she continued her quest for the "Promised Land," in which she was seen as an alien with a view of fear as a Muslim. She believesthey have not achieved the happier life she hoped for since marrying Jassim and leaving Hassan, Salwa's former boyfriend. Halaby skillfully transports the reader back in time with the nostalgia of her characters until they reach the point where Salwa informs Jassim of her pregnancy and miscarriage.

The plot now shifts its focus to the couple's true plight. Jassim hits the guy, Evan, after learning of Salwa's miscarriage. Jassim's psyche has been thrown into disarray as a result of this incident. He is tormented by the idea of how the boy came to be killed by being struck. He tried desperately to warn his wife about Evan's passing, but he couldn't. He triumphs over challenges that are inside himself. He also avoids going swimming and instead goes to a café, where he feels forced to inform the server, Penny, that he is responsible for the death of a child. He does this despite the fact that he is embarrassed by the news. He becomes her buddy, and their connection develops from there. Meanwhile, his wife, Salwa, becomes estranged from him and becomes close to a coworker, Jake, with whom she had an affair while being married to Jassim. Both of these things caused a schism between the pair.

After Jassim informed Penny, she advised him to meet Evan's mum, Mary Parker. He learns from her that Evan despises Arabs and "wishes he could kill an Arab" after meeting her. The mother's account shows the true nature of Jassim's challenge to live as before as just an ordinary citizen, but not as an Arab in America:

> But he did then ranted and raved about how Arabic people should all be kicked out of this country, rounded up, herded up, and thrown out. I ignored it for a while, thought he was just scared. We were all scared

> those people were going to blow us all up. Then he started talking about how he wished he could kill an Arab—my own son talking about killing someone! I sat him down and told him two wrongs don't make a right and that most Arabic people don't have anything to do with this. He wouldn't listen—refused to. Talked like a bigot, and I was so mad at him. I think he got it from his dad, who is a racist prick. That's why I say that God is one fucked-up bastard to have Evan die under the wheels of an Arabic person's car. (200)

This quote covers a lot of ground. It demonstrates how even young boys see Arabs as terrorists; as a result, they must kill an Arab. He also desired to exclude all Arabs from the land. The way Mary Parker expressed her son's wishes suggests a strong anti-Arab sentiment among Americans. She claims. "We were all afraid those people were going to blow us all up" (201). She also thinks about Arabs, who try to blow it all up. Looking at Arabs in this way has become a fascination with Americans. This scene sets up the Americans' view of Arabs once more. It brought out Evan's hate in addition to Amber's terror. Evan portrays a young American child who is not yet an adult, while Amber's view pits adults against Muslims. According to them, the issue is internalized by the fear of Muslim terrorists.

When Jassim returns to his office, he discovers a business card bearing the name Noelle James, Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as a letter penned "in a blue ink, Would like to ask you some questions." (221). Marcus, Jassim's manager, is concerned about it and has asked Jassim to speak with him and find a lawyer for himself. Marcus initially protects Jassim but later becomes suspicious of Jassim's strange conduct. His being suspended highlights how he has been misrepresented as a Muslim. This image is filled with terror and panic. It also makes one feel sorry for Jassim.

Prejudice and bigotry against Arab-American Muslims were most emphatically shown in Jassim's office ordeals. Jassim's job is to oversee the city's water sources. He is a pioneer in rainwater irrigation and has an American Ph.D. However, after 9/11, a massive cloud of doubt hangs over him. Customers tell

Marcus, the owner of the companywhere Jassim works, that they are worried about their welfare. Jassim is Arab and Muslim and, therefore, untrustworthy. He may expertly manipulate the city's water supply to cause havoc. Who knows that he won't poison the city's drinking water supply? The customer wants Jassim to be fired immediately.

Jassim's friends, Corey, Bella, and Lisa, have conspired against him to make his life in the professional domain excruciatingly difficult. They keep a close eye on him, secretly reviewing his screen, taking notes on his statements, and analyzing his appearance, moods, and clothing. All of this ultimately leads to Jassim being apprehended by the FBI. About the fact that they are American citizens, Halaby's portrayal of the FBI investigation and the questioning of Jassim, "the rich guy from the Middle East," is well intended to illustrate the bigotry, animosity, racism, and derogatory preconceptions of which American governmental institutions engage with people of Arab-Muslim stock. Jassim and his wife's feelings about 9/11, their phone calls to and from Jordan, the amount of money they send to Jordan, even the number of days they go to the mosque to pray—all of these, and a slew of other details about their daily lives, are all part of the FBI's demoralizingly hair-splitting investigation into Jassim, their alleged water-poisoner bomber. In this case, Jassim's agonized words to Agent Fletcher are worth quoting:

> I am a scientist; I work to make water safe and available. I am a normal citizen who happens to be an Arab. Yes, I have access to the city's water supply, but I have no desire to abuse it. The mere fact that I am an Arab should not add suspicion to the matter. I have spent my entire life trying to find ways to make water safe and accessible for everyone. Just because I am an Arab, because I was raised a Muslim, you want to believe that I am capable of doing evil. (32)

Jassim's mother is convinced of his son's innocence, and his ordeal fills her with desperation. Some suspect that because Jassim is an Arab and the survivor is a well-known anti-Arab who used to skate around with the words "Terrorist Hunting License" (76) insolently scribbled on his skateboard, Jassim deliberately hit Evan and used the accident as a ruse and pretext. Jassim's vulnerable status in white society is exacerbated by all of this.

Trouble doesn't abate for Jassim. He remembered Jassim's odd actions recently. Marcus was completely unaware of Evan's accident at this stage. It has made matters worse for Jassim, as his best friend will not put up with it any longer. As the story progresses, the FBI conducts interviews with Jassim's clients. Marcus views this as a kind of 'maligning' the corporation, and it is the result of Bella's actions; as a result, he agrees to fire her. Things do not end there; after the FBI investigates the customers, Marcus contacts them and asks if they "no longer had Jassim working for them" (268). Marcus seizes this opportunity and informs Jassim of his decision: "I'm letting you go. I have to. We have lost several contracts. Several. These contracts are our livelihood. No contracts, no business. And why have we lost these contracts?" "Because of you" (296).

This exemplifies how Marcus Jassims identity has hampered the firm's activities. The corporation is losing business as a result of Jassim's inability to lead a sale. Jassim's job has been less successful as a result of both of these cases. As a result, the company has lost revenue, and the clients have demanded that Marcus not compel Jassim to work with them. This is a depiction of the status of Arabs in the United States after 9/11. In the aftermath of 9/11, this reflects the American outlook on Muslims.

Eventually, Jassim gets fired from his position as a scientist at the corporation, and when he informs his mother, she says something that encapsulates the challenge to his whole life and career, especially henceforth: "They're looking at the fact that you're an Arab. Do you think any American would be scrutinized in this way?" (301). As a consequence, one can infer that Jassim's being an Arab, and particularly a Muslim, is the source of all suspicion. As a result of this turn of

events, Salwa presents Jassim with an e-ticket indicating that she is leaving the United States unexpectedly, owing to her own problems and unwanted circumstances. It was primarily caused by her dissatisfaction with her husband, Jassim.

In the meantime, Salwa experiences a miscarriage, which Halaby uses symbolically to indicate the depletion of Arab- American stability and happiness on American soil, in addition to suffering the brunt of American hatred, bigotry, and ostracism alongside Jassim. Salwa falls into a friendship with Jake, a cocaine addict, over the course of her and her husband's ordeals. Eventually, fed up with all their American experiences, she decided to take action. She finally decides to move to Jordan, prompted by her recurring desire for her Arab heritage and milieu. However, conditions, ironically, prevent it. When she goes to bid Jake farewell and tell him of her decision, Jake hits her and throws her down the stairs, severely injuring her.

Salwa, a survivor of white American abuse, ends up swollen, beaten, and befuddled in a hospital bed. To make matters worse, she is now accused of drug dealing by the authorities, and Hassan, who has been madly in love with her, has called Jordan to tell her of his marriage to Intizar. Only the broken Jassim remains to protecther and believe in her innocence at this stage. The novel comes to an end with this highly emotional picture. Jassim and Salwa's lives have been tragically ruined by America's massive hatred and racism towards Arab Americans, as well as its permissive society and alluring lifestyles. It is perhaps not presumptuous to say that thepicture is also a potent symbol of the Arab-American Muslims' general peril in post- 9/11 America.

Arabs have lived in the United States for decades. However, there is a long and ingrained history of unfairly stereotyping them. The main perpetrators of the demonization of the Arab and his culture have been common media forms. Perhaps the society for which Hollywood has expressed the most disdain, aping older interpretations by the French and the British, has been Arab culture. The wealthy bumbling Arab sheikh with his entourage and many wives trailing him has been a

typical stereotype for decades in Hollywood and other forms of visual entertainment. The Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967, as well as the Arab oil embargo of 1973, fueled the stereotypical image of Arabs as extremists and terrorists. And most recently, 9-11 solidified this stereotype as never before, with the perpetrators of the tragedy being quickly identified as Arab Muslims. This is what made Arab Americans, in general, an outcast. It is because of this that Arab Americans in general, and Arab-American Muslims in particular, have been fragile in post-9/11 America.

It is possible to make the case that the traumatic events that Arab Americans went through in the aftermath of September 11 were nothing more than the culmination and escalation of more comprehensive, decades-long patterns of prejudice and discrimination that were directed against them. *Once in a Promised Land*, having been released in such a social setting is unable to avoid reflecting on the socio-political history of the United States after 9/11.

The terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, 2001, can be said to be a defining milestone in the evolution of relations between the West and the East. The "West" has had a significant effect on Eastern cultures, notably in terms of their way of life, first due to colonization and then in modern times as the dream culture for an individualistic culture and aspirational lifestyle. The "East" undoubtedly has always had a peculiar fascination for Westerners. The most crucial factor here is the collision of the two cultures and two reference points, as well as the impact of these factors on the psyche of an immigrant, which has been damaged by exile and by being a target of enmity from the American mainstream media and society in the wake of September 11.

It is unavoidable to acknowledge that throughout history, cultural boundaries have been constructed by biases and preconceived beliefs toward other societies. On the other hand, both authors Hamid and Halaby highlight their characters' emotions as the element that makes their absorption into American culture so haphazard. Here there are innate factors relating to their personal loss and deceitful actions that have impacted their assimilation

Furthermore, this chapter has shown that various techniques are used by Arab American characters in their integration process. Characters in Halaby and Hamid's novel follow what it can be called a "chameleon approach," in which they repress their original identities in their adaptive mindset, assuming that Identity is both an inner awareness and an external representation. That is to say, Salwa, Jassim, and Changez try to fit into the American lifestyle without displaying any external religious affiliations, integrating with middle-class neighborhoods at first and excluding lower-class ones later. Finally, as Etienne Balibar mentions, "Identity is never a peaceful acquisition" (186). In fact, the process of identity construction in *Once in a Promised Land* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is highly influenced by the stereotypes and the attitudes of the American mainstream, media, and official policy.

This racial prejudice creates divisions between insiders and outsiders. Furthermore, religion and culture are clearly crucial in the protagonist's identity development in these books. To put it another way, the authors argue that since 9/11, the world has seen a kind of forming and strengthening religious identity as a response to the ethnic categorization framework, but that commitment to Islam remains an impediment to their inclusion into the American melting pot.

The various instances mentioned in the two novels discussed in this chapter demonstrate the challenges Muslims in the United States have encountered since the 9/11 attacks. She holds both Americans and Muslims responsible for the inconvenience and abuse they experienced in the United States. The United States' structures and policies viewed all Muslims with suspicion suspecting all of them to be violent militants. Laila Halaby's and Mohsin Hamid's key characters Jassim, Salwa, and Changez, loved the American way of life and culture; they saw it as a complete and glorious dream that they wished to realize, but it turned out to be a nightmare. Jassim realizes at the end of the book that "Salwa would have been better off staying in Jordan." (326), a conclusion that Changez of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as well comes to. It has been the end of the American Dream for both of them. As a result, this book is a plea for justice, decency, and acceptance,

regardless of one's faith or origins.

The representation of Muslims in Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist and Laila Halaby's Once in a Promised Land can be observed by referring to Maha El Said's observations in her work "The Face of The Enemy: Arab-American Writing in Post 9/11". She describes the condition of Muslim Arabs as having been "othered." They are portrayed as terrorists and dangerous entities. It was a shocking and surreal experience for them that they were described as THE enemy, posing a security threat to 'their' country – in many cases, the land of their birth as well. An instance that can be found in these works is what happens to Jassim, who is accused of posing a threat to the city's water supplies because he is a hydrologist. As El Said puts it:

> The predicament of 9/11 was not only an American national security plight; it brought about a personal dilemma to Arab-Americans. Even though they themselves are Americans. Arab-Americans are confronted with the double and roots burden of mourning their country's misery on one hand and defending their Arabic heritage on the other. Although they are Americans by nationality, they still have Middle Eastern features that categorize them as the enemy. (El-Said 1)

This refers to what we've seen in Halaby's book. Halaby deftly depicts the condition of these helpless Arab Americans in the United States. Jassim and Salwa wanted to identifythemselves because they were not on the terrorists' side, but they were still not involved. This reminds the reader of Halaby's comment in the Before section (which can be similarly connected with Hamid's Changez), where she presents her characters:

> Our main characters are Salwa and Jassim. We really come to know them only after the World Trade Center buildings have been flattened by planes flown by Arabs, by Muslims. Salwa and Jassim are both

> Arabs. Both Muslims. But of course they have nothing to do with what happened to the World Trade Center. Nothing and everything. (vii-viii)

They were not involved in the explosion, but they were affected by the aftermath. They are afflicted by the situation in the same way as an adversary is tormented by his adversary. They became "othered," including the fact that they are citizens of the United States. Despite the fact that they believed America was their Promised Land, they continued to search for it and were unable to locate it. As a result, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* can be discussed as representations of Arabs and Muslims in American society after 9/11. The trauma and the unfortunate predicament these characters find themselves in is the direct aftermath of the post-9/11 discourse in the United States:

> The attack that brought down the World Trade Center constructed a higher wall that separates "Self" from "Other." This division was enforced by the simplistic view expressed by the U.S. foreign policy, where the world is divided into "good" and "evil," 'with us' or 'against us. (El-Said 3)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COLLECTIVE TRAUMA– THE NATION, IDENTITY AND MEMORIALIZATION

4.1. Introduction

On September 11, 2001, four airplanes crashed into two of the most recognizable landmarks in the United States - The World Trade Center and the Pentagon. This event left the whole world in shock and disbelief. The fourth aircraft had the Capitol as its intended objective, but it ended up crashing in a field in Pennsylvania instead. Among those killed were a large number of unarmed bystanders, as well as all of the passengers who were on board the four hijacked aircraft. It is possible that the Vietnam War was the last time the whole of the United States of America felt a sense of loss and anguish, horror, and helplessness on such a widespread scale as they did after 9/11. Nearly three thousand people were killed in what is widely regarded as one of the most destructive acts of terrorism to take place in the twenty-first century United States.

The 9/11 assaults on the surface devastated buildings and murdered thousands of innocent people. These terrorist assaults “shattered a sense of security and perceptions of invulnerability among residents of the United States” (Silver 247). In other words, not just the highest buildings in America were brought down, but the terrorists also dealt a devastating blow to American national pride. They “destroyed an icon in the household imagery of the American nation” (Borradori 28). The tremendous pain relating to 9/11 broke the psychic unity of Americans and shattered them into pieces. In a disaster that took approximately three thousand lives, the question of trauma suffered by individuals who survived or lost their

loved ones to the devastation is essential to explore. The notorious and catalytic effects of September 11 have led to a significant collection of the "corpus of textual/cultural representations that allow us to identify a variety of aesthetic and thematic responses" (Mohr & Mayer 2).

As "literature generates deeper and more stable impacts in the form of lasting impressions" (Khalis 88), early 9/11 novels generally talked about the event's horrific experiences and its immediate impact on individuals. This study aims to analyze Amy Waldman's *The Submission* as a post-9/11 work and examine how she depicts the tragedy of 9/11 in the lives of her characters and dwells on the challenges and conflicts that come in the way of creating a memory and the intricate complexities in the process of memorialization of the event

The Submission was published in 2011 and garnered a satisfactory amount of attention from general readers. In interviews conducted after the book's publishing, Waldman stated that she explicitly did not seek to create a novel about September 11 because she believed that the subgenre of 9/11 fiction had already been widely exploited and wanted the readers to feel free and embrace her fiction away from the heavy memories the mention of the date of September 11 invariably brought to mind. *The Submission*, on the other hand, is without a doubt one of the examples of literature that was impacted by the tragedy due to the fact that it makes recurrent allusions to an assault on buildings that seems to be generic, as recounted or remembered by the characters, but for the lay reader, the allusions of any such attack unmistakably relate to 9/11. We may use it even when the novelist makes no explicit mention of the day of the 9/11 attacks as a neutral guide to help us understand what happened on and after that day using the information provided in the novel. Amy Waldman here implies that the attacks mentioned in the book were unquestionably a global disaster that wreaked havoc on people of a variety of races and left them in a condition of utter devastation.

Waldman's *The Submission* begins the story with a jury, which has been given the task of choosing a design for a memorial monument to be created on the location of the site of the now-destroyed World Trade Center buildings and discussing the proposed design of the memorial. The jury committee has to decide the winning design from among the thousands of anonymous entries. One of the characters in the novel is Claire Burwell, who is responsible for the committee making the right decision on this matter. Claire has a deeply personal stake in the decision as she is the only member of the panel who has lost a family member in the attacks. Claire is impatient, and she goes, "What about the names? The names" (TS 3). These are the words that introduce her story and that offer an appreciation of the significance of the act of identifying the deceased both to those who are still alive and to a monument that will honor them.

For a monument, Waldman informs us, having the names of the victims is one of the most crucial parts. Alison Blais and Lynn Rasic put it succinctly, stating that the "names are a core expression of a person's identity, and the challenge of how to arrange the victims' names on the memorial was one of the first and most impassioned topics raised" (160). In their work, *A Place of Remembrance: Official Book of the September 11 Memorial*, Blais and Rasic write about the way in which the original monument for 9/11 victims at Ground Zero was designed and constructed. They can comprehend this complex process in detail and can compare the actual memorial-building process relating to the September 11 attacks to that mentioned in Amy Waldman's work. The original jury for the memorial on September 11 discussed the issue until approximately 11 p.m. when ten of the thirteen jurors eventually picked the entry 'Reflecting Absence,' "the design that just days before had been described in the New York Times as the 'dark horse' of the competition" (135).

This work by Amy Waldman nonetheless shines a fresh focus on the problem of prejudice against Muslims in post-9/11, drawing the reader's compassion away from distressed victims to the trauma of those left behind as they

negotiate their own now transformed lives as well as taking crucial decisions on the act of remembrance. The novel covers the 'Memorial Battle' from many angles and presents, as Arin Keeble defines it, "a true picture of American life" (171). One of the main characters of *The Submission*, Claire Burwell, is a wealthy 9/11 widow, and her presence on the jury ensures a representation of the families of the dead in the memorial jury. Claire supports Mohammed Khan, or Mo, as he is identified throughout the novel. He is an accomplished architect and a secular man with Muslim Indian ancestry. Another 9/11 widow, but this time from the opposite end of the spectrum, is Asma Anwar, who is an unregistered Bangladeshi immigrant. Asma, too, like Claire, supports Mo. Another principal character is Sean Gallagher, who lost his brother in the 9/11 attacks. He is presently unemployed, and as the novel begins, Sean is preparing to organize a demonstration relating to the construction of a memorial in honor of the victims of the attacks mentioned in the novel.

4.2. Trauma and The Politics of Identity in *The Submission*

The topic of Islam and Muslims is introduced in the novel right at the beginning itself. After the results of the blind selection by the jury relating to the memorial design are revealed, the reaction of the jury is brutal. The members cannot come to believe that the winning design is by a Muslim architect. As they try to process the name of Mohammed "Mo" Khan, the Governor's representative reaction is unsettling. He goes, "It's a goddamn Muslim!" (TS 19). Suspicions and speculations about the likelihood of Mo being "problematic" and a "terrorist" come thick and fast. The paranoia and the harsh judgments about an as-yet-unknown person definitely elicit sympathy and curiosity in the reader for the architect.

The narrative continues in a similar manner when immediately after, we are presented with the famed architect who, after all, turns out as not that scary. We meet Mo in an opening scene when, a week after the 9/11 attacks, he returns to

New York City from Los Angeles. Mo Khan gets pulled up for interrogation as he tries to board the airline. At the beginning of the questioning, Mo reflects on how the attacks altered his life majorly in just a week. As the investigation continued, Mo began to be more passive because he feared how terrorist acts influenced the attitude among the populace toward Muslims. The baseless insulting reaction of the jury to his winning the memorial design contest and Mo's fear of an adverse reaction to it plants the readers firmly on Mo's side even before his questioning begins.

During the interrogation after his first brush with the law as a Muslim in the new post-attack America, the questions put forth to him emphasize that Mo was suspected and subsequently taken aside for interrogation only because of his religious identity:

> 'Do you love this country, Mohammad?'
> 'As much as you do.'
> 'What are your thoughts on jihad?'
> 'I don't have any.'
> Do you believe you'd go to your heaven if you blew yourself up?'
> 'I would never blow myself up.' (31)

Mo's firm yet logical responses to a series of questions that are insensitive and insulting bring to light the absurdity of the nature of the questions put to him. Mo elicits sympathy from the readers yet again as the recipient of mindless suspicion, prejudice, and premature negative judgment. This is further emphasized by the fact that in the officer's own perspective, Mo has always been an upstanding and law-abiding person. When Mo comes home, he sees that the agents have passed through his suitcase thoroughly as it is in shambles. Nevertheless, when he sees the situation in his hometown, his wrath over the entire affair vanishes fast. Mo's feelings of anger and bitterness dissipate as soon as he understands the magnitude of loss and suffering all around him. A series of instances makes the reader perceives Mo as a fair and sensitive individual who does not deserve to be

unfairly treated and therefore deserves the reader's support and compassion. This sympathy is not solely aimed towards Mo as the characters of Waldman are "extremely representational" (20), as Arin Keeble remarks. As a result, the sympathy of the reader extends to genuine Muslims discriminated against after 9/11 in the United States.

At first glance, the world portrayed by Waldman seems to be filled to the brim with stereotypical representations of the following renowned archetypes from 9/11: the grieving widow Claire; Ariana, the establishment liberal; Alyssa, the exploitative journalist; Sean, the reflexive and knee-jerk reactionary, Paul, the political stoic known for his "neutral" stance and Mo, the 'believer' in Islam. Waldman here crafts characters who are fully identifiable in the 9/11 story and most definitely in the decades that followed the attacks. At the surface level, the text of Waldman may be seen as the personification or personalizing of many of those archetypes from the 9/11 period. This is a means of approaching, more specifically, the intricacy of the traumatic experiences that these characters undergo.

It can be safely construed that Laurie Vickroy was alluding to this aspect when she questions if trauma fiction may "make overwhelming psychosocial dilemmas available to individual readers by personalizing them" (xvi). The view intends indeed to emphasize several difficulties which have increased for specific individuals following September 11, namely the rise of xenophobia and racism against the Muslim population. However, Waldman's novel provides readers with more than just particular psycho-social dilemmas; it combines (suspected) views of specific entities and makes the individual identities of those who personalize them more complicated, suggesting an over-simplified approach to these issues that must be avoided. Waldman selects the proper forum for questioning the conflict between pain and cultural affairs – the 9/11 Memorial. As explained by David Simpson in his work on commemorative and cultural perspectives:

> Rituals of memorialization exist to assimilate these intense and particular griefs into received vocabularies and higher, broader

> realms than the merely personal. The routines of commemorative culture,whether private or public, exist to mediate and accommodate the unbearably dissonant agonies of the survivors into a larger picture that can be metaphysical or national-political and is often both at once. (123)

By their very nature, public memorials to mass disasters represent the sometimes fragile and always complicated relationship between survivors, the families of the victims, and the general public. Frequently, public monuments to mass disasters are intended to strike a balance between people's private grievances and the need for public remembrance. The competition between "hegemonic cultural memory" and "cultural counter-memory," that is, between master narratives and the many ways in which they dispute with one another, puts doubt on the memories of mass-media events and fatalities. It is an open question as to whether or not the monuments should go against the traditional impulse to include an event in history, exalt the dominant culture, and overlook anything that does not adhere to the established norms. Many arguments and contestations about the commemoration of events are crucial for the recollection process, as they question average assumptions which cannot be accurate and which are taken up by those in positions of power to promote specific agendas. In this environment, Waldman’s novel will contribute much to the discussions over the process of remembrance, dramatizing and vocalizing the different disputes and conflicts about the control of representation.

There is, of course, a connection between Waldman's concept and the events that unfolded in the actual world. In 2003, a rigorous jury competition was organized to choose a successor to the existing 9/11 Memorial, which is referred to as "Reflecting Absence" and was designed by architect Michael Arad. The entries were evaluated along with other significant figures in the political and cultural environment, also by Paula Grant Berry, who had suffered the loss of her husband in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In addition, the topic of the novel

draws attention to the dispute over the building of what nowadays is called Park51; an Islamic Community Centre located two blocks from the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan. There was a lot of media interest around Park51, a conflict that was first created by a group named "Stop Islamizing America," who misleadingly and falsely began referring to the facility as the "Ground Zero Mosque." On 21 September 2011, Park 51 was opened following years of debate, with media coverage in which family members of the 9/11 victims both supported and opposed the proposal.

Public monuments are intended to blend the memory of the events the community has as well as the memory of individuals relating to any tragic event. This is not a simple undertaking and speaks of the anxiety inherent in the culture of trauma for the person. This refers to concerns over the sensation of displacement or devaluation of one's experience in the midst of large-scale mass-mediated events, which can be termed cultural trauma identity displacement. This worry is particularly evident in the memorial construction relating to a big disaster and the arguments surrounding them, and the many voices and choices that definitely play a part in the debates over the monument decisions.

The Submission poses two concerns in dealing with the contradiction between the individual and the communal. Firstly, how can individual victims' demands become imbued by collective expectations? Secondly, how can we resolve a contradiction between communal identity and personal experience when it comes to commemorating such events? While Waldman admits that the assaults have harmed the concept of national, collective identity, she emphasizes the reality of a wide range of individual answers within the collective itself. There is an underlying worry about the arduous task of accounting for both personal injuries and societal wounds. How can we sanctify this tragedy in such a manner that we recognize both of them without quashing either if it has not only hurt individual lives but has also challenged the collective spirit or cultural identity of a particular group?

Therefore, the 9/11 memorial gives Waldman an unusual yet suitable setting for exploring these problems and conflicts. Waldman tries to study the subject from as

many points of view and view as feasible. In contrast to Waldman's article for The New Yorker, in the novel, she puts in: "In venturing into public space, the private imagination contracts to serve the nation and should necessarily abandon its own ideologies and beliefs" (TS 125). She appears to suggest a more sophisticated approach that examines more private reactions to September 11 in the context of an inevitable public event. The act of memory-making and memorialization, as James Young in his 2008 work, "The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History" proposes, should ideally be a continuous negotiation between all the groups of people whose lives are impacted and those whose lives are altered by what is here. Waldman's work shows that balancing individual and societal interests is a dangerous and challenging task, a process that does not allow quick results or satisfactory answers. Young seems to agree that the process of memorialization and design selection should evolve. He says about the construction of the 9/11 memorial:

> I would have us build into this site a worldview that allows for competing, even conflicting, agendas — and make this, too, part of the process. Rather than fretting about the appearance of disunity (all memorial processes are exercised in disunity, even as they strive to unify memory), we should make our questions and the public debate itself part of our memory work. Memory is, after all, a process and is everlasting only when it remains a process and not a finished result. (216)

We may wonder whether questions and public debate were included in New York City's 9/11 Memorial making decisions. In the novel, Paul, as the jury chair, recognizes the fusion potential of this commemoration as especially significant, as most Americans are vicariously living the trauma through survivors. The novel acknowledges this when it says:

> You couldn't call yourself an American if you hadn't, in solidarity, watched your fellow Americans being pulverized, yet what kind of American, did watching create? A traumatized victim? A

> charged-up avenger? A queasy voyeur? Paul and he suspected many Americans harbored all of these protagonists. The memorial was meant to tame them. (13)

The character Paul's philosophical thinking, which mocks the concept of 'solidarity' and refers to the variety of characters both within and outside the nation itself, encompasses many of the major topics of the novel. According to Paul, most of the country participated at the same time in the same action; namely, the majority of citizens observed on TV on the morning of 11 September 2001 the devastation of the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre. In addition to this, most Americans acquired substantially the same knowledge about events, filtered, sculpted, and influenced by popular ideas and clichés through the media. The Americans accomplished this in the same way and at the same time, so to say, "together."

Paul's ideas bring attention, on the one hand, to the easy formation of group identification in the setting of mass mediation. In fact, although the "country" includes "the traumatized victim, the charged avenger, and queasy voyeur," it highlights variety. On the other hand, as Paul notes, it is a "country" that is defined by "solidarity" (TS 13). Moreover, Paul's ideas imply that there is a plurality of this sort in persons as well. A single individual may have opposing points of view, numerous attitudes, and different perspectives for events within themselves depending on the time elapsed, the context, and the emotions felt. Waldman's characters may be representative of the clichés after September 11 on the surface, but actually, they are multifaceted and ambiguous. Even Paul, who symbolizes a sort of neutrality throughout the story, battles with his own confusing views toward his driver after 9/11, whom he had "known was Muslim but never dwelt on it" (13) and also added:

> …three months later, when a sorrowful Sami—was he ever any otherway? Begged to leave to return to Pakistan because his father was dying; Paul was relieved, although he hated to

> admit it. He promised Sami an excellent recommendation if he returned, politely declined to take on his cousin, and hired a Russian. (13)

The narrative situates characters in certain identifiable groups only to destroy those categories later via ambiguity, uncertainty, and struggle with identifying archetypal patterns. As it stands, Waldman's work might easily become an essential, relatively linear tale of argument with competition at its heart and archetypal characters as its cast. Every character would be allocated a place in the discussion, and readers are urged to do the same. The story would have been a blatant reinforcement of particular moral and moral principles by the evident victors and losers. But Waldman avoids such an over-simplified approach and confuses the argument by developing characters that vary between opinions and techniques.

The evolution of three characters, Mo, Sean, and Claire, in particular, is clearlynon-linear. Every individual fluctuates in different views, frequently without the expected moment of epiphany. In this tale, Mo was presented to the readers one week after September 11, 2001. Waldman puts in here an after-9/11 scenario that was becoming commonplace for a Muslim-American in a security queue in an airport following 9/11. Earlier that week, Mo also noted how his behavior had begun to shift since September 11, as if he were guilty by association:

> He realized that the difference wasn't in how he was being treated but inhow he was behaving. He had become gingerly, polite, careful to give no cause for alarm or criticism. He didn't like this new, more cautious avatar, whose efforts at accommodation hinted at some feeling of guilt, yet he couldn't quite shake him. Cloistered at the airport, he struggled to maintain his self-respect even as the avatar encouraged obsequiousness. (25)

Mo's ambivalence and diversity were immediately stressed throughout the

text. Mo wants to behave with dignity, defend his own civil rights and resist prejudice. He is always warned and gets self-conscious about his inner voice. Mo's common interest in representing his 'community' is replaced by his individual desire to maintain a low profile. There are several instances of Mo's fury at the apparent racial profiling of 'others' post 9/11 throughout the text. For example, Mo feels humiliated when he is not considered for an expected promotion: "Outside his body shivered out of proportion to the temperature, and there was no plane above to account for the roar in his ears" (40). Mo's wrath grows when he remembers his recent airport interview:

> The memory of the airport interrogation was unpacked, shaken out, stuffed full of straw to make it lifelike once again. There was no evidence Roi hadn't elevated Mo because he was a Muslim but none against it, either. If he had been singled out once, why not again? (40)

Mo seethes at the feeling of discrimination, his fury at being discriminated against, and the dissatisfaction that he was profiled in accordance with ethnic and religious criteria. All these are suitable and anticipated emotions. However, Waldman portrays Mo as a dissatisfied and outraged victim of racial profiling rather than defining Mo as one-dimensional. When his friend asked him how he would answer FOX news, "Should Muslims be singled out for searches at airports?" (40), Mo responds in a positive tone:

> So be it—I have nothing to hide. I'm not going to pretend that all Muslims can be trusted. If Muslims are the reason they're doing the searches in the first place, why shouldn't Muslims be searched?. . you're presuming that because I'm Muslim, I'll feel a certain way abouthow Muslims should be treated…It's patronizing that attitude. (41-42)

While Mo is unwilling to be viewed as part of a collective and seeks to keep a sense of his own independent personality. At the same time, he is also willing to stand up for all members of a specific group, provided some members of that group take responsibility. Instead of profiling Mo in line with mainstream expectations, Waldman considers it ambiguous and points to such discussions as having never been this straightforward, not even for the most impacted.

Like Mo, it is increasingly more complicated for Sean and Claire to be labeled. They seem at first simple to categorize. They both hold strong opinions in the argument over the memorial design and find themselves on opposite sides. Sean is against Mo's design, while Claire likes it. Granted, for a victim's family member as she is, Claire's first response to a Muslim winner is unexpectedly positive. Nevertheless, in her opinion, at least initially, she is determined to be fair but direct: "'So that's what you propose? That we quash it when the majority of us believed it to be the best design? That's a total betrayal of what this country means, what it stands for" (21). In defiance of a family member's predicted stereotyped reaction, Claire supports Mo's design while honoring the selection process and principles above the predicted debate around the architect's Muslim-American "identity." In contrast, Sean is shocked by Mo's design choices: "My mind closed toward Muslims the day they killed my brother" (TS 88).

After his first open demonstration against the design, however, Sean has contradictory notions about how he is expected to act in relation to the design. His feeling for an American Muslim winner is evident and is the result of shared identity, and he is dismayed and outraged for all families. The quarrel, nevertheless, alleviates Sean as an individual who "exactly needs the Sean ruder, which was recently lacking. Disaster had called his finest self, he had learned. He stumbled in his absence" (56). He feels like an impostor, though, very often. During one protest, Sean reddens when he doubts himself as having the same courage as those who sacrificed their lives on that dreadful day. Sean sometimes represents the classic reflexive knee jerk, the sort of guy who may decide to construct and name a gigantic hull in Manhattan. At other times he is represented ambiguously as a

prominent person whose misplaced and unwilling to know who he is, what he stands for, or in what direction he is moving. It is simultaneously defined by "collective" connections that structure it into a heroic and subjective association and see it as a failure and deception.

Amy Waldman is once again capable of focusing on ambivalence and insecurity by framing him according to that duality. In this regard, it is appropriate that the most famous protest act of Sean, the tugging of the headscarf of a Muslim woman, is characterized as an ambiguous and unclear act. The incident is part of an accident/part deliberate protest in contrast to the media characterization of the incident – Sean, the aggressive scarf puller, has a history of violence against women. Enraged liberals term the scarf incident a horrible prank, while some on Sean's side laud the deed as a gesture of courageous defiance. Neither, however, is an accurate depiction of what happened. Claire, like Sean and Mo, may be classified as a member of an archetypal group of widows after 9/11. Claire, unlike Sean, is less explosive and reactive and is selected because she is the safe pick for the selection jury.

The presence of Claire means the need for public engagement from a political point of view. It is not a safe or predictable jury choice, as it turns out. It, in fact, complicates the process by condemning judgments that are based only on public appeasement or complacency and strongly urges everyone to be open-minded. If anyone knows better than to seek group recomforts instead of doing as anticipated, it is Claire. Just like Mo, she does not match her views immediately with her role in the prevailing narrative.

Despite her stubborn posture, in the beginning, Claire's viewpoint on the memorial design argument and her awareness of her own identity within that discussion are increasingly complex. In theory, the idea that the design selected should be accepted on its own merits and not rejected based on the designer's name or his presumed associations seems to be founded on moral, ethical, and procedural considerations. However, while she maintains that her perspective is the clear, honest response to the matter, the fact that she requires the "courage" to do so is especially recognizable: "Until he failed to express gratitude toward her, she hadn't

realized she was expecting it. He must have seen the Post column; must have some inkling of the courage it took to stand up for him" (115). He suggested, even gently, that Claire not only saw her stance as an apparent ethical decision but also as a unique, commendable approach. Even if they reject tradition as the most logical and proper way, they feel it deserves further praise, as though they are rewarded for doing the correct thing. Soon after this deceptive conversation with Mo, Claire becomes more and more unsure about her situation.

But a little later, Claire reconsidered her mind, conceding that the media had probably moved things forward as she began to question herself.When the jury gathers to decide, she is entirely ambivalent: "Claire had scaled to a longed-for view, only to find it vertiginous. Their backing of Khan, which she had sought so vigorously, now dizzied her" (236). This gets us to the most accurate metaphor of Claire' as a Russian matryoshka doll, which depicts conflicting identities in the whole person. As the emblem of their family, Claire's husband bought the dolls, having each member in a declining sequence. But Cal purchased three sets after his kid inquired why Daddy was the biggest doll so that each could turn around to be the largest:

> Claire now could create a matryoshka of just herself—Claire within Claire within Claire within Claire, all these different Claires, who just happened to look alike, seemed to rest inside her so that every argument, no matter how contradictory, found sympathy. Each time shethought she had reached the last Claire, the true and solid one, she wasproved wrong. She couldn't find her core. (35)

The matryoshka dolls attract attention not just to symbolize variation within the group but also within individuals. Although tragic occurrences might create new category identities such as victims, relatives of the victims, survivors, public figures, etc., they are not all identical and, in spite of their joint identities, do not necessarily hold the same views or views. In the context of 9/11, Waldman believes that the meaning is based on recognizable patterns, archetypal history, and known tropes of good and evil, heroes and villains, etc., The challenges caused by these occurrences

must be maintained in a more sophisticated and multiplied way. Neil Smelser, in his "Epilogue: September 11, 2001, as Cultural Trauma," also agrees in his epilogue: "In a word, we need to adopt a more complicated view of the contrapuntal relations between the positive and negative and between the heroic and the tragic in the theory of collective trauma" (281-82).

Waldman's novel also promotes Michelle Balaev's trauma theories, which support multiplicity over singularity, and stresses how important context is when we look at the effects of trauma and the often-important role played in determining its impact on individuals by one's interiority and contextual background. Michelle Balaev, in "Trends in Literary Trauma Theory," claims that "the response of an individual to a potentially distressing occurrence partly dependent on past and contextual experiences oscillates unavoidably from private to public meanings, from personal to societal perspectives" (153).

The Submission argues that typically this oscillation creates more questions and more ambivalence than certainty and answers. Claire's posters at Sean's rally, for instance, show this ambiguity graphically, in which her face is represented as a question mark. Even Claire acknowledges afterward that the representation is not completely inaccurate. The demonstration ends with Asma's death. As an illegal immigrant whose husband was murdered on September 11, Asma symbolizes those categories who have been hurt and belong outside the established and acceptable group. Indeed, Asma's trouble throughout the entire narrative is to find a means to honor the death of her spouse in a culture that denies his very existence. The United States government and other organizations, however, only discreetly recognize Asma as a wounded group, and the family of other victims like Asma's has not been given the same attention or prominence. Asma thus acts as an alternative vision to collective identity; she symbolizes another viewpoint of 9/11 that, in the prevailing public narrative, had been suppressed or ignored.

However, though Asma may first seem at the outskirts of the wounded collective and not of any official capacity belonging to the wounded culture, she later in the novel represents a distinctly steady and alternative stance on the problems involved. In other words, Asma is everything but unequivocal. Contrary to Mo, Sean, and Claire, Asma is really one of the rare figures in the novel that takes solid positions:

> I think a garden is right,' she says at the much-anticipated public hearing, 'because that is what America is — all the people, Muslim and non-Muslim, who have come and grown together. How can you pretend we and our traditions are not part of this place? Does my husband matter less than all of your relatives? (231)

Asma praises Mo's design, stating that Mo's Garden honors the varied objectives and identities and therefore becomes a suitable alternative rather than trying to quell or dismiss multiple tensions in the wounded society. Asma's sponsorship of the Garden as a monument to opposing ambitions within the national collective indicates that "all memorial processes are exercised in disunity, even as they strive to unify memory" (Young 216). A number of reactions are received as a result of Asma's speech at the demonstration. For example, Sean gets affected and starts feeling compassion for the other side. Asma's impassioned speech also gains her sudden celebrity status. She even receives a phone call from the representatives of the star talk show host Oprah Winfrey about the possibility of her appearance in a segment of the show. Unfortunately, Asma's killing ends all such prospects.

Amy Waldman closes her tale without identifying any apparent winners or losers instead of making use of the end of her story in order to moralize the rights and errors of what happened and to denounce those guilty for Asma's murder. Mo's concept for the 9/11 monument does not work on a final humorous switch-back but is nevertheless commissioned and erected as an independent garden for the wealthy Muslims outside the country. A transcription of passages from The Qur'an is used

instead of the names of the victims. It is a mark of sarcasm, satire, and comment on the intricacy of the circumstance that what was meant as a place for public commemoration turns into a private enterprise. No solution is clever or satisfactory. So, Waldman remains committed to issues of plurality, ambiguity, and complexity even at the conclusion of the story and fiercely resists easy answers, clear explanations, and desirable results. Like the *Falling Man* from DeLillo, Mo "underlines that evil goes between us, waiting to strike unless we keep our eyes open" (FM 59). So, he supports the "See something, say something" (TS 95) campaign by the United States Homeland Security in response to the bigotry and damage to Arab and Muslim communities in the aftermath of 9/11.

At the start of Mo's narrative, Claire, a liberal 9-11 widow, supports him, but she wonders briefly why he included the Gardens in the memorial design. This change from confidence to suspicion occurs when Claire meets Mo for the first time. Mo realizes that Claire awaits him to thank her for her support and assistance. But Mo is reluctant to do so as he has grown defiant and combative after the suspicion and abuse directed at him post the attacks and also the revelation of him being the winner of the memorial design competition. Claire, on the other hand, begins to assign new meanings to things she would not have realized otherwise, and this contributes to her suspicion. When she sees Mo's photograph with the judges taken during the event, she observes everyone's dull faces and contrasts it with Mo's smiles.

It is suggested to the reader that the aggravation and uncertainty experienced by Claire are unwarranted as Mo's focalizations make it evident throughout the story that no reason exists for anyone to distrust him. Mo's smile obviously shouldn't start any skepticism, and the readers are firmly placed on his side as Waldman helpfully depicts the story behind his smile for the reader: "Smile, the photographer called out. From reflex Mo did" (TS 144). The readers are not only aware of Mo's feelings but also understand how much he sympathized with the September 11 victims and their families. He was also quite conscious of the resentment he had actually provoked in their midst. It is only through the New York Times that all of hell breaks free about the Islamic influences of the garden in the memorial design. Mo's Garden is about to be branded a paradise for the martyrs,

threats begin to come up, and demonstrators and reporters patrol outside his flat.

Claire's suspicions go deeper as she meets Alyssa Spiers, the ruthless journalist who provides her with false information that Mo is going to threaten the American embassy when he reaches Kabul. Claire can no longer give up her reservations about Mo after her conversation with Alyssa, and she begins to gradually withdraw her support for Mo's design. Claire begs Mo to convince her that his design has nothing sinister in it, but he refuses to explain his plan since, according to him, the only reason anybody asks these questions and accuses him of having sinister designs is because of his faith. Claire and Mo sat up to try to fix the matter close to the end of the novel, but they were still unsuccessful. Claire wonders whether the Garden is a paradise for the martyrs, and Mo refuses to respond. Mo has had enough and tells Claire:

> How would you feel if I justified what happened to your husband by saying it wasn't about him but about his nationality—his country's policies— damn shame he got caught up in it, that's all—but you know, he got what he deserved because he paid taxes to the American government. I get what I deserve because I happen to share a religion with a few crazies? (348)

Mo points out that associating him with terrorists because they share a religion is as ridiculous as stating that the victims of September 11 were held responsible for their destiny because of the conduct of their government. The logic in Mo's argument is indisputable, but for Claire, his words are nothing short of blasphemy. She is shocked and hurt beyond measure. "The words seemed to strike the fragile bones of her ear, even as she wasn't exactly sure what he had said: she had been thinking and listening at the same time, which made it hard to hear" (347). Claire feels betrayed by the one to whom she had shown so much support. She feels extremely hurt, and her confidence in Mo's good nature is shattered and is now convinced that perhaps Alyssa Spiers was all along right in her assessment of Mo. "But this, at last, had to be what he really thought. It pained her, sickened her … that Khan did see Cal as mere collateral damage in a war America had brought on itself, that he believed Cal,

generous, good-natured Cal, bore responsibility, guilt, simply because he was American." (348)

Claire is so offended by the mere mention of her husband's name that she refuses to care anymore for Mo's explanations. What infuriated her was Mo's refusal to adhere to the tendency of putting 9/11 victims on a revered platform. Claire places her husband firmly there, and any questioning of this position obviously leads her to blind hatred. The moment represents the theme observed throughout the entire novel in which the relative's of 9/11 victims and the general public reject any explanations that seemingly give a justification for the 9/11 attacks. The relatives of those who lost their lives to the attacks firmly believe that these kinds of arguments "dishonor" the hallowed memory of those killed on September 11, 2001, and devalue their own resultant trauma due to the loss of their loved ones. Claire's statement leads the reader to notice her doubts once more because she believes she can finally infer from his thoughts without actually listening to Mo's words. Here Claire is willing to " believe only the information that would confirm her suspicions" (79).

Nevertheless, throughout his narrative, Mo has consistently been shown to be a balanced and sympathetic character with no resentment against the US government or the American public. The reader is not expressly informed what the Garden means to Mo, but this should not lead to any form of mistrust for him, neither from Claire nor from the reader. There is nothing in Mo's words or behavior that leads us to believe that the Garden is a paradise for martyrs. However, the story offers Mo's design a further depth to its mystery. The narrative returns to Mo's journey to Kabul in the chapter before the Epilogue. This particular section of the novel gives the readers some additional information about Mo's trip to Afghanistan and shows that Mo actually visited a garden in Kabul, which is in many ways architecturally similar to the design he submitted for the competition. Tim Gauthier, in *9/11 Fiction, Empathy, and Otherness,* notes that this disclosure and the fact that Mo did not explain the full nature of this impact raises questions (211). However, Mo officially said that Islamic gardens are one of the influences of the design. So, Mo should not be suspected of his design since he saw a garden in Kabul.

Considering the type of turmoil Mo has produced, the fact that he doesn't want to share the truth about seeing a garden in Kabul is reasonably logical. As Baelo-Allué observes, Mo might have experienced peace and tranquility during his visit to the garden in Kabul, but we are none the wiser about any of his "secret motives" (178) behind his design; it is deliberate. Furthermore, it is true that Mo has purposely left unanswered most of the concerns regarding the significance of his design. This is not done though to make Claire or the readers distrust Mo, but simply to note that her doubts are unreasonable. It shows how prejudice may influence and distort people's interpretations.

The Submission, therefore, generates a precise antithesis to the work of Don DeLillo (in *Falling Man)*, which calls on the reader to grasp the clearly laid out ethical beliefs and actions of characters because of their trauma. This complaint is made again and again as Claire and the judges try to grasp the intricacies behind Mo's design. Claire's viewpoint has evolved, and she now brings Mo's design into question. Ironically Claire's change in position happens at the very time when the other judges are finally coming around and is at last willing to accept Mo's design for the memorial. Claire tries to appeal to them, claiming that Mo's design is also opposed by other relatives of the victims. When she asks what she should say to them, Maria, Claire's fellow judge is brutal: "Tell them to get over it, Maria said… To be blunt, I'm tired of hearing about the families. You wouldn't know from the way we're talking that an entire nation was devastated by this attack" (315).

Maria's extraordinary blunt words are nothing short of blasphemy. She has given a voice to words that, according to the general consensus, should not have been expressed. This relates to the unexpectedly "privileged position" that the relatives of victims have achieved in American society post-9/11. As Waldman puts it, "The words had broken some taboo, robbed Claire of some talismanic ennoblement" (316). Maria has cut ranks to go against what is prevalent in the predominant discourse surrounding 9/11 in America. As Martin Randall puts it - "the dominant discourse has sacralized the 9/11 attacks," and the nature of this

discourse has impacted the whole of 9/11 literature.

In *The Submission*, the reader gets to understand the trauma of the characters in the novel and, as David Holloway in his work *9/11 And The War on Terror*, "into the private agonies of the traumatized self … away from any meaningful contextualizing of 9/11 in public or historical space" (114). However, Waldman's work also diversifies the depiction of the traumatized Americans and the survivors and victims of 9/11. The victims depicted in most of the 9/11 novels are mostly Americans of the dominant white ethnicity. *The Submission*, however, has characters from possibly as many backgrounds as it is possible in a narrative. Along with the White Claire, who represents the majority, Mo is of Indian heritage, for instance, and Sean is of Irish origin. Asma and her dead husband are illegal migrants from Bangladesh. Sean and Asma represent the economically disadvantaged as well as those culturally different from the upper Middle class.

The Submission also employs several background characters to emphasize the question of inequity among 9/11 victims. This notably applies to the character of Asma, whose husband, a cleaner at the World Trade Center, was killed in the 9/11 attacks. When Asma gets an opportunity to speak about her dead husband, Amy Waldman allows Asma to express herself forcefully, "How could you be dead if you did not exist?" (88). Asma wonders with this query how her spouse cannot be recognized as a victim of 9/11 just because he was an illegal migrant. She observes one day a discussion on television on a right-wing talk show the popular commentary on the theme of the rights of illegal immigrants and bursts forth:

> The illegal immigrants who died came here seeking opportunity, but if they had stayed home, they would still be alive. Isn't that the greatest opportunity of all?' Asma ground her fists into the sofa cushions, furious that there was no one to speak for her husband, for the army of workers who cleaned and cooked and bowed and scraped and, when the day came, died as if it were just another way to please.(101)

The host's words and the efforts to remove Asma's spouse from history are justifications for her passionate reaction. Asma's views are not only critical of the treatment of immigrants but also bring to focus the dehumanizing of working people. Once again, this perspective mirrors the truth behind the assaults. Indeed, the illegal employees who were working in the Twin Towers are not acknowledged as victims, and they seem to be less important because of the social class they belong to. (Gauthier 214).

Even though the characters in The Submission resemble conventional tropes, they do not remain static. Instead, they question the prejudices against them as the narrative progresses. Asma, for example, is initially portrayed in the novel as a representative of a typically oppressed Muslim woman. Waldman makes her comment that she wanted to emulate her father and be brave in the face of adversity like him. But Asma soon comes to the realization that as a woman, she is not expected to be brave (137). In current US popular fiction, the persecuted Muslim lady is a widespread stereotype, according to Dohra Ahmad in "Not Yet Beyond the Veil: Muslim Woman in American Popular Literature" (105). Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin, in their work *Framing Muslims,* point out that this stereotype proliferated in media, entertainment, and politics throughout the post-9/11 period.

Asma, however, leaves this stereotype when she finds her freedom and voice at the memorial hearing and by giving expression to her thoughts. Asma finds her freedom in the "West," and yet, in reality, this model belongs to the stereotype of the downtrodden Muslim woman. Dohra Ahmad reminds us that the oppressed woman in popular fiction always has to be saved by the enlightened West. But the pattern is not so straightforward in Waldman's work. Asma finds her voice in the USA, but she uses it to show her adopted country the hypocrisy of their practice in relation to the values the country ostensibly upholds. At the memorial hearing, she tells the US public that the country she believed to be a liberal and tolerant paradise is, in reality, guilty of practicing discrimination and antagonism toward Muslims and immigrants in the country: "You should be ashamed!" (297).

Mo is a fighter and doesn't meekly take to unfair accusations and unjust judgments without fighting back. The general presumptions of Mo as dangerous in some manner are disproved, and as a result, this typical stereotype of a 'dangerous Muslim' turns out to be deeply flawed. From the beginning of the novel, Claire and Sean are portrayed as almost polar opposites in every aspect imaginable. And in an odd manner, this stays consistent throughout the progress of the story. "Claire is a rich, educated, composed, elegant liberal, while Sean is a poor, uneducated, impulsive, crude conservative. Yet, as the narrative progresses, they both move from these positions almost to the opposite ends of the spectrum." (Eikonsalo 91). After the initial support, Claire slowly starts to distrust Mo's garden and discovers that deep down, she is not the liberal she pretends to be, but she has been trying to be a liberal to emulate the values her husband cherished. Similarly, at the beginning of the narrative, Sean is virulently anti-Muslim. However, it becomes clear that it is out of compulsion and not out of conviction. Sean embraces an anti-Muslim stance only to fit in with his family.

Waldman makes Claire and Sean undergo a change in stance as the novel progresses toward its climax. Claire used to passionately protect Mo's design of the monument at the beginning of the book, but later she develops reservations. And Sean, after his initial opposition, decides to quit battling against the monument. The novel demonstrates that identities are not set but flexible by illustrating through the characters of Claire and Sean the tremendous transformation of these two personalities. *The Submission* is also against the pigeonholes of good and evil that are easily classifiable as Foer's and DeLillo's characters, illustrating how all these individuals are moving within a grey moral sphere.

Waldman's work not only does alter the patterns that were established in the early publications about 9/11, but it also reforms those patterns that were established in the reductive, oppositional discourse immediately following 9/11. It would appear that Waldman's purpose in designing these preconceptions was merely to debunk them and reinforce the idea that individuals cannot be categorized according to a

single defining characteristic. *The Submission,* in fact, illustrates the mistakes that people make while attempting to categorize people, and as a result, it provides support for the idea that identities cannot be conclusively determined just by observations made from the periphery. The intention is that anything itself has no significance before we give it one: a Muslim is simply a Muslim without any destructive ideas, and a garden is genuinely only a garden and not a tribute to religious martyrdom arising out of religious fanaticism.

In the second half of the 20th century, the Islamic movement in the West was established in an effort to develop and translate Islam into an integral political, economic and social order. This deliberate uprising of Western Islam was basically a response to the heightened western momentum in the direction of secularism. These combats led to disputes and confrontations between Western and Muslim communities. Western intellectuals saw Islam as a danger to the West and viewed it via the dominant rhetoric under the backdrop of the prevailing emotion of the fear of Muslims. Fear of the Muslim community is generally related to a built-in dread of Islam in America and Europe, and the rise of the Muslim population in these countries is seen as a cause of growing social and political concern.

The 9/11 event was such a significant historical breakdown that it exacerbated the perception of the fear of Muslims in western minds in particular and among the masses worldwide. The world continues to evolve daily, but it's extraordinary how it evolved rapidly following 9/11. On the historical date, the United States was traumatized, while Muslims and Islam were hurt as well, albeit in a very different way. The Americans started to question American Muslim citizens' loyalty after the occurrence. The most severe verbal and physical crimes against Islam and Muslims have been practiced and justified as a battle of "Us vs. Terrorists." The development and growth of neo-orientalism led to easy classifications like the belief that the majority of Muslims are, in fact, Islamic fundamentalists. They also contend that these Muslim fundamentalists believe in ideologies opposed to the concept of freedom and democracy, contemporary liberal and secular ideals and values cherished by the west.

According to Scanlan, after 9/11, a public dread of Muslims and Islam was created in the west by literary figures, the press, and politicians. A terrorized image of Islam was not only presented in T.V dramas and popular culture but also in the post-9/11 novels and in political statements given by some military and civil leaders in the post-9/11 discourse. These statements enhanced the public outrage towards Muslims and Islam in American society. According to Chris Allen in his work *Islamophobia* :

> Fear of the Muslims is an ideology that is similar in theory and purpose to racism and other such phenomena that supports negatively evaluated meaning about Muslims and Islam in the contemporary setting. Subsequently, it has influenced upon social action, interaction, and so on, shaping and determining understanding, perceptions, and attitudes in the social consensus – the shared languages and conceptual maps – that inform and construct thinking about Muslims and Islam as Other. (71)

It is not confined to open and direct links between power and dominion; but to the less open and ordinary interactions of power that are found in our daily lives, which may be quite difficult to distinguish between what is genuine and what is plainly not. The pre-judication against Muslims and Islam in political, economic, and social realms, as well as against Muslims as instigators of violence, is fairly clear from these exclusionary behaviors - the unfavorable position of Muslims. The processes of fundamentalism, exclusion, distribution, and intentionality are crucial fundamentals for understanding and explaining via Fear of the Muslims as an ideology, influencing Muslim lives and everyday experiences in Western social spheres.

The fear of Muslims contextualizes Muslims and Islam as excluded at the societal borders, whether socially, politically, or economically, or due to lack of knowledge and due to prejudice. The fear of Muslims does not always show in violence and reprisals at the administrative and political level, but more precisely, in

the beliefs and prejudices of fellow citizens and is also embedded in the less explicit but daily power relations we experience in day-to-day life as exemplified here in *The Submission* by characters like Mo and Asma. Therefore, the fear of Muslims is undoubtedly not a phobia but rather a convenient label for those social interactions that maintain and reinforce meanings that suit perpetuating excluded positions of Muslims in western contexts.

In *The Submission,* the fear of Muslims in America is obvious from the spurious claims and harsh words to characters like Mo and Asma. Throughout the narrative, the dread is palpable in fear of the unknown in general and for Islam in particular. Most American people are not sure of their own ignorance and prejudice when they realize that the winning architect Mohammad Khan's identity is thatof a Muslim American. When the news of a Muslim winning the competition was informedto the media, Mo instantly became the target of hostility and suspicion of the media. For example, The New York Times underlines the Islamic implications of the garden in Mo's design as a paradise for the martyrs. These ludicrous charges and deliberate misinformation plainly demonstrate the American dread of Muslims. The entire narrative might be sensed vividly in fear of the unknown and Islam in particular. In many areas, the ignorance and bigotry of most Americans that Mohammad's identity was the Muslim-American one is evident. Claire begs Mohammad to assure everyone publicly that his design has no hidden meaning, but he refuses to reply because, according to him (and rightly so), the only reason why everyone asks these questions to him is that he is a Muslim.

Alyssa Spier, the journalist, is ruthless to Mohammad Khan. He is identified as a political adversary, and Spier puts him outside of America. The New York Times, however, cannot confirm its allegation but finds out that she only moves to Khan's defense when she meets his business associate and buddy Thomas Kroll who reveals his support for the American architect. This entire episode demonstrates her biased reporting, with little substance in her article. As a Muslim, Khan's submitted design clearly does not align with the widespread feelings of nationalist woundedness. Khan is placed outside of what is considered truly American. He is excluded from this category of victims because, as a Muslim, he is more similar to

terrorists than to Americans:

> Khan faces the biggest challenge throughout the narrative not just because he was connected to the terrorists, he had to do it and explain himself; to overtly convince his fellow citizens of his good intentions and innocence, and being condemned by society at large at his refusal to do so. Declining to cooperate with a lawyer's strategy to—humanize, No, Americanize him. Khan thus refuses to "explicitly profess intense love of the nation, demonstrate how to share in its woundedness, too —repetitively engage in exaggerated performances of patriotism." (58)

Mo Khan's personal pain or the pressure, which he builds up over the week and then on the day, now seemed to worsen by the hour. But his emotions are not recognized as causing him any kind of suffering. Khan's agony as a consequence of his examination and humiliation is seen as inferior to the agony that the victims experienced. That is because of the exclusivism that developed in the post-September 11 political discourse in which trauma is valid only if you are a victim of the 9/11 attacks. Since Khan's pain is not caused directly by the terror attack, he cannot take part in the victimhood that should define his personality. This biased mindset prevails throughout the whole narrative, therefore exposing the problem of exclusivism or selective inclusiveness in American society. In Sean's conception of democracy, this is fairly obvious. In Claire's change of heart also, the growth of this exclusivism may be seen. As the tale progressively unfolds, the once-upon-a-time Mo's ardent supporter, Claire, also starts to give up on her support for Mohammad Khan's design.

When people claim many a time that they are against all forms of terror, they use violence against Muslims. It is considered an American patriotic duty to safeguard the country from Islamic-inspired attacks, and reductivism brings with it its own challenges. As Jack mentions about Claire's old boyfriend: "The attack made everyone afraid of appearing unpatriotic, of questioning the government, leaders. Fear has justified war, torture, secrecy, all kinds of violations of rights and liberties" (121).

Furthermore, the problem is not just the anti - Muslim organizations but the American Muslims themselves think that Mohammed Khan is not worthy of being supported. They resent him and believe that it is because of him that they are now referred to as – the enemy of the enemy. Consequently, they even demand that he should voluntarily retire from the memorial design competition. Claire and Mohammad, again close to the conclusion of the novel, attempt to address this problem, albeit unsuccessfully. Claire wonders whether the proposed design of the garden is indeed a paradise for martyrs. But Mo still adamantly rejects giving any explanations. Mo Khan is acutely aware that it is his faith that is the sole reason for all the reservations and suspicion, but he decides to stand his ground even in the face of Claire's pursuit of the matter.

9/11 exacerbated the fear of Muslims, and Muslims were discriminated against both verbally and physically, and Waldman portrays these instances repeatedly in the novel. Moreover, in certain situations, The fear of Muslims was certainly a pretext for racialism and xenophobia in general. There have also been other occasions in which those utterances were selected targets, especially in the American context, against distinctly perceived indicators of Islam. But anti-Muslim sentiments have typically arisen from several sources and have taken place in a number of activities based on sites already before the events of 11 September. The main focus of the representation of Muslims is on the male; the women are reduced to supporters.

In the novel *The Submission*, Mohammad Khan is questioned at every point of social contact. He had been residing in America since his birth. What more can be the proof of his citizenship? But as he had a Muslim name- Muhammad Khan. Even security forces who question him and are convinced of his innocence wish that he was not an America born. On his assurance that he was born in America and is an American citizen, they pose a series of questions to validate his love for his country America. When he guarantees that he loves his country as much as they do, they want to know his thoughts on jihad. These questions follow the pattern set by the dominant American ideology that has been formulated by the media and similar fundamentalists and racists among Americans in response to 9/11. Islam has been considered a religion that promotes violence. The practicing Muslim has been

presented as one who believes in blowing oneself and such violent acts as the sole gateway toward heaven. Furthermore, Americans are of the view that any Muslim, who has visited Afghanistan, is a Mujahid and a fundamentalist Muslim. The Americans' post-9/11reaction treated the Muslim communities as those:

> …who are perceived as self-separated, not just by culture but by religion too, a political religion, with its own system of laws and rules of social conduct and sanctify oppressions – a fundamentalist religion of the Book – stuck in the Middle Ages, untouched by time or place – forever waging jihad against the unbelievers. (Fekete 128)

The situation relating to the increased security measure targeted against Muslims was a direct result of the incident of 9/11. The security uncertainty led to the increased suspicion and discrimination of the Muslim community in the form of fear of the Muslims, resulting in direct and indirect physical and verbal assaults, where Muslims had to constantly prove their innocence against a broader socio-political discourse that labels them as would-be terrorists. In *The Submission,* we see that most Americans consider that those who have any association with Afghanistan and are Muslims are undoubtedly terrorists. This shows the collective wounded situation of the American masses. As America is a capitalist-oriented country, the worst enemy of America has been communists and socialism from Russia. We see that since the incident of 9/11, Russia is no more considered the primary threat to America. Islam and Muslims have been raised to the status of the worst enemy after the failure of communism and socialism. Consequently, Islam and Muslims are the easiest social target of American racism and violence.

4.3. Trauma and Commemoration in *The Submission*

Memorials have always contributed to the consolidation of national identity but have also served as a vehicle for the dominant narrative. People are in constant contact with their surroundings, especially with the buildings and constructions around them and especially certain iconic monuments that define a city, like the Twin

Towers of the World Trade Centre in Manhattan, New York City. These attachments, however, develop only gradually and organically. Therefore, it is inevitable that the unexpected destruction of the World Trade Centre spawned a variety of narratives of trauma and suffering.

The connections between people and places depend on one another. People constantly interact with their surroundings, objects, and individuals around them. This interaction happens even when people are not conscious of it. This is a dynamic interaction that occurs naturally and seamlessly. Similarly, the notion of the connection between the city and the individual is based on what may appear unimportant, but this sets values and impressions on individuals who become deep over time. Walter Benjamin, in his work *Illuminations,* describes this approach to an architectural context as being appropriated or in quasi-ownership:

> Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception — or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building. On the tactile side, there is no counterpart to contemplation on the optical side. Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit. As regards architecture, habit determines to a large extent, even optical perception. The latter, too, occurs much less through rapt attention than by noticing the object in an incidental fashion. […] For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation. (233)

Structures transmit emotional bonds for Benjamin. This process is accomplished through time, habit, and the contribution of memory. The essential collection of memories through habitual familiarity cannot take place without a lived experience that may equally be called ‘usage.’ The individual’s bodily presence is

required for a process of appropriation in a specific context. Neil Leach reflects Benjamin's opinion when he applies Benjamin in his paper on the link between identity and architecture after 9/11:

> These appropriations are reinforced by habit. Here memory plays a crucial role. Over a period of time, the sensory impulses leave their mark, traces of their reception. These traces are themselves not forgotten but constitute a type of archive of memorized sensory experiences that constitute our background horizon of experience. (Neil 79)

The effects and relevance of time cannot, therefore, be dissociated from locations that are remembered as they produce what is known as experience and so build a sense of space through a lengthy acquaintance with them. In other words, through a large store of memories, a person's sense of ownership of public or common space in or immediately outside certain structures is internalized. Whereas the person resides in the city with its urban sprawl, in the case of the cities, it has a position within which the relationship doesn't seem to signify much in the first stage. Elizabeth Grosz states in *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* that "People build towns. Cities are reflections, projections or human efforts. For these beliefs, bodies are often subservient to the self-awareness as just an "instrument" of subjectivity. The city is a product of the intellectual and reflective potential of consciousness and not just of the muscles and the energy of the body" (115).

The city plays a significant role in societal development in the sense that it presents a body-like mission in its presentation of architecture. It provides the space that architecture completes by its presence. The city plays a big role in societal development by affording individuals a range of public or communal architectural sites, which they may collectively wish to appropriate as if it were its mission to weld them into a single body of citizens. The city inevitably exists and acquires its distinctive character owing to the presence and contribution of the individuals who inhabit it. In a quasi-reciprocal process, the activities of the individual city-dweller

contribute to his or her subjective impressions of the city. Over time that subjectivity helps the individual to gain experience and knowledge as they start to become familiar with the urban environment either as a growing child or a newcomer.

If individuals were questioned about the significance of the Twin Towers in the year 2000 and if they were asked again in the year 2010, there is no doubt that there would be a significant variation in their replies. Despite the fact that they originally stood as symbols of "American power, the importance of capitalism, and phallic masculinity," they are now most often known as the location where over three thousand people lost their lives on September 11, 2001. The space is particularly significant for New Yorkers who were there at the time of the attack or who suffered the loss of a loved one in the area of the wreckage that is now known as Ground Zero. Although in the past.9/11 exacerbated and amplified the already potent symbolism associated with the World Trade Center skyscrapers, which had been assigned a significant amount of recognition due to both their financial and symbolic significance.

The loss of the iconic towers is reflected both in real life and fiction as an event that caused a great change in both the outward appearance and inner feel of Manhattan. In one of the (real life) stories in *110 Stories*, the degree of attachment to the towers is expressed as follows by a witness who saw the aerial assault happen from his flat:

> Those twin towers were my landscape, my navigational points, my night lights. I write, staring out the window, depending on the fixedness of the landscape to give me the security to allow my thoughts to wander and my imagination to unfold. Now, I am afraid to look out the window, afraid of what I might see. (*Stories* 151).

Art Spiegelman is one of the millions of witnesses who have expressed similar feelings of disorientation, adding that ‘those towers had been our taken-for-granted neighbors, always picture-postcard visible a mile south of our front stoop’

(qtd. in Versluys 991). People in New York were indeed always attached to the Twin Towers, but the degree of the attachment increased as sharper awareness associated them with the heroic efforts to save fellow citizens initially at a local level and then throughout the nation. In the aftermath of the attacks, the consequences were varied because whenever the routine is disturbed and the familiar appearance of any given space is altered, problems ensue, occurring in the psyche as much as in the physical world:

> In the aftermath of September 11, the transmission of traumatic feelings through aesthetic means — as it occurred, for instance, through the televised coverage of the World Trade Center collapse — conferred victim status to the nation as a whole. This view of trauma was one of many factors in the development of a new national myth, one that drew from therapeutic discourse to suggest that prior to the attacks, the United States was itself a fully constituted whole until it endured an unexpected and unidirectional assault from outside which spun it into chaos, the chaos it could only recover from by restoring its integral — and identical — wholeness. (Rachel 64)

It is essential to remember while discussing the possibility of constructing a memorial at Ground Zero that it becomes imperative to fill the vacant spot left by the collapse of the building as quickly as can be done since, sooner or later, people will inherently need it: "Building is not just a matter of office space and revenue. It is also a basic human impulse, a means for imagining an ordered universe" (Solomon 44) and the situation that was experienced in Lower Manhattan can be considered similar. Soon after the attacks, a large number of psychologists published articles claiming that what the American nation had been through would result in trauma, either in the immediate aftermath or in the long term. Reviewing the situation retrospectively in 2008, John A. Updegraff et al. comment:

> The attacks of 9/11 provided an unusual opportunity to examine the predictors and long-term consequences of meaning-making among

> individuals coping with a collective social upheaval. Although a vast majority of Americans were not directly exposed to the attacks, the largely symbolic threats that the attacks represented (unpredictability, the possibility of war and future terrorist attacks, loss of security, and threats to the "American way of life"); all challenged fundamental assumptions most Americans held about both national and personal invulnerability. (711)

Although Waldman devotes fewer pages to flashbacks or characters' nightmares, it is clear that the public has been influenced by the pain. As a result, what some of the characters have gone through, particularly Claire, Sean, and Asma, can only be described as trauma. The characterization of one of the jury members, Paul Rubin, in particular, reminds the reader of the novel's painful substance while also bearing resemblances to the predicament of many individuals in both reality and post-9/11 fiction. The trauma sufferers' understanding that the seemingly unreal tragedy to which they were subjected did really happen is depicted in the novel's first few pages:

> The trauma, for Paul, had come later when he watched the replay and pledged allegiance to the devastation. You couldn't call yourself an American if you hadn't, in solidarity, watched your fellow Americans being pulverized, yet what kind of American did watching create? A traumatized victim? A charged-up avenger? A queasy voyeur? Paul andhe suspected many Americans harbored all of these protagonists. The memorial was meant to tame them. (13)

Gilad Hirschberger describes the term collective trauma as "psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society." As American society tried to make sense of the 9/11 tragedy constructing a memorial is one of the ways in which the collective trauma felt by the citizens of the United States is expressed. There is a link between trauma and monuments, as one of the characters, Paul, observes in *The*

Submission. He believes that the new memorial framework will assist folks who are having difficulties figuring out what has truly happened and whether or not this tragedy has affected their identity. Despite the fact that he may be aware that it does not provide a comprehensive solution to the problem, Paul appears to support the notion of a monument that will provide relief to many individuals who are now suffering. At the very least, seeing a physical representation of the memorial will force them to confront their memories and realities.

Memorials are visible expressions that aid people and citizens in reconciling with their history. As previously noted, citizens in Manhattan pushed for a memorial on the Ground Zero site, and Waldman addresses the same problem and the resulting complexities here. The protagonists in The Submission, like their real-life counterparts, need the presence of a monument to be reminded of the tragedy on a regular basis in order to accept it and leave an imprint on history. The majority of the jury members who oppose the Garden project in the novel believe it is not an appropriate memorial, which they believe should be "a national symbol," a historical monument. It should be a way to ensure that anyone who visits – no matter how remote their connection to the attack in time or geography is – understands how it felt and what it meant to the nation.

Waldman, in a way, provides information on the psychological climate in the United States by invoking pain and trauma in the novel. Sean, who lost his fireman brother in the assaults and is having trouble both surviving the grief and witnessing the unidentifiable site of damage, mentions the so-called site of destruction on the following pages. Waldman's allusion to firefighters inevitably recalls what happened on 9/11 and seems to suggest an authorial intention to highlight the intensification of nationalism after the attacks. Sean reimagines the pain and difficulty that his brother experienced in the rescue work while, at the same time, he was there in the hope of savinghis sibling. Waldman has made little attempt to avoid addressing the nationalist aspect of reactions to the events; in fact, her allusions to trauma seem to tacitly embrace the nationalist message.

As a result, Waldman, like many psychologists, once again emphasizes the psychologically unpleasant experience of Americans in general and Manhattan residents in particular to the 9/11 attacks. Waldman creates the idea of persons who are a delayed tragedy through the characters of Paul and Sean. While Paul struggles to find the right words to describe what many others have gone through, Sean can't get the pictures of those days out of his head. Despite their opposing viewpoints on the monument design, these two individuals appear to have a transformed vision of themselves and the sort of American they formerly thought they were, as they both see that "meaning fell with the towers." The author's style indicates that their particular kinds of trauma are reflected countrywide and have been felt collectively, causing Americans to become more distrustful and each person to have distinct concerns.

Some psychologists in the United States, like the novelist Waldman, have voiced concern about the plight of survivors. On the tenth anniversary of the events, some psychologists, historians, and sociologists responded to the topic, "Has 9/11 affected the American psyche (in contrast to J. F. Kennedy's assassination)?":

> Unlike the past national traumas of historical significance, the collectivefear that 9/11 has given rise to remains palpable. (Brian A. Monahan, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Marywood University, DE) The definition of post-traumatic stress disorder requires you to watch somebody else trapped in a life-threatening situation. Which, of course,millions did on TV. And the images of the smoking towers have left memories that will not fade. The mass and scope of this tragedy are just too big to get over quickly, and it has already left a huge impact that will remain for several generations. It has become part of who we are as Americans today. It's part of our memory, part of what we feel, and part of our DNA. And so, ten years later, we really are experiencing PTSD on anational scale. (Prashant Gajwani, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Texas)

When US Muslim architect Mo Khan is questioned at airport security, another scenario in the narrative freely informs the reader about the broader ramifications of that day. Despite the fact that the architect does not communicate his thoughts to the cops, Waldman says that they are no different from the other characters' strong emotions throughout the catastrophe. What we get is Waldman's interpretation of Mo's dialogue with the cops, with her impressionistic but impartial comments offering sympathetic insight into the Muslim's thinking and behavior during the attack.

Despite being far from the disaster, Waldman depicts her character as someone who wishes she could be there. Despite the resistance to the architect shown by his fellow residents, the author includes him in the country's overwhelming sense of unity. As a result, he wants to use his abilities and knowledge as a successful American architect to help the country. As a result, in addition to his horror at what has occurred, he has obviously experienced self-realization in terms of a feeling of place and worth for the demolished skyscrapers:

> What was it he was trying to see? He had been indifferent to the buildings when they stood, preferring more fluid forms to their stark brutality, their self-conscious monumentalism. […] Now he wanted to fix their image, their worth, their place. It was nostalgia he felt for them. A skyline was a collaboration, if an inadvertent one, between generations, seeming no less natural than a mountain range that had shuddered up from the earth. This new gap in space reversed time. (29)

Mo expresses his thoughts on the site of destruction as an architect whose societal function is to comprehend and experience what a structure signifies and what kinds of feelings it generates. After the buildings vanish, he understands that they were vital contributions to New York and that they were really uniting icons of the city. However, now that they are obscenely lacking, he wants to use his initiative to assist others in filling this massive gap:

> A walled, rectangular garden guided by rigorous geometry. At the center would be a raised pavilion meant for contemplation. Two broad, perpendicular canals quartered the six-acre space. Pathways within each quadrant imposed a grid on the trees, both living and steel, that were studded in orchard-like rows. A white parameter wall, twenty-seven feet high, enclosed the space. The victims would be listed on the wall's interior; their names patterned to mimic the geometric cladding of the destroyed buildings. The steel trees reincarnated the buildings even more literally: they would be made from their salvaged scraps. (4)

According to the reports, Mo Khan's monument design incorporates complex geometric designs. His choice of steel trees most likely represents the material's strength and indestructibility, as well as a reminder that, though the demolished buildings were intended for future generations, the trees will now stand to represent their everlasting memory as they connect the subterranean and above ground. They alsoserve as great memorial artifacts, integrating parts of the structures. In the same way that the debates about the names on the monument surfaced in real life when the design ideas by Lin, Arad, and Walker were submitted, Waldman's novel does not shy away from describing the intricate details of such conflicts in fiction. Obviously, this appears to be one of the major topics on which Waldman wants the reader to concentrate. Despite the importance of other issues, such as patriotic ideals and religious diversity, Waldmanbegins by focusing on names.

Claire considers painting to be a therapeutic tool for dealing with trauma. Claire retaliates to the comments of Ariana, one of the jury members, that in the appropriate memorial, the names won't be the cause of the emotion by retaliating that "They will for me," and attempts to explain what she has gone through. "They'd all lost, of course … lost the idea that their nation was invulnerable; lost the city's most identifiable landmarks; maybe lost friends or acquaintances" (41), the third-person narrator continues after Claire's remark. But she was the only one who had lost her spouse. Claire has a lot of common sense when it comes to memorial conversations.

Despite being heartbroken at the loss of her husband, Claire advises the jury members to remain impartial while still empathizing with Ariana and others in similar situations.

> *The Submission* emphasizes competing concepts of entitlement as the impetus for discriminating between privileged empathetic perspectives and their dispossessed equivalents as individuals strive to legitimize their post-traumatic identities at an increasing temporal distance from the incident. Characters in the story wrestle with the complex subject of who has the strongest claim to the memorial and how their right toit can be justified and evaluated.

The Submission by Waldman sheds light in this manner on the challenging work of representation involved in the design of monuments. In addition to the individual's proximity to the traumatic event – be it physically, temporally, or ideologically – the criteria for inclusion that are fostered by pervasive, public narratives on grief include familial connection, fiscal or institutionalized power, and more abstract notions of moral privilege and cultural ownership. These criteria are all fostered by narratives on grief that are prevalent in the public sphere.

As a dysfunctional post-traumatic community, these networks of identities accept their shared empathic terrain while ferociously disputing it. This is in contrast to the creation of relative deictic empathic postures, which would be the opposite approach. In addition, the authenticity of the traumatic event as a singular and pivotal center is compromised, and this damage is compounded when an effort is made to recreate the initial pain by erecting a monument in the exact location of the original tragedy. The Garden will be constructed on the site of the catastrophe, turning what was once the gravitational center of the fallout into what may be a potentially centrifugal force for remembering and memorializing. As a consequence of this, two contradictory centers come into existence: one that is beyond the reach of the texts and puts the reader back in the middle of the immediacy and assault of the horrific event, and another that will evolve throughout the course of each story.

Through a sequence of ‘submissions’ that interrupt the course of each book, characters actively struggle to legitimize their identities and empathetic position by negotiating, manipulating, and differentiating states of victimhood. The literal submission to the memorial competition, Claire’s eventual submission to the expectations of her role as a widow, and the misunderstanding of the Islamic veil as a form of subjugation (to name a few) divide the novel’s cast into two combative groups:those forced to submit and those to whom submission is expected.

Waldman’s characters appear to reject empathic unrest as a means of healing and reconciliation, favoring patterns of separation, subordination, and hierarchy above constructive and emotional forms of empathy. Characters struggle for ownership of a terrain that has the capacity to undermine empathic structures and deictic models of memory and the remembrance of trauma within the unstable temporal field of the aftermath rather than attempting to appropriate the painful experience of others. Waldman’s characters are deeply entangled in the problems of portraying and remembering trauma with which the characters themselves battle in another echo of the empathetic doubling that this comparative type of text-translate analysis enacts. Waldman’s work is a fictional depiction of painful experiences and memory.

The immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, as well as the later attempts to express its lasting cultural and historical meaning, were united in treating the assaults as a collective and national tragedy. For some, the 9/11 attacks were an act of violence against the high gloss of American modernity and the advances in technology that manifested in objects of comfort and also of destruction. The American culture was all pervasive all over the world. Its reach transcended cultures, opposing religious values and geographic barriers, inviting awe and anger. The country was deeply aware of the hate and resentment that the spread of its culture generated. In spite of the ambiguity of such a term, ‘quintessential American ideals’ were portrayed as the principal targets of the terrorist attacks in a narrative that positioned the tragedy as a profoundly American tragedy.

In addition to these broad, public discussions of American identity, scholars have emphasized the importance of the harm done to the internalized creation of the American condition or psyche in the individual's private realm. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon had both immediate and long-term effects on the American psyche,' writes literary theorist Neil Leach, who believes the event "struck atthe very heart of the American psyche, because it was an assault on one of the very iconic references around which an American way of life has been for so long." (79) These narratives have contributed a conflation of private and public narratives of grief, identity, and belonging, that is relentlessly interrogated in *The Submission*. Conceptualized as a distinctly national trauma and as attacks against the very values or qualities that are intrinsic to an American image of nation and self, these narratives have contributed to the overall glossing of victimhood in the aftermath of 9/11 and a conflation of private and public narratives.

Critics have pointed to a general failure of literature, whether fictional or critical, as well, as Lucy Bond puts "properly differentiate between differing levels of exposure to loss, preferring instead to embrace the appealing vision of an America united" (750) by a national and 'collective trauma' in response to the creation and proliferation of a catch-all sense of victimhood in the aftermath of 9/11. Furthermore, these broad categories of identity persist long after the event, thanks to a widespread 'fascination with ideals of liberty and freedom [that] extends across 9/11's memorial culture and helps place stories of personal loss into a broader discourse firmly rooted in a nationalist sphere,' as facilitated by a widespread 'fascination with ideals of liberty and freedom [that] extends across 9/11's memorial culture, and helps place stories of personal loss into a broader discourse. The counternarrative to this image of memorial culture is enacted in the novel in the theoretically unlimited temporal field of the aftermath, permitting creative, literary interaction with concepts of distinction, commemoration, and entitlement.

Both the horrific incident and the monument, which would memorialize the tragedy into something concrete and permanent, are beyond the temporal purview of the texts. The latter only exists as a series of architectural designs until it is translated into an ornamental garden in the Middle East in the novel's last scene. Waldman's characters seek to achieve and exert domination as a method of taking agency from marginalized identities that the process of remembering and historicizing pain threatens with impotence. While some characters surrender, others strive to construct privileged empathetic positions from which others must negotiate subservient identities and accept "illegitimate" concepts of victimization.

As the immediate and lived experience of the traumatic event is completely missing in The Submission, the temporal field of the aftermath is crucial in framing questions of agency. Although causality and chronology are preserved by the narrative form of the texts, the traumatic event is never precisely represented or secured in the same linear timeframe in which the book participates. As a result, the temporal link between victim and event is disrupted, and Waldman creates an isolated microcosm in which individuals act and are exposed to the totalizing narratives and discourses of difference that have proliferated in the aftermath of the attacks. Amir Khadem sees the loss of individual action as a sign of the futility of individualism in the face of the discursive power of the many in one of the interesting scholarly analyses of the novel:

> Mo, Claire, and Asma, all within their own paradoxical conditions, try their best to escape the confining modes of thought that surround them, and each tries to do so by adherence to the social values they uphold, unaware of the fact that the problem lies in the incongruity of those values. (77)

Finally, each character must submit to their own forces of differentiation, exclusion, and prejudice, whether due to misguided political correctness or the reality of a timeline beyond the trauma and its immediate effects. Only Asma's death allows her to achieve an untouchable degree of victimization, surpassing the identification

hierarchies that strive to divide and stratify vicarious, voyeuristic, and infectious trauma experiences. Ironically, her attempts to gain a degree of agency and visibility in the public domain seal her fate. It is only when she is made visible that she is obliged to surrender to the terrain's totalizing mechanisms.

There is a feeling of spatiality in the novel's concentration on monuments, in addition to the recollection of horrific occurrences and the representation of characters with wildly disparate cultural origins. The body, memory, and mind all work together to create places where feelings like happiness and sadness are kept, and which, most of the time, show themselves in structures:

> Place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscapes. It is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts: places trigger memories for insiders, who have shared a common past, and at the same time, places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about themin the present. (Hayden 46)

The contemplation area, the remembrance of victims' names on the inner wall, and the usage of steel trees are all suited to the goal of a memorial as well as contributing to a marker of a historic event in their own ways. While the names serve to remind people of the World Trade Centre in real life, they also add to the legacy of personal recollections associated with the formerly massive corporate complex. At this juncture, Foucault's idea of heterotopia comes to mind, with its capacity to juxtaposition in a single actual site various places, different emplacements that are incompatible in themselves. Furthermore, because the monument in the novel is a Garden, it has the potential, as Foucault says, to convey "superimposed meanings."

For example, while some people may feel melancholy when they visit the garden environment, they may also feel angry, resentful, or even dream of peace. Furthermore, with the steel trees and a raised pavilion for contemplation, it becomes a rather 'sacred' space that might remind Foucault's explanation of sacredness by reference to the design of the traditional garden of the Persians, which was considered a sacred space that was supposed to bring together four parts representing the four seasons inside its rectangle. Following the thoughts of some of the novel's characters and the term "navel" establish a connection in some way since the term suggests the significance that the characters place on the monument. They presumably want it to be the center of attention as a national symbol so that the fateful day is etched in people's minds. The characters' expectations for the Garden memorial vary, but the most frequent one is that it should serve to heal, and they indicate that the memorial zone should be a location where diverse people gather together to feel what they once felt and remember the day for the rest of their lives.

The subgenre of the 9/11 books entered a new era with the publication of Waldman's *The Submission*. It presented a contrast from the established patterns that followed immediately in the wake of the 9/11 incident in terms of the themes, the portrayals, and the discourse these works followed. Earlier, the 9/11 discourse tended toward portrayals that were straightforward, respectful, and trauma-focused; however, Waldman's work departs significantly from this constricting tradition. Given that the majority of the readers' reactions to Waldman's work have been positive (Keeble 165), it would appear that in the second decade after the attacks, there has been a shift toward a more critical portrayal of the impact of the attacks and the inclusion of characters that went beyond the typical white victims and survivor's trauma narratives. *The Submission,* thus, reflects not only a shift in how the 9/11 attacks are portrayed but also a shift in how those depictions are received. Such a shift in values and attitudes may make the later decades a time of rewriting the portrayal of 9/11 in literature.

According to Waldman, the second-decade post the attacks should be the time for Americans to focus on Civil Rights rather than the stupefied and exacerbated conceptions of fear of Muslims. The loyalty of its inhabitants is still measured by their names in the United States. If an American citizen has a Muslim name, he is accused of being a terrorist or a terrorist enabler. As a result, such citizens are seen as adversaries of the United States. Claire, a character in the novel *The Submission*, is Waldman's spokesperson against the fear of Muslims. She claims that the names are only a record and not a gesture with hidden sinister meanings. Furthermore, we can observe how American culture has failed to incorporate Muslims into a unified society. As a result of the fear of Muslims, American culture has transformed from a pluralist cosmopolitan culture to a highly conservative racist monolithic culture. Only violence towards the targeted community can be predicted from such a society. The Muslim community is one of the groups targeted in the novel *The Submission.*

> Muslims have been observed attempting to normalize their presence in western societies in order to combat hostility and insecurity engendered by sensationalist portrayals of their identity in the media or political discourse. The character of Mohammad has demonstrated that Muslims are not always "passive victims of prejudice and securitization." They've also defied the prevalent assumption about theiridentity as possible terrorists by simply refusing to talk about it.

In the novel The Submission, Islam is not depicted as a monolithic and uncompromising belief or as a religion of isolated individuals who refuses to integrate. Waldman confronts the prevailing American and western ideological construction of Islam and Muslims as inferior and Western, and Christian ideologies as superior and civilized, through the character of Claire. Amy Waldman's work cannot be understood without a contextual understanding of the mood that existed in September 2001 and of post-9/11 literature, despite its extensive portrayal of the aftermath of an unidentified incident. With a narrative that revolves primarily around the contentious debates after the results of a memorial competition, the novel presents many views that encourage the reader to reflect on the assaults.

Trauma, space, and heterotopia are essential words to investigate since any monument is linked to architecture, history, and psychology. The story conveys the concept that what America went through was truly a worldwide event that left lasting psychological wounds, based on the subject of the design of a monument. Waldman is able to create a connection between the design of a memorial site and trauma, as well as draw distinct lines of trauma, by watching and drawing on her experiences. The notion of the garden and memorial structure's multivocality, which may be described using Foucault's concept of heterotopia, contributes to a better understanding of the event's international character.

The novels that came out in the initial years of the 9/11 attacks, to a large extent, reflected the initial reactions to the event – shock, horror, and confusion. It contains scenes of characters witnessing firsthand the destruction as it unfolded before them. As the characters started to process the impact of the event on their lives, it was clear that they were traumatized by the upheaval that the unprecedented incidents brought to their families. They had to undergo the process of dealing with loss and grief over an extended period of time, and the novels *Falling Man*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, and *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* deal with these issues.

Many works of fiction also tried to put in the trauma suffered by Muslims in America post the attacks. They had to suffer a "double trauma" – one of the attacks itself as they were Americans themselves (or immigrants who had assimilated into the American culture) and the other of suffering trauma as the targets of hostility through misunderstanding and suspicion. The characters of Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Salwa and Jassim in *Once in a Promised Land* are the fictional counterparts of these real-life American Muslims.

Interestingly Amy Waldman's The Submission has within its pages characters dealing with all the issues mentioned above. In Claire and Paul, we have grieving

relatives trying to overcome the trauma of the death of their loved ones. In Asma, we have the voices of those who are outside of the privileged whose grief was not recognized. And Mo is in part Changez of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in post 9/11 America. He, too, goes through the same harrowing experiences in American airports as Changez does and is humiliated through repeated interrogations. Even though none of the authorities get any clue of any suspicious activities, it seems as though they are already proclaimed guilty by association because they share the same Islamic faith as the hijackers of the 9/11 planes.

As the novel was published a decade after the attacks, it is appropriate and maybe inevitable that *The Submission* takes up the issues related to memorialization. All the incidents in the novel flow from the issues of constructing an appropriate memorial structure for the 9/11 victims. As it happened in real life, the process is not smooth and also not without controversies and passionate debates. The choice of the design and the suspicions of possible hidden meanings relating to Islam in the proposed memorial design evoke ferocious reactions. Amy Waldman has successfully incorporated all these disparate elements relating to individual trauma, the questions over the place of Muslims post the 9/11 attacks, and the process of collective trauma and memorialization.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The events that took place in the United States on the morning of September 11, 2001, had a monumental impact on society, political discourse, and the nation's connection with its ethnic, racial, and religious minorities in a way that was unparalleled by any previous event in the nation's history. It shattered the country's feeling of security, which had developed into an almost total perception of invincibility ever since the conclusion of the cold war. The United States became the unrivaled leader of the so-called "free world" as a direct result of its triumph against communism, which was evident by the disintegration of the former Soviet Union into multiple independent republics and also by the weakening of its other communist allies. The other nations put up somewhat less of a fight against this new global order. Of course, there was Afghanistan and Iraq to serve as a reminder that the US was still engaged in hostilities that were taking place in far-flung regions thousands of miles away and that had been going on for decades. However, the safety of the nation and the strategic interests of the United States seemed to be far more secure than they had been at any other time since the end of the Second World War.

The events of September 11 prompted a flood of literary reactions in the United States and other parts of the world. The first thing people did was write up their own personal experiences and share them. At the same time that people around the country were attempting to make sense of what had taken place, an outpouring of raw emotions took place in the form of poems and tales, both personal and community-based, which were shared across conventional media and on the internet. Soon enough, there was time for fiction to provide its point of view. Novels, short stories, and poetry were among the many works that were published during this period of time. The rest of the world, which was unable to remain immune from the

most significant political and media event of our times, participated in the discussion by providing their own fictitious literary interpretations. The canon on 9/11 was beginning to take form.

This research attempted to study how trauma resulting from the events of September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks are depicted in some select post-9/11 novels. The six works chosen for study have the 9/11 incident of the attack on the Twin Tower buildings of the World Trade Centre and its aftermath as the central theme. All the works have their action set in the United States. The novels selected for study are not chosen in the chronological order of their publishing. However, three books, namely Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country,* and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man,* were written in 2005, 2006, and 2007 respectively, i.e., in the years immediately following the tragedy. Two other works are by writers with multiple identities – the British Pakistani author and brand consultant Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and the Lebanon-born daughter of a Jordanian father and an American mother Laila Halaby's novel *Once in a Promised Land.* The former American journalist Amy Waldman's *The Submission* was the last one among the selection to be published. In order to obtain a critical understanding of the qualities that define a "successful" post–September 11 novel, a detailed look was taken at the fictional works.

In the first chapter, which is titled 'Introduction,' I have tried to place the attacks of September 11 in their proper historical perspective as we cannot make sense of the unprecedented nature of the events without taking their historical context into consideration. The political impact of the attack on the most powerful nation on the earth has undoubtedly had a profound effect on not just the American consciousness but also sent shock waves across the world. It set off a diplomatic and real war with soldiers on the ground in countries thousands of miles away from the US. Afghanistan became the primary target of President George Bush's "War on terror," and the world was being threatened into taking an absolutist position with the threat, "if you are against us, you are with them." Within America, there were enormous changes as well. The feeling of invincibility vanished somewhere between

the two planes hitting their intended targets. US military might and all the state-of-the-art weapons, including its nuclear arsenal, proved to be of little help against a group of people; who, fueled by religious ideology, were willing to risk their own lives in a mission of destruction.

This study next examined how the events of the destruction of the WTC have been portrayed in fiction with an overview of the themes of some 9/11 novels published all over the world before discussing some of the critical perspectives on the common themes and contents of the novels especially those published in the years immediately following the attacks. Since the objective of this research is to explore and analyze the literary representations of traumatic experience in the works selected for the study using some of the basic tenets of the Trauma theory, the chapter also discusses the origins and development of the Trauma Theory from the field of psychology and medicine to its application to the area of literature as Literary Trauma Theory. The introductory chapter also explains the research aims and objectives and the techniques that have guided this work.

The individual and personal trauma that people experienced as a direct consequence of being exposed to the events of September 11, 2001, has been a prominent issue of discussion in the literature that was written after the attacks. This thesis finds that Cathy Caruth's definition of trauma, which she expounds in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, History and Narrative*, encompasses the majority of the symptoms that trauma sufferers experience. According to Carruth, trauma is "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, the uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (11).

The characters of these works selected for the study are forced to confront the fallout of the terrorist events that occurred on September 11. They need some time to react to the catastrophe, and their response comprises "acting out" and "working through" the experience via a process that includes daily hallucinations and ritualized behaviors. The act of depicting trauma has resulted in the development of several distinct aspects of trauma, such as vicarious trauma and trauma corporeality,

which are both based on the experiences of first-hand and second-hand trauma sufferers. The core chapters of this work talk about trauma in its most general meaning, covering personal, national, cultural, and historical trauma.

This premise made it possible for me to carefully read the post-9/11 texts that were included in my thesis. These studies tell us that trauma should be viewed as a possible experience, and Cathy Caruth's observations serve as a jumping-off point for the presentation of a detailed textual interpretation of the works especially *Falling Man*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Once in a Promised Land*, and *The Submission*. The protagonists in these stories go through traumatic and unpleasant experiences in their personal lives, which are reflected in their behaviors and their perspectives on themselves and society.

The terrorist assault on the World Trade Center evokes feelings of horror and sadness as an experience of collapse, repair, and recollection tied to the shattered zone of traumatized, violated territory that is 'Ground Zero.' People throughout the world were left with an indelible mark due to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. But in contrast to the decontextualized televised war, photographs, or reports, the fully developed stories of sorrow that these characters are able to express have a context, a reality, and hence a reason for the reader to feel empathy for those who have experienced traumatic events.

By strategically positioning the characters and their painful experiences, authors like Don DeLillo, Jonathan Safran Foer, Amy Waldman, Ken Kalfus, Laila Halaby, and Mohsin Hamid provide the possibility for moral development via self-examination and self-determination. Even though the events of these novels take place in a variety of geographical areas in the United States, except for Mohsin Hamid's Changez, in which part of the action takes place in Pakistan, some of the protagonists in some works here, such as Keith from DeLillo and Oskar from Foer, are able to find a way out of the distressing setting. The authors have crafted intriguing narratives of complex survival dynamics in the aftermath of a national disaster. These tales do not

have satisfactory endings, but after their journey through the aftermath of a horrific tragedy, they find themselves in a much better setting than they were before at its commencement.

This study avoided focusing on the historical or geopolitical background and repercussions of the attacks in favor of depictions of a disturbed state of domestic life and deteriorating relationships. It does this by using literary representations of the 9/11 tragedy as its starting point. The characters of these 9/11 books taken for study exhibit evidence of the standard trauma theory assumptions. The experience of trauma victims here in these novels mixes representation and remembrance, and future images or experiences that make them recall the traumatic event and continue to make them feel uneasy.

The second chapter, titled ‘Trauma and Disrupted Domesticity’ has three novels taken for study, namely Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, and Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*. All these three novels have characters who have lost close family members, friends, and colleagues to the attacks or those who escaped being victims to the attacks by sheer luck. All these three novels portray the lives of White American families unsettled by the tragedy. Their domestic lives are terribly disrupted as they seek some solace and meaning in their lives.

All of these novels exemplify the definition of the term ‘trauma novels’ as a work of fiction that portrays a terrible sense of loss and fear for individuals and societies arising out of some negative experience. However, it would not be prudent to expect in literature the exact representation of a traumatic experience that a person might have undergone in real life. As Kali Tal pertinently notes in *Bearing Witness: The Literature of Trauma* that any “…accurate representation of trauma can never be achieved without recreating the event since, by its very definition, trauma lies beyond the bounds of 'normal' conception” (15). Dori Laub observes in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, the literary representations of trauma and the readers of trauma fiction share a “mutual recognition of a shared

knowledge" (Felman & Laub 64), and consequently, the readers of trauma fiction become "a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event" (57).

Memory plays a vital role in connecting the past with the present and helping people make sense of their experiences. It does seem that the speed with which witnesses are expected to grasp the events of September 11 is a barrier to memory archiving. The act of remembering in the background of events that are beyond the scope of immediate processing due to its unexpected and unprecedented nature is fleeting and fuzzy, and it is also connected to the culture in which it is articulated. Furthermore, it is continually mediated by the method in which it is portrayed. Memories are collections of the individual's and community's social and cultural ideas, political occurrences at the regional and national level, and even international events that maintain the creation and transmission of collective memory. The investigation of the literature surrounding 9/11 helps to deconstruct the trauma of individuals and communities. Additionally, it suggests that the scope of memory goes beyond one's own experiences.

The majority of 9/11 trauma fiction portrays the attacks as an inconceivable rupture that favors narrative coherence in order to "heal" from any violent, traumatic experience. This is done in order to make sense of what happened. It's possible that traumatic experiences have the effect of centering trauma on the individual's identity. One factor that all of the writings have in common is that they all represent trauma, sadness, loss, and grief. This is something that can be said about all of the works. These 'pain fiction' also illustrate the problematic limits that the 9/11 catastrophe imposed, which are the cause of long-term suffering. The common elements found in 9/11 trauma fiction include the recurrence of disturbing images, the memory of shattering and dust, the burning of the buildings, the twisted pieces of paper flying around, horrifying visions of injured victims, the frantic rush to escape the smoke and rubble and the devastation and these are depicted in all the novels taken here for study.

Memory and traumatic experiences are at the center of what is known as "trauma fiction," which is founded on Freud's theory of “acting out” or “working through” painful experiences, as La Capra puts it. One day is not going to be enough time for a person who has been traumatized to heal from what they have been through. Instead, in order for a trauma victim to recover from his or her experience, there are numerous steps that must be taken. The greater the level of resistance, the greater the likelihood that “acting out” or the act of repetition of the traumatic images associated with that event will take the place of remembering for a considerable time. On the other hand, it is not always simple for someone who has experienced trauma to get to the stage where they are past the phase of “acting out” and are done “working through” it. And La Capra has pointed out in an effective manner in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* that “those traumatized by extreme events, as well as those empathizing with them, may resist working through because of what might almost be termed a fidelity to trauma, a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it” (22).

In fact, works of literature centered on trauma portray the ways in which individuals have undergone the pain, violence, and tragedy that occurred on September 11, and the primary works chosen for study here depict the same. In *Writing History, Writing Trauma* La Capra suggests that in order to overcome one's trauma, a person has to "act out" their experiences and "work through" what happened to them. The trauma victim is said to be stuck in the past during the phase known as "acting out" since, throughout this time period, the individual continues to experience the same events, whether through reoccurring nightmares or obsessive behaviors. This keeps them imprisoned in the past.

For instance, in the novel *Falling Man*, the main character, Keith, keeps recreating the scene of his companion Rumsey's tragic death in the terrorist attack on the WTC building where they used to work. In the novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, the sudden death of Oskar's father leaves him with lingering psychological scars. He will never forget the messages that his father left for him before he passed away. In his thoughts, he keeps coming back to these messages over and over again. The recollections of Erica and his time spent in the United States

leave Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* feeling sickened and repulsed. In the book "*The Submission*," the characters Asma and Paul are unable to accept the fact that their loved ones have vanished from their lives.

In the initial phases, none of those who suffer a tragedy would be in the mood to accept what has happened and confide their emotions. They keep their feelings to themselves and do not discuss them with anybody. They are sluggish to react and their “acting out” consists primarily of engaging in behaviors that are repeated and experiencing hallucinations. On the other hand, "working through" the trauma denotes that the person who has been traumatized is making progress toward overcoming the problematic consequences of the event. At this period, the individual experiencing trauma prepares to accept his/her condition as an integral part of life. Because the victim recognizes the traumatic experience as his or her own, he or she starts to grieve over the incident and learns to learn to live with it. The characters' trajectories in the works used as examples in these works follow the same direction. They react to the September 11 disaster in the same way as those who have experienced trauma in real life.

In the novel *Falling Man*, for instance, the protagonist, Keith, uses poker as a means to alleviate his traumatic experiences and lead a more joyful life. Oskar learns that his father will not be returning at any point throughout the events of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. In his scrapbook, he changes the picture of the person falling into one that depicts a figure floating in the air. This indicates that he is accepting of the realities and that he has communicated his sorrow to his mother. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez goes back to his home country after spending time in the United States. Using La Capra's terms of "acting out" and "working through," an attempt has been made to demonstrate that "acting out" and "working through" are not separate states independent of one another. In fact, these are two different processes that the victims suffering from trauma must experience so that they can recover from the trauma. It is important to note that in all six of these works taken here for the study that was published after 9/11and that it took some time for people to get through their sorrow and start talking about the suffering they had been through.

In the *Falling Man*, DeLillo validates the veracity of the events of September 11, 2001, including what occurred to those people who were lucky enough to escape the World Trade Center. The awful complication that is trauma is brought to life by DeLillo through the character of Keith in the novel. Keith is both a direct victim of the incident and also a witness to what happened- the destruction caused by the collapse of the tower, including the smoke and ash that spread over the streets in the immediate aftermath of the attacks and the impact of the horrific attack on the psyche of the people who experienced it. In addition, DeLillo emphasizes the ideas of terrorists and attackers by exhaustively analyzing them from the viewpoint of the attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001.

DeLillo's account of his characters who are victims of 9/11 and their struggle to overcome their psychological problems is compelling and provides the readers with a sophisticated and fundamental understanding of the problem. Keith cannot get his mind off the fact that he was so close to being a victim and of his eventual escaping and running away, as well as his dear colleague Rumsey’s tragic death and his own public exposure of his relationship with Florence. He is constantly tormented by the recollections of these events, and he is unable to free himself from the effects of his trauma. In an effort to distract his attention away from the distressing memories, Keith begins playing poker. He avoids his family as much as possible in an attempt to lead a peaceful existence, but he is unable to put the past behind him.

Don DeLillo also uses the novel *Falling Man* to analyze the shifting political and economic climate in the United States as well as the potential for an albeit long-term effort at national recovery. In his narrative, DeLillo uses the character of Hammad to give an account of the of events from a terrorist point of view; more specifically, he demonstrates the aspect of indoctrination of a terrorist persona by using Hammad as a vehicle. DeLillo also emphasizes the power of imagery in the story by detailing Keith and Lianne's haunting reminiscences of the 9/11 disaster that placed them in danger and dread. These memories put Keith and Lianne in traumatic and psychologically debilitating situations.

Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* details how difficult it is for both adolescents and adults the process of "acting out" and "working through" difficult emotions in reality. Oskar has a huge struggle when he attempts to integrate himself into the real world of adult men. Through the narrative of his character, Foer hopes to elicit in his audience the thought of what may have become of the children who had lost both of their parents in the assaults. Oskar is fortunate to have his mother, with whom he may undertake the journey of recovery, but imagine if he had no one else in his life. What would have transpired in such a scenario?

In addition, Foer uses the figure of Oskar to bring attention to the concept that overcoming one's suffering might be easier for a child than it is for an adult in some instances. For instance, Oskar makes a speedier recovery from the trauma he experienced compared to his grandpa, who seemingly never recovered. Additionally, through Oskar, the protagonist of the book, Foer hints that, in order to overcome a prior traumatic experience, one should engage in new discoveries. Here Oskar will need to triumph over a number of obstacles in order to use the mysterious key that he found among his father's belongings to open the lock on the door. Because Oskar is still a teenager, he performs the duties assigned more effectively than an adult, or a more experienced individual would have done. The young boy has to figure out the clue for the key, and when he achieves that, he has to go back to his mother.

Foer additionally illustrates in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* that trauma sufferers, like Oskar in the book, may acquire a loathing for their own families. Oskar mistakenly considers his mother to be unconcerned by the loss of his father and to be pleased in the company of her male friend. He is deeply disturbed, and his misjudgment leads to his hatred of his mother. In spite of this, by the end of the book, Oskar finds himself wondering why his mother never communicated her disappointment over Oskar's seeming happy state. Oskar's mother never opens up to anybody about her anguish though she is as much a victim of trauma as her son. This may be because she doesn't want her own traumatic experiences to be transmitted to Oskar, whom she is raising as a trauma survivor.

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close delves into the numerous ways in which individuals of all ages – both children and adults experience, react, process and recover from traumatic events. For instance, both Oskar and his mother try to convince each other that they have recovered from their shock and trauma by keeping their true condition a secret from each other. It is likely that they did this in order to create the impression that they have moved on.

The manner in which Foer deals with the victims of traumatic events is distinct from the approaches used by other authors due to the fact that, despite the fact that they are unpleasant, Foer's characters suffer for the sake of each other's pleasure. Oskar makes sure that no one is bothered by the truth of his father's farewell message by concealing the device that captured it and his mother puts on a pleasant front so that she may see Oskar enjoying his success. They mask their anguish for the sake of one another's happiness in this way, and in time, with the help of one another's sympathy, affection, and the comfort of their families, they are able to get past the traumatic experience, at least to some degree.

Foer's use of games and riddles to help him overcome his trauma is another aspect that distinguishes his 9/11 book from others. Oskar's life is constantly set off by his father, who serves as a trigger. Oskar reflects, "My father would always tell me that I was too smart to work in retail" (7). In spite of the fact that Oskar is sure that his father is more intelligent than he is, Oskar Sr. tells his boy, “I am not smarter than you; I am more knowledgeable than you, and that is only because I am older” (7).

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close is an engaging work of literature that is made up of a considerable number of fictitious conventional processes and plans that deviate from the pragmatic perspective of reality. By accurately describing traumatic experiences, Foer enables the reader to participate in a terrifyingly in-depth exploration of how the effects of terrorism are felt by people. This account demonstrates that the events of September 11 reflect a terrible loss in the annals of the history of New York City, and that cannot be made up for in any way.

Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* has a similar theme of self-destruction that dominates many 9/11 novels, except that this work is in the form of satire. Kalfus is very brave to attempt satire at the risk of being perceived as a sacrilegious act. The novel mirrors the larger world in the small family unit. The family hostilities, in many ways, get more acute with the couple Joyce and Marshall Harriman's lucky escape from certain death. But unlike other families who suffer due to death and destruction, ironically, here it escapes from death during 9/11, which causes the trauma.

However, even after their prodigious escape from death, the Harriman family is still not immune to the effects of trauma. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a major consequence of undergoing any traumatic experience. PTSD was first recognized in relation to military combat deployments. Soldiers who returned from war, especially those who returned from the Vietnam War, were diagnosed with symptoms of PTSD. For civilians, terrorist attacks can also cause this condition. People suffering from this symptom often experience trauma in the form of nightmares and flashbacks, which makes them feel that they are experiencing the traumatic event all over again. After September 11, many survivors and witnesses were diagnosed as suffering from PTSD.

The characters in *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* also exhibit many symptoms of PTSD. Joyce and Marshall are first-hand witnesses of the attack on the Twin Towers. Joyce sees the planes hit the building while standing on the rooftop of her own office. Marshall was even close to action being inside the building when the planes struck. He escapes through, but on his way out, tries to help another man Lloyd, but is unsuccessful. Marshall is wracked by guilt (survivors' guilt?), and he continues to think about the man he was unable to save.

The Harriman children have it worse and suffer from 'double trauma.' They are witnesses to their parents terrorizing each other at home. They notice that their parents act very differently from those they see around them, and this puzzles the children. The elder child, Viola, old enough to understand what it means, gets

traumatized when she hears the word “divorce” during one of her parents’ fierce quarrels. Victor, the young son, though not old enough to comprehend the reality of his household, indulges in several repeated acts of misbehavior which, however, pass the attention of their feuding parents.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder is triggered by either experiencing or witnessing a terrifying event. For the Harriman kids, the daily display of their parents’ hostility and hatred of each is as frightening as any other. The children also suffer from another trauma. Though, unlike their parents, they have not watched or experienced the attacks as they happened, along with their parents, they have also watched the endless replays of the planes hitting the towers played out continuously on television. The inability to concentrate is another symptom of PTSD that Marshall experiences. Self-destructive actions, irritability, angry outbursts, and aggressive behavior – Marshall exhibits all these classic symptoms from the Post-traumatic Stress Disorder manual.

“Trauma by Proxy” is a common theme in all three works taken - Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man,* and Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*. This is a state in which a character experiences trauma as a result of being in contact with an individual who has directly experienced a traumatic event. In all three books, it is children who experience this condition the most. Oskar from *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* suffers from the guilt surrounding his inability to pick up his father’s call just before his death. Justin and his friends from *Falling Man* are concerned over watching their worried parents, and the Harriman children Viola and Victor in *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* suffer from being witnesses to their parents’ trauma. In addition, the Harriman children have to cope with being constant witnesses to their parental conflict.

The chapter titled The Death of the American Dream studies two novels that carry this theme of the collapse of the American dream of their protagonists. Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Laila Halaby’s *Once in a Promised Land* are the works taken for analysis. The protagonists of both the works, respectively, Changez and Salwa and Jassim, had settled comfortably into American

society. Their lives follow the immigrant's dream till the events on one September morning rudely awaken them. American society is no more welcoming to the three of them. They stand out due to their ethnic and religious uniqueness, making them an easy target for suspicion and hatred.

In Changez, in the novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Hamid portrays a member of the Muslim community who, because of his cultural and religious profile, is subjected to unjust treatment in post-9/11 America. Hamid draws attention to the climate of ferocious animosity towards Muslims in New York following the September 11, 2001 attacks, which forces Changez to return to his home nation of Pakistan in a traumatic state as a result of the fear of Muslims prevalent in the city. Changez's persona exemplifies the dilemma of dual identities that other trauma sufferers encountered both before and after the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001. In part, as a result of his Pakistani heritage, Changez feels estranged from American society. According to Hamid's work, the rise in America of anti-Muslim sentiment has been inextricably linked to the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, and Islam has since then become synonymous with these terrorist attacks in mainstream American culture.

The events of September 11, 2001, serve as a backdrop for *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* about a Pakistani abandoning the American Dream after almost being there. Changez, who arrived in the United States on a scholarship prior to the events of September 11, 2001, is attempting to realize the American dream. He adopts a new identity, one that he considers being more conducive to his professional advancement, and does so by mimicking the speech and mannerisms of his classmates. As a kind of self-defense, he employs identification as a protective mechanism whenever he is confronted with unsettling feelings. In spite of this, Changez never seems to be able to relax. It is clear that he values maintaining ties to his Pakistani heritage, as seen by his migration to New York to be close to the thriving Pakistani community in the city. When he first meets Erica's father, he opts to wear his ethnic wear kurta over the western jeans, highlighting the internal conflict he feels between wanting to blend in and yet trying to remain loyal to his Pakistani heritage.

The majority of the works and analysis about the terrorist attack in New York has been undertaken from the point of view of the western world. To most people in the United States, the outward manifestation of individuals like Changez is their actual identity. A white American citizen in the United States of America is always a part of the majority and is able to seamlessly blend in where ever they might be originally from. Such individuals are also not seen as an outsider, however recent the immigrant they might be. But to those who do not blend in the background due to the nature of their physical characteristics that reveal their ethnicity or religious orientation and become a "visible minority" means being exposed to vulnerable situations. These identity crises might show themselves in a number of different ways depending on the person, and in certain instances, these individuals might go back and embrace their original ethnic or religious identity in order to cope with their dilemma. For example, Changez discovers his identity in the Pakistani culture that he had previously abandoned when he went to the United States of America.

Changez has been subjected to 'othering' even before 9/11, and it is an essential and crucial component of his identity formation. He exhibits conflicting sentiments and ideas about the 9/11incident, which drives Changez to ponder life more thoroughly. Before the assaults, Changez had displayed no ill will against the United States. He had comfortably settled himself in the United States and, in what could have been safely assumed, the country would have been his home for the foreseeable future. In this aspect, Changez is no different from Salwa and Jassim of *Once in a Promised Land*.

Changez moved from Pakistan to the United States to continue his further studies at Princeton University after completing his primary and secondary schooling in Pakistan. It is from the perspective of an immigrant that his mixed experiences and the dilemma surrounding his dual identity are depicted in The Reluctant Fundamentalist. Changez describes his new life at Princeton as "a dream come true" (3). He journeys to Princeton with qualifying tests, interviews, and other procedures. He arrived and was delighted to receive a scholarship and gushes in pride and

excitement: “I have access to this beautiful campus, I thought, to professors who are titans in their fields and fellow students who are philosophers- kings in the making” (3). Additionally, he recounts his emotions of feeling like nothing less than a movie star. “Penn State fostered the notion that my life was a film in which I was the star, and everything was possible” (3).

Changez’s immediate reaction to the September 11 attacks is a smirk as if someone has brought America to its knees by its actions. Changez attempts to keep his feelings about America and 9/11 hidden, but his grin betrays the growing contempt he has for the country and his real feelings about the 9/11 attacks. The Reluctant Fundamentalist demonstrates how Changez’s disappointment in his love for Erica parallels his shift in opinion about the American civilization. Changez’s preoccupation with his physical appearance turns into a symbol of exclusion that also serves as a carrier of national identity.

Changez is pleased to watch the attack on the Twin Towers on his television screens in Manila since he felt he had been humiliated during his interview with Underwood Samson, and he expresses his delight in watching the towers come down. After each response, he becomes frustrated, but his frustration quickly turns into aggression, which expresses itself in his confusion and lack of interest in America. Even though Changez had an undeniable affection for his nation, he found that his time spent in Pakistan did not bring him any joy. He is overcome with sentimentality and longs to spend time with Erica once more. This similar sense of alienation reverberates within him, and the relationship strife that arises as a direct result of the attacks prevents him from developing a fundamental understanding of self. Since Mohsin Hamid had spent time in Pakistan, the UK, and also the United States, it is reasonable to believe that probably some aspects of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* appear to have been written in an autobiographical style, which lends credibility to the novel’s authenticity.

Once in a Promised Land is an effort by an Arab-American author, Laila Halaby, to shed light on the effects that the September 11 attacks had on Arab Americans. The novel delves into the many facets of the aftermath of the 9/11 incidents on the affected by illustrating and investigating the psychological, political, social, economic, and cultural ramifications of those events. Additionally, the novel explores the perplexing notions of citizenship and identity that are prevalent in contemporary society. It also examines the representations of gender, class, location, and other aspects, in addition to the sociopolitical implications of the shock that followed the events of September 11.

In the midst of the upheaval that followed the attacks of September 11, 2001, the story centers on the implosion of the relationship of an Arab-American couple named Salwa and Jassim. The protagonist, who is of Jordanian origin, is a geophysicist by training and works for a business as an expert in the area of water quality management. He has a doctoral degree in his specialty and is very passionate about his mission of bringing water to his people. Life in the desert country of Jordan and the deserts of Arizona has taught him not just the importance of water but how the future conflicts of the world would be because of international fights over this scarce resource. Salwa, his wife, is a banker and land dealer. This had afforded her an extravagant and lavish lifestyle that she never in a million years would have imagined was even remotely possible for her when she was in Jordan, her home country and the place where she grew up.

Salwa and Jassim are a Muslim couple that resides in the city of Phoenix, which is located in the state of Arizona. They do not have to worry about their financial or social situation. However, tragically they are unable to find a place for themselves in either Jordanian or American society, so they are constantly trying to carve out a niche for themselves, but they are met with social rejection and exclusion, which leads to their confused identities. As a result of their inability to find a place for themselves, they have hybrid identities.

Silke Dewulf, in her article “Arab-American Identity Construction: A Comparison between Pre- and Post-9/11 Literature,” asserts that Salwa’s upbringing in a variety of places makes it difficult for her to establish a sense of self, mainly because she is raised in both Arab and American cultures. Steven Salaita, in his book *Modern Arab American Fiction: A Reader's Guide*, writes that *Once in a Promised Land* analyses how anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia connect with American domestic politics, especially in the social and political climate following the attacks and that the events depicted in Laila Halaby’s novel are an excellent example of this. In addition, he asserts that political events have a direct impact on the psychological growth of the characters in the storyline (91).

Characters from Arab nations who are unable to establish themselves in Western societies are frequent in many literary representations of post-9/11 America, and this portrayal is without a doubt accurate to the primary characters in Laila Halaby's novel. The characters in *Once in a Promised Land*, Jassim and Salwa Haddad, have comfortable lives in the suburbs of Phoenix, Arizona, just outside the city itself, prior to the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11. Almost immediately after the attacks, Jassim was made the prime suspect in an unfounded investigation by the FBI, and Salwa began to feel a longing for her country of origin since she believed the people of the nation in which she was reared had marginalized her. As a direct result of the tragic events that took place on September 11, 2001, Jassim and Salwa realize that they are not only separated from the American way of life that they had been used to but also from one another. As a direct consequence of this, their marriage starts to break down. Although Halaby's work addresses the difficulties that her primary characters face as a result of the attacks, the flaws of the Americans who act alongside her Arab American characters receive far more emphasis than the difficulties that the protagonists themselves have in navigating their own identities.

The pervasive American perception of a world sharply divided between the East and the West –"the civilized world" (in the favorite parlance of American politicians and administration officials) and the "othered" or "Them" when placed in an environment that takes place after 9/11, Halaby's Arab American characters become increasingly aware of the fact that many people in the United States have adopted the oppositional discourse that was promoted by U.S. politicians at the beginning of the war on terror. This has contributed to the aggravation of the misconceptions of Arabic and Islamic immigrants that were already prevalent in the United States prior to the attacks of September 11. This exposes Western political theory and provides an indictment of American society. The fact that Halaby transposes the stereotypical American image of Arabic nations into her novel makes it a potentially very compelling account of post-9/11 America.

The West, in the author's view, only serves to exacerbate international crises such as droughts, poverty, and war. According to Halaby, the events of September 11, 2001, were a direct result of these worldwide issues that, at some point, will no longer be able to be contained within the affected population. As a result of this, her story functions as a cautionary tale, and it urges people living in the United States to go beyond binary discourses in order to forestall the escalation of existing crises as well as the emergence of new ones either inside or outside its borders. In Halaby's view, the United States of America is just as susceptible to crises as the other nations that are facing issues of terrorism and civil unrest. She does this by bringing attention to social inequalities, environmental and climate-related concerns, and a troubled population, especially the young that exist within the United States, as well as by suggesting that, for the most part, the American public and the news media overlook and underestimate significant issues that occur within the borders of the country. Halaby's novel distinguishes itself from other works of fiction written by Arab American authors in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks because of the skillful connection she makes of the attacks to a theme of persistent global crises through the war on terror and the discourse that has accompanied it.

The character of Oskar, a nine-year-old boy, mixes a youthful naivete with a mature ability to observe and understand the world around him. This distinguishes Foer's work from other novels set in the aftermath of September 11. Despite the fact that individuals may not always comprehend each other's traumas, the same symptoms and patterns have recurred throughout history, regardless of culture. As a result, La Capra's observation in his article in the *Critical Inquiry*, "Trauma, Absence, Loss," states that "trauma is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we are entangled in each other's suffering" (721) comes to life here in the most vivid way. And DeLillo, in the *Falling Man*, throughout the novel merges the private and the public. In the novel, numerous aspects of the connection between history, memory, and the account of traumatic experiences are addressed as well. This connection is one of the novel's central themes.

The common thread that binds all the novels taken for the study is that all of them have an unresolved ending. They deny their characters complete closure. These works also demonstrate the close relationship between history and memory and trauma theory. One of the more recent developments in the field of memory studies is a shift away from an emphasis on historical and factual awareness and understanding of specific events and towards an interest in concerns pertaining to memory. In other words, it is a shift from "what we know" to "how we remember it."

Memory and trauma narratives are closely related concepts. The study of history involves compiling an orderly and factually sound account of the occurrences and developments that have taken place over an extended period of time. Memory is made up of an individual's personal experiences, recollections, and interpretations of those experiences after they have lived through a sequence of events and processes. In these works, the labor of memory drives the constant rehabilitation of historical events to meet the needs of the current day. This process occurs at several stages and necessitates the interaction of a variety of items, including texts, activities, and locations. Memory does not live in a vacuum but rather engages in a conversation with one another, sometimes reinforcing one another, sometimes creating dissonance

between them. These narratives help to connect the dots between events that have occurred, to find causes and meanings within different events that succeed one another, and to be able to decide the events that are important from among the many that dot our existence.

History and memory are not always synonymous terms. Since it is associated with both forgetting and remembering, memory is differentiated as a system that selectively draws on the past to inform one's present actions. It is also crucial to the present because of its malleability. Memories of a presumed past are significantly influenced by perceptions of the present. It is generally believed that history is typically shaped by the manner in which genuine historical events were perceived by individuals and by the way in which the memory of such events lingers long after the event has passed. Trauma fiction is a genre that has emerged in recent years to address this question. Trauma fiction delves into the challenge of using this memory of a lived experience in constructing compelling narrative tales.

Traumatic experiences are inextricably linked to fear. Terror is related to trauma in some way or another. For example, Justin and his friends in *Falling Man* continue to be terrified of the possibility of more terrorist strikes like the September 11 attacks happening in their everyday lives. When Justin says, "They're searching the skies," it demonstrates that he thinks that a jet may arrive at any time and crash into another structure. Similarly, Oskar from *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* experiences the same sense of discomfort and panic when he goes to meet Ruth Black, who has her residence on floor eighty-six of the Empire State Building. A traumatized Oskar is unable to hide his fear and anxiety and confesses that it was an experience that created dreadful memories. The readers can sense his panic as he recalls the feeling: "Even though I was aware of the breathtaking beauty of the view, my brain began to misbehave, and the entire time, I was seeing an aircraft flying in through the window of the building below us" (244).

When Changez appears in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, he embodies the fear and disquiet that are produced as a result of religious and cultural stereotyping. Jassim undergoes the same suspicion and hostility in *Once in a Promised Land*. The fear of Islam and of the Muslim community has existed even before 9/11, and since the September 11 attacks, it has become profoundly entangled in Islamophobia and binary thinking. Despite the fact that the fear of Muslims has been in many social systems for many decades, it became entrenched in preconceptions and biases following the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The capacity of trauma patients to focus is impaired as a result of the dread they are harboring. As a result of the fear brought on by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, trauma victims experience anxiety, concern about an imminent threat, and worry, which causes them to engage in an internal battle to find a method to escape the threat. These six novels, all of which are written in the genre of trauma tales, have a lot in common. They each have their own story and cast of people, yet the concerns of trauma and its manifestations of it are recurring themes in all. Through their characters, these authors depict the trauma survivor's fear of death and violence which is connected with suppressed emotions and anxiety.

The haunted reminiscences of the September 11 tragedy were crammed into the minds of trauma sufferers, and these horrific recollections resurface in the minds of the victims even years after their occurrence. As a direct consequence of the incident, traumatic experiences cluster in the 9/11 archive, which gives the impression of being an early manifestation of the impact of the disaster. Trauma victims face a significant challenge in that they are unable to fully comprehend the transition from their lives before the terrorist attacks of 9/11 to their lives after these events. They are still perplexed by the fact that they have experienced a real-life tragedy as well as the ‘theatrical’ reoccurrence of 9/11. They are able to endure enough in order to answer this problem.

Another factor that contributes to trauma is a person’s sense of guilt, which is followed by a sense of remorse on the part of the victim. Each of the protagonists in

many of these stories is plagued by the feeling of being responsible for something that has gone wrong with their lives. Some of the trauma victims described in these accounts are filled with shame and unhappiness because they believe they have done something wrong that they should not have done in the first place. Keith, the protagonist of the novel *Falling Man*, feels embarrassed since he has exposed himself openly about his relationship with Florence. Throughout the novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Oskar repeatedly expresses regret for not picking up the phone when his father called from the towers after the attack and also for subsequently not informing anybody else about it. Changez, the protagonist of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, surprises himself when he spontaneously smiles as he watches the destruction of the twin towers on his television screen. But he is immediately perplexed and is at a loss to understand his own reaction. At the same time, Changez is also profoundly aware that he has transgressed morally by exulting in a tragedy. This illustrates that traumatic experiences are not always the result of extreme circumstances but can also be triggered by feelings of guilt and humiliation. The urge to constantly refer to the event stemmed from a lack of perception to comprehend a substantial part of what had occurred.

For example, in the novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly* Close, Oskar's grandpa remains mute throughout his life following the Dresden tragedy. Soon after the events of Dresden, Oskar's grandfather began a life of solitude in the countryside. Since that occurrence, he has been in a state of self-reflection and contemplation. And decades later, as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, the latest trauma creates an uncritical approach to the past that defines disaster inside him. Beyond the deaths and devastation, the difficulties of turning the horrific event into something that could be talked about caused several authors to quickly turn to the field of trauma studies in order to understand what had happened. For instance, in the *Falling Man*, the protagonist Keith is reluctant to share his pain with anyone else and instead moves away from New York. Erica in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* does not wish to reveal her inner sentiments to anybody else either and instead relocates to another country. Erica and Changez decline to communicate

with one another and prefer to live in seclusion. It was also vital to highlight the impact of the 9/11 trauma, and these works provide dramatic depictions of trauma victims as they contended with the political atmosphere as well as the traumatic environment in these stories.

Trauma sufferers, especially those with PTSD, are sometimes susceptible to bouts of violence. Lianne's mental equilibrium is disturbed by a specific type of music in the *Falling Man*. When Lianne overhears her neighbor listening to music, she forbids her neighbor from listening to it as well. Her next-door neighbor, on the other hand, dismisses the concerns, claiming that it is simply music that has nothing to do with any terrorist activities. Lianne, on the other hand, becomes enraged and smacks her. Perhaps the music reminds Lianne of the unfortunate occurrence, and as a result, she does not listen to it. It demonstrates that Lianne is agitated by music and becomes violent as a result. All of these tales represent a particular perspective on history as well as the links that exist between history and the memories of trauma sufferers. History and memory are inextricably intertwined in the human consciousness.

The fourth chapter of this study is titled 'The Collective Trauma – The Nation, Identity, and Memorialization.' It is on Amy Waldman's *The Submission*, which is a work that can be classified as an anti-historical novel written from the "what if" perspective. It follows the trauma narrative as all the other works taken for analysis here. It is the last novel to be published from the collection taken for study in terms of the publication date, but the events of the story actually happened two years after the 2001 attack. Written by the former New Your Times journalist Waldman brings to the narrative experience her experience of covering the 9/11 attacks as a journalist. *The Submission* does not mention the 9/11 attacks by name anywhere in the novel but leaves the reader in no doubt and is considered a proper 9/11 novel.

Following the terrorist assault on September 11, 2001, the sudden removal of the Twin Towers from the Manhattan skyline in the wake of the tragedy left a massive void in the city's outer look, as well as in the lives of the many people who lived

there. The attacks sparked debate over what should be done with the site of the devastation, which was dubbed "Ground Zero" almost immediately after they occurred. Architects, city planners, and political authorities worked hard to duplicate ideas on the necessity of constructing a new building. Amy Waldman, an ex-journalist who worked as a news reporter in the years following the attacks, reflected on what she observed in the course of her career in the aftermath of the attacks. However, despite the fact that the author avoids referring to the assaults in the novel as being those of September 11, 2001, in order to liberate the world of imagination, as she explains in her recorded television appearances, it is difficult to read the novel without thinking about the 9/11 setting. So, the book serves as a type of resource in the sense that it presents a fictitious version of what was previously known in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The Submission, which was published ten years after the attacks, is primarily concerned with the collective trauma and loss of attachment to a place as a result of the unexpected devastation of the Twin Towers, which resulted in psychological emptiness in addition to a physical vacuum on the city's outer rim, received favorable attention from the reading public. The author explained that she did not set out to write a post-9/11 novel because she thought that the sub-genre had already been over-exploited and that she wanted the readers to be free of the heavy load of that day in order for them to become engaged in the fiction. With its many references to an allegedly unnamed attack on buildings as depicted or recalled by the protagonists and with its explicit reference to the 9/11 type of attacks, *The Submission* is clearly similar to other works of fiction that were influenced by the tragedy. It may even be considered an objective guide to aid us in comprehending and visualizing what occurred on the day in question and immediately afterward. *The Submission'*s implicit message is that what transpired, as mentioned in the novel, was such a global occurrence that it shocked people of all nations and caused them to be traumatized.

Furthermore, despite the absence of explicit references to 9/11, the use of phrases such as "there was no joy there on the day," "people with an immediate association to the present attack," "in the wake of the attack," "What are your

thoughts on jihad?", "a year after the attack" and "all of this taking place in New York" demonstrate the apparent allusions to 9/11 and prepare the reader for what is to follow. Another important reason is that, despite the fact that those who died in the September 11 tragedy came from a diverse range of social and religious backgrounds, the novel offers a broad range of perspectives in the aftermath of the unspecified tragedy that claimed the lives of thousands of people. It depicts the lives of Americans and non-Americans, as well as people from a variety of religious and national backgrounds. We thus have characters who are Jews, Christians, Muslims, Indians and Bangladeshis, citizens, and illegal immigrants to remind the viewer that what happened has global implications.

Consequently, the reader is exposed to a variety of perspectives and emotions from people who live in the same nation but have vastly different viewpoints, which one has to emphasize was the author's objective all along. Individuals who have seen or witnessed the aftermath of the assaults are experiencing or witnessing not only trauma but a wide range of emotions and views according to the point of view of where they stand in the social and economic spectrum. Waldman responds to the topic of whether or not her work should be included in booklists that include references to September 11 with "I don't really want it to be about 9/11; I want it to be about the aftermath and a couple of tons of questions that we, as a country, had to deal with." As Waldman explains in another interview, since she did not explicitly mention 9/11, she wanted the reader to be able to browse and imagine freely, which presumptively meant that she wanted them to imagine the ramifications of any attack that came into their minds. In another interview, Waldman explains that she "intended to portray the varied cluster of persons and concerns" that arose in the aftermath of 9/11, despite the fact that the novel is presented as "a separate history to post 9/11." The author, who released her work on the tenth anniversary of the attacks and compared it to the novels written before hers, claims that she has taken a long time, in the sense of taking a step back and looking at what happened to the country in the years after the attacks.

The theme of the book *The Submission* exists on an interesting premise – what if the architect chosen to build a memorial to the attacks is a Muslim? With this

provocative idea at its heart, Waldman masterfully depicts the collective trauma felt by New York. In a case of fiction imitating real life, a jury is tasked with choosing a design from among the blind submissions. The jury consists of members representing various interests, and one among them is a widow who lost her husband to the attacks. When it is revealed that it is a Muslim by the name of Mo Khan who has won the competition, predictably, the reaction is horror and hostility. Mo Khan is unapologetic as he is submitted to 'questioning.' It does not matter that he is an agnostic and he, like a considerable part of Changez, is a man who is at ease being a New Yorker.

The construction of memory through monuments is age-old. One significant concern after the 9/11 attacks was the construction of the 9/11 monument that would serve as a memorial site for the victims and survivors. In *The Submission,* Waldman has extensively illustrated what various individuals anticipate from a memorial site. It is the ordinary people who see and evaluate the constructed monuments and memorials and who give significance and meaning to the vision and creations of artists and architects. The memorial, in many cases, represents the state authority and the dominant attitudes, opinions, and feelings of the society that gives it value, according to Phillips Kendall in "The Failure of Memory: Reflections on Rhetoric and Public Remembrance," while also obscuring conflicting claims to "authenticity and meaning" (216). Similar to what happened during the run-up to the construction of the actual 9/11 monument and museum, *The Submission,* too, have various people from all walks of life who have shared their meanings and ways of meaning formation throughout the hearing relating to choosing the design for the memorial.

What appears to be at risk for the characters in *The Submission* is determining what meaning and message should be sent through the monument. Most of the general population seemed to realize that they were the people who would provide significance to the monument. In order to determine what meaning the memorial will have, the citizens must first decide which type of memorial they desire. Sean and Frank Gallagher, the brother, and father of one of the firefighters, have been given the opportunity to express their thoughts on the memorial design in

person. Sean is odd in that he lets his father speak, and he disapproves of Mo Khan's design with the words, "This garden is inadequately... courageous to honor the people who have been lost... [A] more powerful memorial, one that does not indicate that America should lie down like lambs in the clover instead of fighting back" (253), is what people like him would want.

Frank's personal interpretation of the design, as well as his ideas on what a monument should be, are significant considerations when deciding the architecture for loss and grief. Is it possible for architecture to be heroic? What might the appearance of a brave design be like? As a possible meaning of heroic, one may think of anything that is male-oriented. A garden has always been considered a female domain, which may explain why Mo Khan's design did not strike the Gallaghers as particularly heroic. The images of male firefighters hoisting flags or sifting amid wreckage and people who were the popular images in the aftermath of the 9/11 assault pervaded the public realm. These were images of heroism, and they were frequently images that involved women, and they were often images of shock or sadness. Women were heartbroken by the deaths of their husbands and fathers. The men who managed to survive were hailed as heroes.

Later, Frank elaborates on his desire to retaliate against what he perceives to be a weakness in the design. Frank believes that the monument for his son must be powerful. It is necessary to deliver a message to those responsible for Patrick's death. According to Frank, the proposed memorial design is more about the perpetrators than it is about the victims. As far as Frank is concerned, a garden does not exude strength and force. At its core, what one feels is happening is that the characters are going through the process of trying to build a memorial to their own personal adversities.

According to Michele Balaev in the article "Trends in Literary Trauma Theory," the location "becomes essential to representations of trauma in the novel

since the physical place of pain and recollection of loss becomes a recognizable source for the author to explain the various meanings of the event" (158). As a result, the trauma from death is closely linked to the location where it occurs. As the memorial site is the place of the occurrence of a traumatic event, it is a source of sadness and suffering for the community. This results in the memorial process being more contentious and exacerbated as the characters attempt to process their pain.

What Waldman is trying to demonstrate here is that pain experienced by everyone, regardless of the circumstance and situation, is genuine. Each character wishes for his or her grief to be regarded seriously and to be appropriately shown via the commemorative ceremony. The characters' spirituality is derived from the sincerity with which they express their grief and their wish for their loved ones to be remembered in an honorable manner. The poetic element must be derived from the aesthetic attractiveness of the design. It is evident that the relatives of the victims want their voices to be heard the loudest possible, and they are well aware of the responsibility they bear in expressing their support or opposition to Khan's memorial design. Having a design picked that does not represent sincerity and may appear to be random is the last thing they want to happen. "In addition to providing little of the solace that many people expect from memorials, this emotion runs the risk of trivializing or dehumanizing death" (Blim 395).

Eventually, the memorial is constructed, irrespective of the fact that it is unsightly and the polar opposite of Ariana's description of the garden. While the reactions to the 'Garden of Flags' are not revealed in the novel, it is reasonable to assume that it was selected as a result of Claire's exhaustion from the entire process, as she suggested previously. Waldman demonstrates that monuments have a history and are loaded with the desires of those who wish to be remembered. What Waldman is attempting here is evidently to demonstrate throughout her novel that creating monuments is one of the fundamental ways of getting through traumatizing experiences. Amy Waldman shows here that what the characters want from the memorial exposes their worries about life and death, as well as their need for historical consciousness.

The monument serves as a means of comprehending grief as well as a means of keeping the wound of the tragedy open and visible. The novel explores the differences between public and private grieving, as well as the artistic processing of sorrow and trauma via the creation of a monument. Waldman acknowledges the several issues that might emerge when constructing a memorial to commemorate an event that caused large-scale trauma to individuals and communities. These six works taken for study here deal with the events of September 11, and through their works of fiction, the writers highlight the difficulties of representation, alienation, dual identity, complicated projections from media, fear, and other issues that arise as a result of the success of terrorists' destructive objectives on 9/11. Aside from the concerns of trauma, anxiety, and violence, the events of September 11 opened the door to additional subjects for future investigation. This work has tried to disentangle the relationship between the trauma narrative and the September 11 terrorist attacks. An attempt was made to integrate some of the components of trauma, as well as the many symptoms associated with it.

This study looks at how trauma affects people with a discussion on the critical characteristics of trauma. Because of the differences in writing styles, each of the six books has characters with a distinct level of trauma. It has been discovered in these writings that the interpretation of trauma is, in many cases, directly related to and in all issues connected to the belated appearances of traumatic events in the mind,which may be associated with the specific cultural setting in which it is placed. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* has themes of trauma that are prevalent throughout the book, but notably in the characters of Oskar and his grandparents. Similar is the case with Changez and Erica in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Keith, and Lianne in the *Falling Man*, the Harriman family in *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country,* and the Muslim characters in Mohsin Hamid and Laila Halaby's fiction.

Trauma, fear, and violence are themes that repeatedly appear throughout these works, and therefore, a thorough reading of these works eventually leads the reader to the conclusion that there is a strong relationship between the responses to

the 9/11 tragedy and the trauma theory. Oskar lost his father in the September 11 attacks, which caused him to have a pang of terrible guilt and trauma. Keith nearly escapes during the attacks. And the situations experienced by Changez and Salwa, and Jassim follow a distinct but similar trajectory. *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, the novel by Jonathan Safran Foer, contains some of the bygone horrors of the twentieth century, such as the Allied bombings of Dresden and the nuclear bomb attack on Hiroshima. Although Foer's books as traumatic antiques leave room for speculation, his ability to portray a terrible history that is nearly inaccessible is exceptional.

These novelists have made substantial contributions to our knowledge of the complexities in the minds of the victims and survivors of the September 11 attacks and the effects on their lives. The obstacles include the emotional agony and the repeating unsettling pictures of the attacks that haunt them. The novelists are able to present compelling narratives that enable the reader to be able to preserve compassion for those individuals who were affected by the tragedy by focusing on the psychological ruptures and anxieties and the disturbed states of both the citizens and the nation as a whole. As a result of the creative narratives of grief following the tragedy in these books, the reader's empathy for the victims is retained. This collection of traumatic novels produced in the genre of the 9/11 terrorist attacks reflects the experience and pain of devastated persons. With all of the characteristics of trauma, these writers put their works in the context of the fear and brutality of terrorist attacks.

The novels *Falling Man, A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *The Submission, Once in a Promised Land,* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* are significant "historical documents" as a result of their meticulous character development and compelling descriptions of the extraordinary effects of the September 11 attacks. The depiction of personal grief, the impact of the tragedy on the national identities as well as the collective and individual sufferings are compelling narratives. These novels vividly portray the trauma of individuals who were affected and damaged by the September 11 terrorist attacks, as well as those

who watched or witnessed the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center from other locations across the world.

One of the difficulties that trauma survivors face is the uncertainty about their own identity. The novels demonstrate how political conflicts become the root cause of the misery experienced by ordinary citizens, like in the example of Changez, whose failed relationship with Erica symbolizes his difficulties assimilating into American culture, among other things. Similarly, Salwa and Jassim, for all their identification as Americans rather than Arab immigrants, are forced to admit post 9/11 that it would have been better for them not to come to the United States. All six works that have been taken here for analysis paint a realistic image of a society that has been drastically transformed politically, socially, economically, and culturally as a result of the attacks. The novelists of these works illustrate the realism of the 9/11 attacks, as well as the impact of the event on individuals who were witnesses to both the initial attack of the airplanes crashing into the building and the subsequent destruction of the entire World Trade Center building some moments later.

All of the victims are confronted with the realization of the difference between the time before and after September 11. In their minds, they were once something very different from what they have become in recent years. They are unable to heal or recover from their trauma because of their confused or complicated state. Furthermore, these individuals continue to feel depressed because they believe that their physical bodies are a symbol of the sad event that occurred. They are unable to forget those who died during the assaults and are therefore forced to confront the reality of death. Witnessing so many people dying or fleeing the site of the attack makes them confront their own mortality as well as the impossibility of the prospect of a quiet existence after experiencing such turmoil in their lives.

All of the principal characters portrayed in *Falling Man*, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, *The Submission*, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Once in a Promised Land*, and *The Submission*, have explored the true condition of 9/11 victims and their experiences that came in various forms. Some were victims, with many being direct first-hand witnesses, others were at home during the attacks and saw the event on television, and many others experienced the event through first-person narrative. As a result, these characters serve as a replacement for all of the trauma sufferers who are attempting to recover from their experiences. They symbolize what it means to be traumatized, which is that the trauma victim is unable to forget the past and is unable to live with the present. There is a strong relationship between 9/11 and the trauma experienced by all of the characters, a state of mind which continues to haunt them throughout their lives.

However, despite all of the challenges and complexity surrounding the September 11 tragedy, all aspects of the 9/11 events are articulately depicted in these novels. Despite the fact that the plots of the novels differ, they are all united in the realistic representation of the aftermath of the events of September 11 and how the ensuing trauma experienced by the affected survivors and witnesses is profoundly represented in all of the works. Keith's narrow escape from the tower he was working on in *Falling Man*, Oskar's quest for the lock that would fit his key, and the trauma experienced by his own grandfather decades ago in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, and Changez and Erica's trauma in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*; all of the narratives are expressed in different ways, but, a common thread runs through them all.

It is possible to overcome a traumatic situation by being enveloped in familial warmth, love, or devotion, as demonstrated by all the characters in these works. These accounts examine the ramifications of trauma for both first- and second-handvictims, as well as for those who have seen it on television in the safety of their homes. An in-depth examination of these books reveals that any traumatic impact prevents individuals from engaging with the outside world, and this is the

complexity that any trauma sufferers or survivors experience, not just those of September 11, 2001. These testimonies in the novels also demonstrate that the trauma victims of the 9/11attacks were not just found in Lower Manhattan or New York or even in the United States of America, but they can be found all over the world due to the global nature of the attack and also the cosmopolitan character of New York City. The events of September 11 not only affected America, New York, London, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, but it also had an impact on the individual psyche of people in other nations through the people affected in the United States, but have their roots in other countries, especially immigrants.

In a globalized world, no one is insulated from events occurring elsewhere. All of the characters featured in these works were either directly or indirectly affected by the September 11 attacks and have now come to terms with the reality of their suffering. At the conclusion of the novels, however, their lives had been irrecoverably transformed due to their lives being affected by their trauma, proving that there is no return to the old normalcy for trauma survivors. These novels have covered some of the challenges in adjusting to the unexpected, but there is a vast amount more that needs to be explored. There is no optimal method for coping with unexpected tragedy and the sudden disruption to otherwise normal and uneventful lives. It is left to individuals to process their personal experiences and deal with the resultant trauma and survival in their own unique and distinctive ways.

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