

Tribhuvan University

**Speaking the Unspeakable: Studying Trauma in Post 9/11 Novels**

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirement for the Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) in English

By

Nirmal Paudel

Admission Year

Roll No.: 444/542

Regd. No.:6-1-40-1093-99

Central Department of English

University Campus, Kirtipur

Kathmandu, Nepal

2014

**Tribhuvan University**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Letter of Recommendation**

This thesis entitled **Speaking the Unspeakable: Studying Trauma in Post in 9/11 Novels** has been prepared by Mr. Nirmal Paudel under my supervision. I recommend this thesis to be submitted for the viva voce.

---

Prof. Dr. Beerendra Pandey

Central Department of English

T.U., Kirtipur

Date:

**Tribhuvan University**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Letter of Approval**

This thesis submitted to Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Nirmal Paudel titled "**Speaking the Unspeakable: Studying Trauma in Post 9/11 Novels**" has been approved by undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of Research Committee

---

---

Internal Examiner

---

---

External Examiner

---

---

Head, -

Central Department of English

Tribhuvan University

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and hearty thanks to my respected teacher and research supervisor Prof. Dr. Beerendra Pandey , Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University for his noble and scholarly guideline to bring this thesis to this complete shape. I am equally grateful to Prof. Dr. Amar Raj Joshi, Head of the Central Department of English T.U. for providing me an opportunity for this research work.

In addition, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my respected teachers Dr. Sanjiv Uprety, Dr. Ani Rudra Thapa, Dr. Shiva Rijal and others who motivated me with worthy suggestions.

I owe a lifelong debt and gratitude to my parents, Dhruva Raj Paudel and Dhan Maya Paudel and my younger brother Mahendra Paudel for their financial support, love and encouragement. Last, but not the least, I want to thank my life-partner Anju Sapkota for her inspiration and motivation.

Nirmal Paudel

## Abstract

This thesis is based in the context of trauma of 9/11 attacks as represented in Ian McEwan's *Saturday* and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. The representation of the trauma of 9/11 took various forms in fictional discourse. Some novelists sentimentalize and politicize the events. However, a novelist like Foer, depicts the victims suffering as closely as possible. Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* analyzes the suffering of trauma and their ways of coping with trauma. The characters in this novel pass through various stages of trauma like melancholia and mourning. In their traumatic narration, novelists remain true to characters trauma portraying it closely. Similarly, McEwan, in *Saturday*, shows how an individual cannot easily get out of the media narratives about the 9/11 in the media-saturated world. The main character, Perowne, first makes his mind out of media narratives but towards the end he comes to realize from the incidents with Baxter that the response to 9/11 is not violence as advocated by media. Thus, this novel shows the resistance to the media's construction and interpretation of events that is a battle cry for revenge through war.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

I.	Introduction: Fictional Responses to the trauma of 9/11 Attacks...	1
II.	Trauma and Representation of 9/11.....	9
III.	Jonathan Safran Foer's <i>Extremely Loud &amp; Incredibly Close</i> : From Melancholia to Mourning.....	29
IV.	Media's Construction and Interpretation of Trauma in Ian McEwan's <i>Saturday</i> .....	45
V.	Conclusions: From Speaking the Unspeakable Trauma to Resistance of Media Narratives.....	62
	Works Cited .....	66

## Chapter: One

### Introduction: Fictional Responses to the Trauma of 9/11 Attacks

The attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001 are taken as traumatic events. These attacks have been traumatic to those who believe that 'first world' is relatively safe from any form of terrorist attacks. These symbolic attacks also turned out to be traumatic for those whose kith and kin died. For those victims, injured, survivors, eyewitness and the people of 'home' and abroad, the attacks have tremendous implications.

These implications are confronted by 9/11 novelists as a meaningful "civic engagement to real world event" (Miller 33) in plurastic ways. Some of the novelists imply this without even mentioning it directly. In this sense, post 9/11 novels are not always related about the attacks. The ramification on the attack is in the novels in various forms. In this connection, David Holloway writes:

9/11 novels weren't always directly about 9/11 and it's consequence. The early 9/11 novels had a particular tendency to sublimate contemporary anxieties about state activity and about the state's jeopardizing of the safety of it's citizens, in stories about the failures of family members to protect one another - particularly the failure of parents to protect children. (108)

The implications of the attacks are not given direct response. In majority of the novels, how it is shown is as a failure of parental generation to protect the young generation. Consequently most narrators chosen by post 9/11 novelists are "either orphans or troubled children and youths or adult sons and daughters" as a leading

narrator in their "distressing relationship with parents or 'guardian' figures (usually fathers), at the center of their work" (108).

The failure of the parental generation took various forms in different novels. In Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* (2004) "the failure of parental generation took three overlapping forms: the inability of the narrator's father to protect his family against the backwash of fascism, a betrayal of American Jews by rabbinical authority, and attacks on the Jewish- American community" (Holloway 108). In the novel Roth presented the American fascist Charles Lindbergh "elected to the white house instead of Roosevelt"(108). The child narrator of *The Plot Against America* collects stamps. National parks stamps haunted him which narrator dreamed as landscapes of parks are overlaid with Swastikas. "Certain strands of fascist mythography and certain strands American mythography , Ruth implies, were drawn from the same aesthetic well and were different in degree, not in kind"(109). This novel was well received as a allegory of Bush administration, says that the reason of attack is in America.

9/11 trauma in *Windows on the World* (2004) by Fredric Beigbeder is shown as having link with American modernity. In the novel New York is presented as "a city of glass less substantial than tepee" (8, qtd in Holloway 121). Beigbeder in this novel blame "tools that western modernity devised to liberate society from nature, scarcity and domination-reason, technology, capitalism, democracy- had led to catastrophic new enslavements of human body and mind"(121). This enslavement led to encroachment over nature and consequent



destructions. Since world Trade Center put people over nature novel seems to be saying that it is doomed to be a failure.

The 9/11 attacks in various novels is interiorized by narrators and characters. These events were rarely referred directly in Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2005). *Saturday* has a third person narrator, the neurosurgeon Henry Perowne, who does not participate in demonstration organized in his city London against the planned invasion in Iraq. Instead, he goes on to his usual business of making preparation of his family reunion for that evening. However, he is not detached from the World events. He turns the radio on and off time and again and observes that "it's a condition of the time, this compulsion to hear how it stands with the world, and to be joined to the generality, to a community of anxiety" (McEwan 180).

Perowne the main character of *Saturday* has long interiorisation, which deals with politics. This novel is about Henry Perowne's "consciousness and personality" as David Hallway writes

*Saturday* was the personality and consciousness of Perowne. Given what he was thinking about the invasion of Iraq, the demonstration, his family working conditions for skilled middle-class labour, London, Charles Darwin, his own insignificance in the greater scheme of things the in word looking. Propensity of the narrative was held in tension with the public and historical nature of the novel's major themes. (113)

As I already discussed, though Perowne tried his best to remain detached from day to day event, media preoccupy his psychology. His engagement shows the enforced passivity of common people. Through Perowne McEwan has discussed "the disempowerment of citizens" (113). Perowne has a belief that there should be invasion in Iraq but he realizes that his opinion will not be taken into consideration. Therefore, he remains passive though engaged through media.

Perowne while arguing with his daughter says "the war is going to happen with or without UN, whatever any government says or any mass demonstration... It will be the end of Saddam and one most odious regimes ever known and I will be glad" (254). But his daughter has just opposite view. She participates in argument with her father arguing that by "attacking Iraq we're doing the very thing the New York bombers wanted us to do- lash out , make more enemies on Arab countries and radicalize Islam" (258). Like this argument of father and daughter in novel, the then discourse was divided for and against war in Iraq. More than that, common people were in the position of compulsive passive engagement.

The vulnerability of the children and complex response to the trauma of 9/11 took another turn in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005). This novel does have multiple narratives. The narrative of Oskar Schell, a boy of nine, who has lost his father in World Trade Center attacks, connects these various narratives. A year after the nightmare events while searching his father's room Oskar finds out an envelope labeled "black" which consists a mysterious key. Oskar took this key as a key to unlock his trauma of

losing his father. As result, he begins search for matching lock in five boroughs of New York. More than that he even plans of visiting everyone named Black who is living in New York.

Safran's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is interiorisation of narrative voice of Oskar Schell and his grandfather, Mr. Thomas Schell , and grandmother Mrs. Schell, who are other major characters of the novel. These narrator-characters narrative form the relationship with each other to complete the plot of novel. Their narrative conflicted and intersected repeatedly. To quote Holloway is apt here:

*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close's* definition of private interiorized experience as nothingness and it's suggestion that withdrawal from social, public or historical space produces only faculty vision, cleared room for the novel to evaluate it's own interiorisations as ideological acts: Versions of 9/11 that repressed, sublimated or otherwise 'contained' alarming narratives about empire or blowback or the patriot Act or any of the other historically grounded, interests driven accounts of 9/11 that circulated in contemporary discourses after the event. (116-117)

Oskar's private invention and engagement are the ways to cope with trauma. The private trauma of Oskar and other characters is what state is repressing. The then discourses are full of fierce cry for revenge. State is marching towards it with War on Terror. State seems to have forgotten the private agonies or wants to fulfill its ideological position in the name of revenge.

Oskar invents lots of things in his mind for parts in narrative. His private invention in novel is his withdrawal into his private spaces called by Holloway "imagination as repressive acts, flights from traumatic reality or sublimation of it" (117). Repression along with sublimation of trauma is internalized by other characters too. Mr. Thomas Schell writes to Oskar that his relation with Mrs. Schell is "a life characterized by deep repression of traumatic history" (117). In the novel Mr. and Mrs. Schell's narrative also lead us to the trauma of Dresden bombing of 1945. The present trauma of 9/11 leads and connects it with past traumas of Dresden and Hiroshima.

Unlike Oskar of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Ahmad, 18, has lost nothing personally in 9/11 in John Updike *Terrorist* (2006). At the center of the plot of this novel is Ahmad and his relationship with other characters. Ahmad, who has Muslim lineage, feels that American "seek to take away [his] God" (Updike 1). He claims that "western culture is Godless" (3). Only money matters in America. As a result, Islam is his comfort and guide. Ahmad feels that America is doing greater wrongs. He Says:

[B]ecause it has no God, it is obsessed with sex and luxury goods. Look at television - - - how it's always using sex to sell you things you don't need. Look at the history the school teaches pure colonialist. Look how Christianity committed genocide on the Native American and underlined Asia and Africa and now is coming after Islam.(32)

Ahmad indicates that the reason of 9/11 is American way of life and its blunders. Therefore, he is ready to fight and sacrifice himself for defending his God. He wants to be a suicide bomber or 'terrorist' to defend his way of life. So his trauma turns out to be being minority Islam in post 9/11 America. Thus, Updike means to say that Americans themselves are instrumental in compelling someone to follow the terroristic way of life.

For Dan Dellios *Falling Man*'s (2007) characters the possibility is in "neither church going nor participation in anti-war protests"(Miller 33). Keith Neudecker, the lead character of *Falling Man* is a middle-aged man, professionally a lawyer, whose office lies in the World Trade Center. He was haunted because of his survival in 9/11 attacks. He even left his family to play the game of poker. He even tested his luck that spared him. His test even took the life of his friend. Therefore, critic Miller views him mere as "a humanoid robot" (33) than as an genuine human being.

In aftermath of these attacks people were feeling isolated because they either lost their kith and clan or their sense of secure first world is questioned. As perceived by various characters in different novels United States of America rather than redressing the personal trauma, goes blundering abroad. The blunder committed in the name of "War on Terror" heightened the trauma. People who demanded that justice be done to perpetrators are disillusioned due to (un)declared failure to restore peace and humanity in Afghanistan and Iraq. The war in Afghanistan and Iraq seem a failure as it failed to restore peace and order. Ahmad's hero Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks, was

killed by American force in Pakistan. According to Dan Dellio "this catastrophic event changes the way we think and act, moment to moment, week to week, for unknown weeks and months to come and steely years" (Harper, quoted in Miller 32). The point is studying the 9/11 attacks and its traumas are still vibrant because it has changed the way people "think and act" globally.

When there is outbreak of trauma, nation and media make it more traumatic. Media supplies the jingoistic discourse demanding revenge. The then reigning president George White Bush and other officials exploit the victims sense of revenge as an outcry for declaration of war. This political event has various impacts, implications and influences in fictional writing. Therefore, these various impacts and influences demand various responses. The novels chosen for this dissertation are some examples of various responses to trauma of 9/11.

Thus, either implicit or explicit reference to 9/11, the 9/11 novels deals with trauma. The novel which are responding to the "real world events"(Miller 32) selected for this dissertation are Ian McEwan *Saturday* and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. In their engagement with the real world event, novelists try to become true to the victims suffering. More than that, the novelists have to resist the media and administrations urge to support war as a means to bring security and justice to victims. In such dilemmatic situation, novelists should not be sentimental and political. They have to true to trauma and its narration. Therefore, with these primary texts, I am going to discuss whether these novelists read the trauma of 9/11 both in a grain and against it.

## Chapter Two

### Trauma Theory and Representation of 9/11

Trauma occurs when there is physical or psychological violence upon individual and a nation state. Such violence will be very instrumental to traumatize the subject, which will questioned subjectivity. The term trauma is so opaque in itself that we cannot provide a satisfying definition. In discussion of trauma, Duncan Bell defines it thus:

Like both 'identity' and 'memory', the term [trauma] is open to multiple interpretations. In pathology, it is used to designate 'a wound, or external bodily injury in general'. In psychology, trauma is understood as an emotional or psychic injury, and in psychoanalysis it is argued that such injuries are often repressed, remaining unhealed and leading to various forms of 'acting out'.(7)

The injuries and loss are repressed and they are revisited time and again. In different fields the very concepts of trauma has close meaning with subtle nuances. Today trauma theory has been a very useful tool to study war, terror, partition, holocaust, violence against women etc.

Therefore, "trauma is category of damage. It marks the limit of conventionalized assimilable experience and the vulnerability of the psychic organization to disrupting penetrations from outside" (Ray 1). As a result, victims and survivors' of traumatic event can't grasp them. Cathy Caruth writes in this connection that "trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed

and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (181). The event is so sudden that people cannot immediately make sense of it. Event in itself may not be inherently traumatic. The working or revisiting and revisiting of event through memory makes the event more traumatic. Therefore, "trauma occurs when some events leaves indelible marks upon consciousness which will mark memories forever and will change their future in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander, qtd in Bell 7).

September 11 has left what Alexander calls, 'indelible marks' upon the psyche of American commoner. The reason for this is that "the attacks did not just strike the symbols of U.S. power; they also struck the ground of American identity. Hence, the traumatic disturbance. Even now, American remains, psychologically, in a very fragile state" (Ray 137). Americans are in fragile state because they have not understood it fully at the time of occurrence. Cathy Caruth writes in this connection that

For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put in somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence. (187)

Trauma victims could not grasp the events and will give delay responses. The reason behind the victims' inability to grasp the event is that "events are not in themselves inherently traumatic" (Alexander, qtd in Bell 7). Alexander writes "trauma occurs when individuals and groups feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their consciousness, will mark



their memories forever, and will change their future in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (qtd in Bell 7). The falling down of the building is not inherently traumatic. The loss of sense of security and loss of kith and kins is major source of trauma in 9/11. The loss of near and dear one cannot be recovered. Though state can rebuild the building, the cracks that happen in "consciousness" cannot be easily reconstructed.

So how and when did trauma happen? For Duncan Bell "trauma occurs when there is a break, a displacement or disorganization in the orderly, taken-for-granted universe" (8). In the case of 9/11 the most secure and monitored world is attacked. Such 'break', 'displacement' or 'disorganization' may not need to happen to the traumatic individual himself. One may be connected to the pain and suffering of others, what Jenny Edkins calls "relationality". As argued by Jenny Edkins: "what is being remembered or perhaps more accurately re-constituted is relationality, that radical interconnectedness that has been so shockingly betrayed in and through the violence of trauma" (99). The relationality become radical because we may not loss our close one still we feel connected with the events. However, due to this relationality, traumatic individual is connecting with the events. More than that, trauma itself reveals the radical relationality. Trauma also reveals that our society is incomplete and fragile.

Edkins further elaborates that "What we call trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuse but a site of

danger" (109). Our community and family become potential danger because they make trauma more traumatic. As Edkins argues, "memory of trauma are, potentially, a mode of resistance to a language that forgets the essential vulnerability of flesh in its reification of state, nation and ideology" (100). These factors-"state, nation and ideology"- hinders to forgets the trauma. Trauma memory resists trauma.

Trauma is not easily forgettable because trauma victims do not understand the events at first. Therefore, there is always belated response. Cathy Caruth in this connection argues, "trauma as it first occurs is incomprehensible. It is only later, after a period of latency, that it can be balanced to a narrative, the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" (qtd. in Bergen 577). Then how it will be revisited, reworked, denied, repressed, reconstructed etc is the question. Sigmund Freud discusses these psychological notions dividing them in two terminologies: acting out and working through. These both terms works in relation with victims' traumatic memory. Dominick LaCapra's term and elaboration: melancholia and mourning respectively redefines the Freudian terminologies.

Summing up Freud, LaCapra writes "[Freud] saw melancholia as characteristics of arrested process in which the depressed and traumatized self, locked in compulsive repetition, remains narcissistically identified with the lost objects. Mourning brought the possibility of engaging trauma and achieving a reinvestment in, or "recathexis" of life that allowed one to begin again"(81). So in mourning traumatic victim " enables reconciliation with the loss" (Ray 145).

Therefore, mourning is "a homeopathic socialization or ritualisation of the repetition- compulsion that attempt to turn it against the "death drive" and counteract compulsiveness by re-petitioning in ways that allows for critical distances, change, resumption of life, and renewal"(81). Mourning allows the victims to begin life with new hope. It distanced the event and make very communicable relation.

In mourning victims recognizes the differences between present and past. In this phase, victims simultaneously, go through various phases of remembering and forgetting. Such victims take responsibilities and try to live in normality. LaCapra further elaborates that mourning

...involves an attempt to counteract the tendency to deny, repress or blindly repeat them, and it enables one to acquire critical perspective allowing for a measure of control and responsible action, notably including a mode of repetition related to the renewal of life in the present. It also requires an interactive context that mitigates isolation, depression and melancholia- a context that may have to extend beyond both self reflection and one- on- one relationship such as that between analyst and analysand and writer and reader. (90)

Therefore, in mourning victim "mourn them and learn to accept that we must be different" (Ray 2). The mourner always remains far from depression and is always with critical perspective to the event. Ray further analyses that "Finally that's what mourning means: accepting the burden of change. Going on, not as before,

but differently- with the awareness that in the wake of a closure, more, and not less, is demanded of us (2)". The victim in mourning stage would accept the trauma. Mourning stage makes them ready to accept the change. They try their best to move forward.

Unlike in mourning, in melancholia or acting out victim has "a mimetic relation to the past which is represented or relived as if it were present rather than represented in memory and inscription. In psychoanalytic terms, the acted out past is incorporated rather than introjected, and it returns as the repressed" (81). So in acting out past is presented as present. The victims do not desire to differentiate past and present. In melancholia "the loss is continually revisited, is vital, intrusive and persistent" (Ray 145). Victim in acting out phase wants to "lock in compulsive repetition" (LaCapra 81). K.M. Fierke writes, "in the repetition, the agent forgets the prototype of the present action, feeling themselves fully determined by present circumstances" (122).

According to LaCapra, "acting out may be necessary with respect to trauma, especially in the case of victims, and in cases of extreme trauma there may never be a fully transcendence of acting out"(89). LaCapra is clear that a victim cannot go in mourning phase from melancholic in "in cases of extreme trauma". James Berger elaborates the notions in these words:"[LaCapra] sets out to describe a way to work through trauma that does not "deny the irreducibility of loss or the role of paradox and aporia" but avoids becoming "compulsively fixed"(193). It's a very thin line, for LaCapra acknowledges a certain value in acting out. If there is no acting out at all, no repetition of the traumatic disruption,

the resulting account of the historical will be that teleological, redemptive fetishizing that denies the trauma's reality: it happened, but it had no lasting effects; look, we're all better now, even better than before. For LaCapra too, a trauma victim should go through the phase of acting out. Passing this stage a victim can get out of trauma better. Therefore, for trauma theorists like LaCapra, pure working through is not possible. The best way is the cooperation and co-working between these two. In the context of 9/11 whether working through or acting out is possible is the question. Traumatic events creates crisis in victims ability to know the reality.

When trauma victims are not able to understand the reality of 9/11, the then Bush administration provided an answer that 9/11 is "a moment of historical rupture, an epochal event that drew a clear line through world history, dividing what came after 9/11 from what went before"(Holloway 1). Administration claimed that it 9/11 is an act of evil and only military actions will brought justice to the victims. In the same vein historians represent the event. Among them, the most buzz concept is provided by the concept of clash of civilization by Samuel P. Huntington. Not only media but also the then president himself represents 9/11 in this way. President Bush in his address to the nation claims that 9/11 is an event which attack "our way of life"(Bush, qtd. in Asad 1). Such official representation simplify the complex cultural and historical concept. Thus President Bush opted militaristic actions and options are cleared "whoever is not with us is with terrorists"(Bush qtd. in Ray 137). The idea of clash of civilization slowly evaporated because "there is no such self-contained societies to which fixed

civilizational values correspond"(Asad 12). Likewise, some of the historians depicted this event as an act against American empire. "The concept of American empire often occupied the center ground in discussion about the causes and consequences of 9/11" (Holloway 12). Still other historians, like Michael Scheur, a senior CIA official in a book *Imperial Hubris*, claims that American foreign policy was resulted in 9/11 atrocities. The reason according to Scheur Islamic world believe " that the United States is attacking the religion, sanctities, resources, children, and dignity of Islam" (qtd in Holloway 19). Not only President Bush but majority of the historians seems to have forgotten the history and memory. They all are "arrested in a process in which the depressed and traumatized self, locked in compulsive repetition, remains narcissistically identified with the lost objects" (Freud qtd. in LaCapra 81). The lost objects for them are the sense of security in first world.

However, most shocking depiction of 9/11 came from political critics. Richard Clark, who resigned from White House counter terrorism chief, in his book *Against All Enemy* come with the conclusion that Bush administration "was diverting resources from the fight against al-Qaeda into a war in Iraq that had no connection with 9/11"(Holloway 168). So for Holloway "Clarke left no one in any doubt that the threat he envisaged came from the Bush administration as much as from al-Qaeda" (31), generated a shock to common people who thought that state is protecting them. Clarke even added that administration ignored pre intelligence warning about such possible actions. The major trauma for people here is not the act of 9/11 but the betrayal from administration that "very powers that [people] are

convinced will protect [them] and give security become [their] tormentors" (Edkins 109). Among such various opinions what common people will hear? How will they form their ideas? In the time of crisis people, rely more upon media narratives. Media try their best narration of the traumatic events and offer consumer their best alternatives.

We know that journalism the flow of news, information and ideas, is the circulation system of democracy, the way we find out what is what. It is based on journalism that we make up our national mind. However, how American media are reporting 9/11 and post 9/11 is issue under consideration. In post 9/11 most media backed up the administration's claim that there is crisis in republic. To mitigate that crisis urgent actions are required. According to Victor Navasky post 9/11 journalism reflected a number of ideological assumptions:

This was a time for rallying around the flag and that those who questioned national policy were giving aid and comfort to the enemy, that any attempt to link the events of September 11 to America's previous role in the Middle East or elsewhere was unworthy of serious coverage or consideration and some how smacked of apologetics; that the demonization of the Muslim world indulged in by the American press over recent decades had been vindicated. (xii)

American media abandon its republican obligations in the rush to support war on terror. Journalist became true American patriot. Demonization of Muslim is in climax. The American media, either electronic or print, failed to pay any attention

in America's role throughout the world and its foreign policy which was imperialistic in nature. Consequently, they failed to contextualize the events in broad spectrum.

The then media analyst protested that corporate US media had failed to provide even an outline discussion of the contexts from which the 9/11 attacks had sprung. American media should have provided "clarification of the historical background of the event, intelligent discussion of rational and effective responses and debate about what responses would be most appropriate and successful in dealing with the problem of global terrorism" (Kellner, qtd. in Holloway 59). Instead, the picture provided by media was as follows:

A benevolent, democratic and peace loving nation was brutally attacked by insane evil terrorists who hate the United States for its' freedoms and affluent way of life. The United States must immediately increase it's military and covert forces, locate the surviving culprits' and exterminate them; then prepare for a long-term war to root out the global terrorist cancer and destroy it.

(Navasky xiv)

Navasky and Kellner's analysis clarify that journalist turned out to be subjective participants rather than objective observer of events. We know that objectivity is myth but the best one can hope for is fairness balance, neutrality and detachment. The mainstream media shows their colors by dividing into right and left. Their opinion, which echo Bush administration, opines that "Our way of life"(Asad 7) is



under attack. We should defend it at any cost. America cannot be secure country until termination of terrorism through war.

To terminate terrorism, it seems natural to rally around the flag in times of trouble. But my problem is not with patriotisms per se but with the jingoistic brand of patriotism promulgated by the media. American media coverage of 9/11 also entailed a specific reconstruction of meaning of America "as a body politic of galvanized for war" (Holloway 62). CBS News anchor Dan Rather's claim can be taken as a representative case. Rather said: "George Bush is the president, he makes the decisions, and you know as just one American, he wants me to line up. Just tell me where. And he'll make the call" (qtd. in Zelizer and Allan 5). Rather turns out to be a "patriotic citizens". Such expression, instead of investigation and research, makes war appear more acceptable. Due to such common people accepts the war thinking that it a just one and war in Iraq is going to give justice to the victims. As a result, common people cease to search objectivity and become true patriot.

Such a patriotic expression as above shows that mass media were not focusing about free flow of information and depth analysis. Media personalities were traumatized and lack critical distance on those in power and an informed perspective on American's place in the world. At the same time white house and pentagons' were attempting to manage the news agenda on "war on terror" mainly invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. The idea of war may not have been new but the intensity with which state agencies sought to administer the news agenda on "war on terror" was unprecedented. According to Holloway

Both the Pentagon and White House approached press conferences and media briefings as opportunities to spin events aggressively in their favor to global audiences and in many respects media access to the Iraq war was more extensively policed than any previous American conflict. (66)

While the invasion of Afghanistan was going on Bush administration wanted republican fourth state to prepare people for Iraqi war. Most media relied almost exclusively on current and former government officials to provide interpretation of the day's event and so effectively frame what had happened and what would happen as a result.

Why American democratic practice and media are not informing people strongly against terrorism? Why people are not so much surprised by the events and consequent war on terror? Because terror is what surrounds American, according to Davis,

Terror surrounds us and not primarily as some foreign infection threatening us from outside the body politic. Terror is , rather , one of the things that most of us experienced a steady diet of growing up and something , sadly , many of us have practiced ever since. Terror is perhaps the truth of the American family and as such perhaps the most revealing definition of American society(151).

Terror is day to day reality for American. They have these things in collective psyche. They are habituated with it in domestic and foreign situations

One question which appeared rarely in the then media was "why?".

Members of public making their way through the September coverage could learn much from what reporters told them about the "who", "what", "where", "when", and "how" of the attacks. The matter of "why", however, remained elusive. Why do they hate us? articles should have flooded the news, views and analysis. No one, source or journalist dares to go against unified American option for war. Instead, media wholeheartedly supports administration's option and act as if an option other than supporting the president did not exist. Administration also has not given media and common public any choice claiming that "whoever is not with us is with the terrorists"(Bush qtd. in Ray 137). Scholar Robert McChesney observed "What is most striking in the US news coverage following the September 11 attacks is how that very debate over whether to go to war or how best to respond didn't even exist" (qtd. in Navasky xiv). The veteran investigative reporter Carl Bernstein described the Bush administration as "Nixonian in character, in its willingness to manipulate the press" and attributed to the White House and the office of the vice president a campaign of "disinformation, misinformation and unwillingness to tell the truth that went beyond even Nixon, something that I have never witnessed before on this scale" (qtd. in Holloway 72-73). Administration's media manipulation was excessive.

Such excessive media manipulation media, as discussed above, almost replace the term 9/11 with "Ground Zero". The term and the images of 9/11 haunt American psyche. The term ground zero itself marked the "return of repressed American history" (Ray 51). What was repressed in American that is dugout by

9/11 was the guilt of Hiroshima. So in post 9/11, Americans were haunted by the memory of bombing of 1945. Gene Ray writes "9/11 triggered an unconscious discursive reenactment of the problem of US guilt for the 300,000, mostly noncombatant victims of the first use of nuclear weapons against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945"(51). Even the use of the term itself surfaced what is buried in American psyche. The reuse and relocation of the term, firstly used in 1945 to refer Hiroshima, "sought to express the depth of American pain and grief and the performative effect of the displacement is to claim for a nation a kind of ultimate victimhood"(52). The use of the term and discourse in media analysis and political sphere marks that there is wound in collective psyche.

What is the wound to American in 9/11? Is it the loss of the common citizen or realization that America is not loved by all? Mainly the desire for revenge and search for justice such discourse is highlighted. The reason for Ray is that "U.S. leaders committed crime against humanity for which they have never held account and which U.S. citizens have so far avoided confronting"( 53). The American denial of Hiroshima guilt resurfaced after 9/11. Ray further writes

Today Americans would rather act out Hiroshima than make any effort to critically process it. Here, there has still not been the slightest official acknowledgement of Hiroshima Day: no admission of guilt or expression of remorse has ever been issued from the White House.(58-59)

American failed to recognize it. But the link of Hiroshima and 9/11 resurfaced in discourses. It is resurfaced as a "regressive moment of American patriotic excess" (59). Despite state denial, individual and media were making the link of Hiroshima with 9/11. "But as long as the genocidal atrocities are perpetrated in the name of the nation, working through will remain a collective and even structural as well as private task" (59). As a result, "United States as a nation and a people, was traumatized by the attacks of September 11 but not quite in the way most American believe" (136). They should have mourn the loss properly and work out from it. Instead, Administration declared War on Terror.

Two planes plunged into a building and something exploded in American psyche. The explosion brought what is hidden in the collective psyche. The images of the events awaken other images buried in the psyche. The images "a plane embedded surrealistically in a building; bodies falling from the sky; that great granite elevator going down; the terrible black clouds rushing forth to engulf a feeling multitude; and then the countless dead buried alive, passing in the endless queue across the shattered landscape of the nations consciousness" (Davis 3). Present leads to past trauma. To quote Davis is apt here

Images from the present world must speak to other images tied to memories buried in the nation's history; to thing forgotten ungrived, vigorously denied , things in the past that have never been confronted and worked through .On 9/11 did many Americans perhaps realize, if only for a moment, that we were experiencing ,in dimindshed form, what it was like to be in Hiroshima city in Aug

6,1945 when in an instant an entire city disappeared in a flash, condemning the survivors to a condition of nameless dread, to wandering directionless in a landscape become nightmare (4)

The events of 9/11 lead American to digout what is buried into their collective psyche or what is called collective unconscious. Therefore, "Hiroshima was the first act of global terrorism"(6). 9/11 attacks is presented as an act of terrorism. Then what are the possibilities of healing. A response reply must begin with the recognition that it was through America that terror on a global scale first came into world and that America remain its global practitioners. "Ground Zero haunt [American] not because they feel guilt about it but because they don't"(9). In other words, guilt for them is that which they must evacuate. That is why; whenever "[Americans] are traumatized they repeat the psychological operations they perfected in Hiroshima"(9). So "tragic understanding of history assures American no catharsis, no renewal, no guarantees. What it offers instead is the realization that to sustain and deepen the trauma is only hope of American" (9).

In their attempt to heal the trauma of 9/11, Bush administration declared 'War on Terror' declaring, "the American way of life is not negotiable" (Davis 9). Davis further writes

Pre-emptive unilateralism is psychologically necessary to the fantasmatic demand for grandiose action as the only means of restoration .Reality be damned. Thus the unleashing of a weapons of mass destruction , depleted uranium, on a country, people, race,

and religion that deserve that fate for being the non-cause of 9/11.

( 56)

American force failed to find out weapons of mass destruction. Why American democratic practice and media are not waging people strongly against terrorism. Why people are not so much surprised by the events and consequent war on terror. Because terror is what surrounds American. They were supplied similar media narratives that present that War on Terror is just war waged as per necessity to terminate terrorism and make "homeland" secure.

How such collective psyche is represented in literature? How literary writers approach the 9/11 in relation to trauma theory? Especially, novels written in the aftermath of 9/11 represent trauma in various ways. Those novels do have either explicit or implicit reference to trauma. According to David Holloway "the early 9/11 novel generalized from contemporary events a working definition of historical experience as trauma"( Holloway 107). Most of the novel presented "emotionally damaged, unstable or mentally ill" (7), as narrator and character. For most of the novelists the term 9/11 itself "reiterate the trauma to which they point, and a close reading of them will help us approach the difficult question of how and why September 11 registers as a cultural trauma"(Radfield 56). The main points for the writers is to deal "how and why September 11" become "a cultural trauma". In such dilemma, various writers come up with various responses.

9/11 novelists were presenting characters who were "repressing history as a function of trauma"(Holloway 117). For some of the writer " contemporary events were somehow bigger than could be accommodated within established

literary modes"(Holloway 127). As a result, some of the writers mix genres to represent the trauma of 9/11. It means some novels were using the elements of other genre like photography in novels. More than that, "9/11 novelists also questioned the capacity of language, and by extension their own novels, to construct meaningful civic engagements with contemporary events"(107). These writers are facing problems of representing trauma. They feel the conventional writing could not represent the 9/11 trauma.

However, "thematically, 9/11 novels weren't always directly about 9/11 or its consequences. The early 9/11 novels had a particular tendency to sublimate contemporary anxieties" (108). The events always loom large at the background of all fictional works. Most of the novelists' have used "orphans or troubled children and youths or adult sons and daughters involved in distressing relationship with parents or guardian figures" (108).

In such critical condition of chaos and confusion, how can novelists present the true trauma of victims? To depict the trauma of the victims, novelist should not be influenced by the media hype. The event of 9/11 was transformed into readable space because of narratives of patriotism and heroism. In such situation, media narratives were deployed to legitimize the questionable military actions to the common people. As discussed earlier, media narratives represent 9/11 as a crisis in the republic. Such representation demanded more patriot response. Besides that, media demands American individual to line up for War on Terror as a justice to the atrocities of 9/11. So now, the question for novelists is how to represent the events without taking side of media demands and depicts the



essence and be truthful to the victims trauma. How the victims is operated in such conditions and how one is acting out or working through? How the victims is working with the media narratives and coming to their own conclusion? These and other similar questions are at the center of the analysis of this dissertation to follow.

This chapter discussed methodological ideas that I will employ in textual analysis of my dissertation. Firstly, I have commenced with general view of trauma, with the definition of Duncan Bell, who defined trauma as "Psychic injuries...often repressed, remaining unhealed and leading to various forms of 'acting out'". Secondly, I discussed the concept of trauma in more detailed with the Cathy Caruth's ideas. With Caruth's ideas, I discussed how trauma victims give 'delayed' responses to trauma. More than that, I have used Jeffery Alexander and Jenny Edkins, who argue when and how trauma occurs. According to Edkins, trauma occurs "when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors". After that, I have discussed Freudian concept of acting out and working through revised and elaborated by Dominick LaCapra as mourning and melancholia. With this discussion, I come to a point that physical and psychological violence cause trauma, which lately results in mourning or melancholia or in both.

Thirdly this chapter discussed how 9/11 as a trauma is represented in historiography and politics briefly. Historiographers have utilized various concepts to give logic of 9/11 from clash of civilization to imperial hubris. Here my discussion focused on how historians and political critics accused American

government not being sensible to the trauma of common people in pre and post 9/11. I even discussed how some historians accused President Bush being equal source of trauma, when he failed to protect his citizens' from 9/11 and now leading them to war. Here I have quoted Talal Asad and David Holloway. Fourthly, I have discussed in details how mass media represented 9/11. Mass media representation is very much subjective and patriotic. All journalists were "rallying around the flag", demanding common people to support administration's option for War on Terror. Media never discussed Why suicide bombers hate America? In this section, I have employed the ideas of David Holloway, Victor Navasky and Zelier and Allan mainly.

Fifthly this chapter briefly talked the psyche of common people after 9/11, mainly, as discussed by Walter Davis. As elaborated by Davis after 9/11 Americans were horrified and they were digging their memory. The use of the term 'Ground Zero' reminds them of Hiroshima and the terror they unleash in WW II. Here I have shown how present trauma leads to past trauma, which was buried in memory. Last but not the least; I have briefly discussed fictional representation of 9/11. Using David Holloway's arguments, I have discussed how fictional responses range from experimentation to mimetically depicting victims trauma. Moreover, I wrap this chapter with contextualizing my statement of problem and hypothesis.

### Chapter: Three

#### Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*: From Melancholia to Mourning

Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, a primary text selected for this dissertation, is mainly based on the narrative of Oskar Schell, besides others narrators. As discussed earlier also, Oskar is a disturbed child who lost his father in World Trade Center. Foer has made this child of nine main narrator besides two more narrators, the paternal grandparents of Oskar: Mr. and Mrs. Schell. Oskar's grandparents, whose narratives focus the personal trauma of Dresden, are the trauma survivors of Dresden bombing 1945.

*Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* took the reader's attention into the private trauma of these narrators. As a result, language of this novel is fragmented, disjunctive and abstract due to the focus on the internalized memory. All these narrators withdrew from public sphere. To quote Holloway is apt here:

*Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*'s definition of private, interiorized experience as nothingness and its suggestion that withdrawal from social, public or historical space produces only faulty vision, cleared room for the novel to evaluate its own interiorisations as ideological acts: versions of 9/11 that suppressed, sublimated or otherwise 'contained' alarming narratives about empire, or 'blowback', or the patriot Act, or any of the other

historically grounded, interests-driven accounts of 9/11 that circulated in contemporary discourse after the event. (Holloway 117)

Instead of discussing the event in reference to empire or the consequences of American foreign policies or the patriot act, the characters are involved in their own private trauma. The traumatic child narrator, Oskar, is involved in his own world that invents many things. He invents a tea kettle which whistles tunes in his father's voice " I could invent a tea kettle that reads in Dads voice" ( Foer 1). In this way, Oskar lives in his own fantasy. This fantasy is sublimation of his trauma of losing his father. He also designs ornaments for mother using various code, which are transcriptions of father's last call from World Trade Center. Oskar here is sublimating which can't be worked in day-to-day life.

In this novel not only Oskar but also other characters represses their traumatic past or memory. We have a section of letter addressed to Oskar's father by Oskar's grandfather, Mr. Thomas Schell. In that letter, Thomas writes that he and his wife never talked about past (Foer 108). They agree to repress their traumatic past. They are not ready to accept their reality and share it with other. In this way, repression is integrated in novel itself. These narrators are having what LaCapra calls "a mimetic relation to the past", LaCapra elaborates that "a mimetic relation to the past which is represented or relived as if it were present rather than represented in memory and inscription. In psychoanalytic terms, the acted out past is incorporated rather than introjected, and it returns as the repressed" (81). So in acting out, past is presented as present. The victims do not desire to differentiate

past and present. All narrators are repressing their traumatic past as their way of coping with their trauma. As an act of repression, Oskar even re-imagines the events of 9/11. He goes back to past when he imagines the collapse of World Trade Center. This is his way of rewriting history. In this rewriting, he saves his father. Oskar in this way fantasizes about the events that for him 9/11 has not taken place. Therefore, invention, imagination, sublimation, repression etc are some of the trauma techniques gone through by various characters in this novel. Now let us turn to the characters ways of coping with trauma separately.

Oskar, 9, the main character, is trauma survivor of 9/11. In those events, he has lost his father. He is presented in the novel more smartly than to his age. His experiences are more mature to his age. His mature thoughts are coupled with his childish behavior. In this novel, I find him sharing his wishes with his friends Toothpaste and the Minch. Contrastingly, he is carrying Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, the book he liked most.

Oskar is living in emotional struggle for survival when he comes to know that his father was killed in attacks on the World Trade Center. He shows his trauma by using an expression repetitively "wears heavy boots" to mean his state, sadness, trauma, and depression. He lost whom he loved most or in other words, he lost whom he is lived most. Eventually he lost father figures that his father represent. Unfortunately, he feels that the people he come across are making his boot more heavy. That depresses him more. Sometimes he is overpowered by suicidal instincts. He knows that he is mediating life and death. He is trying to balance between them. But he is afraid to die. Unlike his parental grandparents, he

does not like to die. His fear of comes from the story told to him by his father. He had heard the story of Sixth Borough on 10th September.

Oskar possesses various features of trauma survivor, which we normally expect in adults. Oskar has numerous ways to express his sadness. He is ready to perform the task of detective, which seems to be impossible. He wants to preserve the last phone calls from his father. He goes to market bought a new phone. He narrates how carefully he hides it after transferring the messages in the new one:

I knew I could let mom hear the messages, because protecting her is my most important *raison d'être*... It was on a TV there that I saw that the first building had fallen. I bought the exact same phone and ran home and recorded our greeting from first phone onto it. I wrapped up the old phone in the scarf that Grandma was never able to finish because of my privacy, and I put that in a grocery bag, and I put that in a box, and I put that in another box, and I put that under a bunch of stuff in my closet, like my jewelry workbench and albums of foreign currncies. (Foer 55)

Oskar is very careful not to lose the last voice of his father. He is so careful that he wraps the phone two to three times. This also stands for his trauma. He has levels of trauma. The wrapping of the phone can be read as his wrapping in trauma. He is having a mimetic relation to past. He is not ready to share his trauma but he is hiding and listening time and again. In this connection According to Freud, Oskar is "locked in compulsive repetition" (qtd. in LaCapra 81) of the past. Here he has shown somehow melancholic character.

Oskar got a key in his father's closet. He also got an envelope written 'black'. Oskar here is a true melancholic character. LaCapra writes

[Freud] saw melancholia as characteristics of arrested process in which the depressed and traumatized self, locked in compulsive repetition, remains narcissistically identified with the lost objects. Mourning brought the possibility of engaging trauma and achieving a reinvestment in, or "recathexis" of life that allowed one to begin again. (81)

He is determined to find the matching lock and meet all person named black in New York. Oskar is in 'compulsive repetition' of past. The key fascinates him because that is related to his father. So he always identifies himself with the lost object. He even says that finding the matching key is his reason of existence. Oskar says, "That night when I decided that finding the lock was ultimate *raison d'être*-the *raison* that was the master over all other raisons- I really needed to hear him" (55). This process of finding the matching key is his movements towards unlocking the trauma he is suffering from.

When Oskar is in New York City, he avoids lots of places. For him they are the possible targets. His various activity results in hypervigilance. He even failed to sleep at night. He imagines plans which will be useful himself in critical conditions when he is under threat. He was so traumatized by his inventions that he even imagines death of his father. He himself agrees that he over invents his father's death. He says, "So I can stop inventing how he died. I am always inventing" (Foer 282). Such imagination involves him in his pain. They also work

as denying what had happened. He always imagines alternative and saves his father. He even imagines that if he could, he would choose his mother to die in World Trade Center attacks.

In one section, Oskar says that from his childhood he memorizes the famous lines from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* "To be and not to be, that's the question"(qtd. in Foer 75). He talks a lot about his class performance. Here Hamlet and Oskar has have similar conditions. After the death of his father Oskar thinks that his mother is in love with Ron. But mother insists that he is her best friend. Oskar shows his attitudes towards Ron. He is happy that Grandma and mom watch his performance. More than that, he is happy that Ron is absent. He says "The second performance was also pretty great. Mom was there, but Ron had to work late. That was OK, though, because I didn't want him there anyway" (146). In this school performance, Oskar's performance is very rude and violent.

Oskar tries his best go hide himself from physical and psychological threats. In his attempts to hide himself, he shows some melancholic features and pass through 'acting out'. He is not fully able to share and control what had happened. It means he is not able to share his experiences with either mother or grandmother. However, he describes everything in subtle detail to strangers like Mr. Black and his grandmother's renter.

Oskar hides his feelings, inventions, and experiences. He outbursts his feelings mainly with those who are near and dear- mother and grandma in disguised ways. Oskar even tells his mother "[he] could have chosen [her]" (Foer 171) to die. Oskar is not happy that his mother is not mourning over the loss of her



husband. He even suspects that she is in love with Ron. "Either promise me you will never fall in love again" (171). He want his mother love him only. He is so violent that he threatened her to stop to love her, who is his "reason of existence" (55). Since he is not talking with grandma and he feels that his mother is in love, he feels "extremely depressed and incredibly alone" (171). His feeling of loneliness makes him unable to sleep because he is inventing various things and imagines plans etc. When he falls asleep, he is tortured by nightmares. Oskar is giving responses which are "often delayed and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 181). Such revisiting makes him more traumatic. Oskar is so traumatized that he even gives pain and trouble to himself. He says, "If I'd been alone, I would have given myself the biggest bruise of my life. I would have turned myself into one big bruise"(Foer 295). He seems to have changed mind. He seems to have accepted the death of his father, which can be read as his mourning.

Oskar has some similar characteristics like his grandfather mainly in his way to deal his trauma. Thomas always recreates Anna who was dead in Dresden bombing. Like his grandfather, Oskar creates his father. According to Cathy Caruth, Oskar is narrativising his trauma in latency period. Caruth writes "trauma as it first occurs is incomprehensible. It is only later, after a period of latency, that it can be balanced to a narrative, the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" (qtd. in Bergen 577). Oskar tries his best to remember everything about him. He imagines numerous alternative conditions out of which he could love him. The search for lock and

person named Black is his desperate attempts to organize his father's tattered images in organic whole. He is searching person named black as the consequence of this melancholic fantasy. This help him to keep his father's memory refreshed in his mind.

His mother and grandma tell him time and again that he reminds them of his father and grandfather. He is not happy that he just reminds himself. He reminds something else. But he also feel comfort that he is able to reminds them his father. He becomes happy that he is like his father. In this situation, Oskar has shown mix behaviors of acting out with working through. This can be taken as his war of mourning over the loss of his father and tentative recovery from it.

Towards the end, Oskar tells everything to his mother, though he does not like her at the beginning and has not said anything. For Ray, Oskar is a mourning character who accepts the burden of the events. Ray writes in this connection that "finally that's what mourning means: accepting the burden of change. Going on, not as before, but differently- with the awareness that in the wake of a closure, more , and not less, is demanded of us" (2). Oskar is thinking of going differently by sharing his trauma with his near and dear one. He is surprised that she knew everything that he thought was secret. She knew that her husband's messages in their answering phone which is great secret for Oskar. Oskar while coping with trauma had released his agonies over mother. He agrees with his mother that he has realized his problems. He even promises to do his best. This is his development from melancholic to mourning. His quest for matching lock failed to

take him to his father as he like. Therefore, he goes to the refuge of his mother and grandmother.

Grandmother of Oskar, another major character of the novel is a survivor of Dresden besides her husband. She is coping with trauma far better than Thomas Schell, her husband. Grandmother seems to be the character in the novel who accepts the trauma more. She has not lost her speech. She is very talk active. She is not so tortured with the past. In comparison with her husband, Mr. Thomas Schell, Mrs. Schell has energy to communicate and share her story of life with others.

Mr. and Mrs. Schell are people having contrasting characteristics. For example Mr. Schell is not ready to keep silent about own traumatic past. However, he is trying his best to motivate his wife to give the silence and share her trauma with other. Mr. Thomas Schell encourages her wife to record her life in writing. The idea is that it will better express herself by realizing the pressure of trauma. It means Mr. Schell suggestion is that writing will work as a therapy. Even he arranges her typing machine. Unfortunately, grandma is not writing her story. She tells it to Oskar in her narration. She says "I did not say anything when your grandfather came home that night. I thanked him for the papers and magazines. I went to the guest room and pretended to write. I hit the space bar again and again and again. My life story was spaces" (Foer 172). She just pretends that she is writing by just hitting the spacebar of her typewriter continuously.

Grandma is also struggling with crisis of life and that of death. Her personality is divided in possibility of death and prospect of beginning a new life

after Dresden bombing. She differentiates between past and present. Grandma's condition can best be described by LaCapra's definition of mourning. LaCapra writes, "Mourning brought the possibility of engaging trauma and achieving a reinvestment in, or "recathexis" of life that allowed one to begin again" (81). Finally, she chose to live and chosen Mr. Thomas Schell. She begins to think of him. Thomas began to occupy major attention in her mind. More than that, it gives her reason of survival. Likewise, there are lots of points which will differentiate Mr. and Mrs. Schell in their ways of coping with trauma. One point is that Grandma is talk-active. She shares her experiences. When she talks, she tells the story as a Dresden bombing survivor. But, the reader failed to get her firsthand account of Dresden air raids. There is gap between her experiences of childhood in Dresden and her life in New York. The gap is her trauma time.

As a trauma survivor, Grandma looks like she is cooperating with trauma better as compared to her husband. Mrs. Schell was in suspicion that her husband is leaving her and her kid. When she asked him why you are doing this, he replied her that he has no idea to survive. At that time also she was in agreement with her husband that even she has no idea. But she add that she is trying. Surprisingly he answers her that he does not know even trying. Here the first impression that Grandma is better in coping her trauma turns out to be clear though she has almost same suffering as trauma subjects. Thus, she is melancholic and mourning at the same time.

Thomas Schell, grandfather of Oskar, is living with the burden of trauma of Dresden bombing. He had lost his pregnant girlfriend Anna. The trauma of

9/11 to him is less traumatic than of Dresden. He could not grasp completely what had happened to him. He was so happy when he first came to know that he is going to be father. Let me quote him, from his letters to Oskar, how happy he was while awaiting the trauma:

‘ Don’t run away from me.’ She wouldn’t look at me. I asked ‘ what’s happened?’ I’d never seen her cry before... She said ‘I’m pregnant’. I can’t write what we said to each other then. Before I left, she said, ‘please be overjoyed.’ I told her I was, of course I was. I kissed her, I kissed her stomach, that was the last time I ever saw her. At 9:30 that night, the air-raid sirens sounded, everyone went to shelters, but no one hurried, we were use to alarms, we assumed they were false, why would anyone want to bomb Dresden? (Foer 210)

Unfortunately, he lost his girlfriend. He survives but his soul was dead in Dresden. He failed to organize his life. This is his past trauma. In 9/11 when he lost his son that makes him more traumatic. According to Duncan Bell character, like Thomas, "in the moments of crisis hark back to the past with amplified intensity" (6). Therefore, Thomas is in "compulsion repetition of the past"(LaCapra 81). The trauma of 9/11 took the characters like Thomas to their traumatic memory that is burried deep in mind. He is a very melancholic and invented rules to lock himself in the traumatic past.

As his way of coping with trauma, he invented various rules with his wife. He just wanted to live in past and in his memory. These are the symptoms of

melancholia. He locks himself in the memory of Anna. He is compromising with his life. Grandma told Oskar that

Our marriage was not unhappy, Oskar. He knew how to make me laugh. And sometimes I made him laugh. We had to make rules, but who doesn't. There is nothing wrong with compromising. Even if you compromise almost everything. (Foer 171)

Thomas invented rules to repress his reality. He is not ready to accept what had happened to him and work through it. He says in a letter to his son, which is never sent, that "Your mother and I never talk about the past, that's rule" (Foer 108). Thomas is "arrested process in which the depressed and traumatized self, locked in compulsive repetition, remains narcissistically identified with the lost objects" (LaCapra 81). The purposes of these rules are to lock himself in memory. He is unable to live in present.

The reason of his inability to live in present is the loss of Anna. The loss of Anna left what Jeffery Alexander calls "indelible marks". Alexander writes "trauma occurs when some events leaves indelible marks upon consciousness which will mark memories forever and will change their future in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (qtd. in Bell 7). The loss of Anna and the loss of his unborn baby changes his life forever. Consequently, he is not able to cope with his wife when he got married.

Thomas and his wife are unable to cope with present. They have created places like 'Nothing and something' (109) after their marriage. Thomas narrates

Only a few months into our marriage, we started marking off areas in the apartment as 'Nothing Places,' in which one could be assured of complete privacy...that they would be nonexistent territories in the apartment in which one could temporarily cease to exist, the first was in the bedroom...it was a good place to disappear, it worked so well that we decided to create a Nothing Place in the living room, it seemed necessary, because there are times we need to disappear while in the living room....the side of door that faced the guest room was Nothing, the side that faced the hallway was Something, the knob that connected them was neither Something or Nothing. ( Foer 110)

Thomas wants to cease to exist. That's why he has created these spaces called 'nothing and Something'. He thinks that after Dresden there is need to survive. To "cease to exist" is better way. For this, he carefully divided the apartment and marked it out. He realized that love making except Anna is of no value. Therefore, he marks the bedroom a 'Nothing' place. This is his way if coping with his trauma, clearly showing melancholic features.

Thomas locks himself so much that he writes to his son that "I will never be your father"( 125). He further writes in his letter why he is suffering and does not want to live:

I'm telling you all this because I will never be your father, and you always be my child... its not out of selfishness that I am leaving, how can I explain that? I can't live, I've tried and I can't... Your

mother suffered too, but she chose to live, and be her son and her husband. I don't expect that you'll ever understand me, much less forgive me. (145)

Because of such trauma, Thomas is living bodily though dead spiritually. He even ceased to be father. He says that he is not living. He has chosen not to live. He is not ready to take any responsibility. He just wants to go back to past. He wants to recover the pre traumatic stage. So, he never accepts what had happened to him. He failed to realize that past could not be retrieved. He does not talk with anyone about his past. He has not shared anything. However, Thomas encourages his wife to share her feelings he does not even try. If he had talked, it could have a talking therapy, which might ease his trauma. He acts as if he has lost his speech. So he is melancholic character who is not ready to accepts the event.

The problem with Thomas is his inability to forget. He can't forget his memory. As Maja Zehfuss writes:

Although remembering and forgetting are clearly opposed to each other in debates over memory, and former valued over the latter, they are inextricably linked: remembering always already entails forgetting and forgetting is possible only where there is remembering in the first place.

(Zehfuss 213)

Thomas is not ready to forget. He is always remembering the loss of Anna. He is paying his compensation by remembering Anna.



Jonathan Safran Foer in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* has shown how people are traumatized by events that are around them. All three major characters, Oskar and his grandparents are the victims of trauma. Oskar is very smart and is doing lots of things to cope his trauma of losing his father. He invented lots of things and plans where he tries his best to save his father. He is mostly preoccupied to find out the matching lock to the one he found out. The key is the key of his life. The finding of matching is the solution to his trauma. He even thought of visiting everyone in New York naming black. This is his impossible mission. But he failed to find any clue and finally shares his feelings with his mother. He finally comes to accept the truth that life of his father cannot be retrieved.

The trauma of Oskar is he lost whom he thought would protect him in critical situations. According to Edkins trauma occurs "when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a site of danger" (109). The very place where his father works become a site of danger. According to Oskar his mother is not mourning the loss of her husband. Even he does not know why his father was killed. State has not given them necessary care.

Similarly, for Mr. and Mrs. Schell the loss they bear in Dresden is too unbearable. More than that, they lost their son in 9/11 attacks. Mr. Schell is not ready to live his life. He himself said that he cannot. For him the loss of Anna is unbearable. He is not ready to accept the change and move ahead. He wants to

live past. Memory becomes his refuse. Likewise, Mrs. Schell seems to typing her life story but she is just hitting the space bar. She even do have suicidal feelings. This novel has truly presented all characters' trauma. The loss these characters had gone through is unrecoverable. As a result, their trauma is so horrific that it cannot be spoken easily. To speak the unbearable loss of Dresden and mainly 9/11, Foer has used mix of narratives. Such first person narratives take us close to the pain of these characters. Therefore, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* tells the unspeakable trauma in very faithful way.

## Chapter Four

### Media's Construction & Interpretation of Trauma in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*

*Saturday*, another Primary text chosen for this dissertation, is exploring the life in West after 9/11. This novel takes place in London. It just covers one day- Saturday, 15 Feb 2003- in the life of main character Henry Perowne. That day was the day when worldwide mass demonstrations were organized. Those angry public were against the heralding NATO/ American invasion in Iraq. The trauma that occurs to Perowne can be described as psychological and physical violence. Psychologically he is tormented by the 9/11 attacks which questioned his secure first world. In addition, physically Perowne is tormented by the cars clash with local gangster Baxter and Baxter's violence and terror in his family. Because of such violence, Perowne is in constant touch of the media narratives, which in turn makes him more traumatic.

As also quoted in introduction, this novel is the "personality and conscious of Perowne" (Holloway 113). The main character Henry Perowne does not participate in the public demonstration. He keeps himself busy in the preparation of his family reunion in the evening. However, Perowne is trying to detach himself from the day to day events, he is unable to do it because his life of that day is fully overpowered by various media's coverage. He, time and again, turns the radio or TV on and off. Perowne's source of trauma is attacks upon his stable secure first world. According to Duncan Bell, "trauma occurs when there is a break, a displacement or disorganization in the orderly, taken-for-granted universe" (8). Perowne had taken his world as very secure from any sort of foreign

attacks. However, 9/11 attacks show that he is a potential victim. To make sense of his doomed existence, Perowne is consuming media narratives.

Perowne examines that "it's a condition of the time, this compulsion to hear how it stands with the world and to be joined to the generality, to community of anxiety" (McEwan 180). This feeling detaches him and isolates him. He has no choice than to be a member of the "community of anxiety". He is so much dependent upon media that he is anxious all the time. Media narratives are so patriotic, which I will discuss later, that they create sense of urgency. That urgency makes social member desperate for war. However, Perowne is in favor of war in Iraq. He says that "[Iraq] war is going to happen with or without UN" (62). He thinks that the war is just because "Saddam's organizing principle was terror" (73). Henry Perowne even thinks that "Iraq is a rotten state, a natural ally of terrorists, bound to cause mischief at some point and may as well be taken out now while military is feeling perky after Afghanistan" (100). For Perowne this world is becoming less and less secure. The reason for this "rotten state" is due to states like Iraq. Nevertheless, he is a successful neurosurgeon, living in his well furnished home in one of the richest nations of the world. However, in such richest nations security is achieved through exclusion of those factors which are potential threat. These elements are kept outside. In case of Perowne, he has to keep Baxter outside of his family.

The luxurious and stable world of Perowne is challenged because of his car crash with local gangster: Baxter. Baxter and his friends threaten Perowne to solve the issues of car crash. At this moment Perowne uses his medical knowledge

to diagnose Baxter, who experiences Huntington Diseases. Perowne gives him false hope of recovery. He wants to achieve security of his family but at the cost of keeping other out of his house. His false hope later creates problems when Baxter entered into his home and terrorizes his family. Perowne has misused his knowledge to create truth.

Saturday, 15 Feb 2003 is the day when states-mostly Western democratic - are planning invasion of Iraq to guarantee the security of their nation. The novels violence and the exclusion of the Baxter by Perowne, is similar act of states who tries to keep threat out of it. There is some sort of analogy between Baxter with 9/11 hijackers. In both cases, what are at core are cultural differences. In this connection, McEwan seems to be comparing Islamic fundamentalist idea with Huntington thesis. Therefore, the reasons McEwan offers to 9/11 seems to be the Huntington's idea. So 9/11 and Iraq invasion are due to cultural differences.

The context of attacks was presented as a clash of civilization by media narratives. As referred by the then President Bush that those 9/11 attackers are against "our way of life", as a result, choice is narrowed down by President Bush himself that rest of countries are "with us or with terrorists"(qtd. in Asad 7). Major western Medias and character like Perowne are fully affirmed that the reasons for attacks are the clashes of civilization. The narratives provided by media is:

A benevolent, democratic and peace loving nation was brutally attacked by insane evil terrorists who hate the United States for its' freedoms and affluent way of life. The United States must immediately increase it's military and covert forces, locate the

surviving culprits' and exterminate them; then prepare for a long-term war to root out the global terrorist cancer and destroy it.

(Navasky xiv)

But the idea of clash of civilization is so simple that it erased its complexities. This idea erased the differences within any culture and made it homogenous. The point is the idea of clash of civilization is easily graspable. Perowne says, "In the ideal Islamic state, under strict Shari'a law, there will be room for surgeons....But perhaps no one is demanding such state. Nothing is demanded...Radical Islamist are not really nihilists- they want perfect society on earth, which is Islam"(McEwan 34). In arguments with his son, Perowne made it clear what Islam wants. That is the reason for the clash of civilization. Even president Bush indicated in his address to nation that "...our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts"( Asad 7). Mainly the phrase "our way of life" clearly indicates the idea of clash of civilization. This very idea prepares state to enter into War on Terror. All the medias are using same language. Most of media in the west are highlighting the idea of clash of civilization. For those medias who is against the war is "... giving aid and comfort to the enemy" (Navasky XII). So, for character like Perowne who is making their mind out of media narrative, this is the reality that common people should support the forthcoming war.

Perowne wants to support war but his life is threatened that is his trauma because he is representative character of first world's commoner. Despite his thinking that "war is going to happen in Iraq" (62), he failed to make clear

statement. He likes to support the invasion of Iraq. He is making his mind as a result of media demands. All the mainstream media at that time were demanding same response. Perowne is in dilemma what to do. The main reason is that objectivity become a myth. Journalists turned out to be very patriotic citizen. Lets quote CBS news anchor Dan Rather. Dan Rather's case is very representative one. Rather says, "George Bush is the president, he makes the decisions, and you know as just one American, he wants me to line up. Just tell me where. And he'll make the call" (qtd. in Zelizer and Allan 5). Such patriotic expression left depth and objective news besides. Media thus failed to inform people with news and views. They failed to provide greater context of 9/11 and its consequences. Media only wants common people to "rallying around the flag" (Navasky xii) and undoubtedly supports the war.

Perowne is the product of western liberal view. He is part of that democratic culture. He legitimizes the state authority and their use of violence. His taking part in for and against war has lots of meaning. But he is not having clear idea. Perowne instinctually wants to support Iraq invasion. Lets examines with what attitudes he examines the street protester :

There are ragged practice chants which at first he can't make out. Tumty tumty turn. Do not attack Iraq. Placards not yet on duty are held at a slope, at rakish angles over shoulders. Not in my Name goes past a dozen times.... A placard of one of the organizing groups goes by- the British Association of Muslims. Henry remembers that outfit well. (72)

He even hates the outfits of Muslim. This clearly indicates the media image presented to such dupe consumer. He forms such imagery out of various medias' narratives. Such image demonizes the image of Muslim completely. As Talal Asad writes "For many Muslim living in the United States, September 11 was the beginning of a long period of anxiety, during which they found themselves associated, occasionally explicitly but more often implicitly, with terrorism"(1). Not only in US but also in other parts of the world same is the image, the derogatory attitudes of Perowne confirms that. However, he feels that his views will not be counted anyway. Despite these facts, he is in constant touch with media. Perowne is in constant with media because it may be of trauma time.

Jenny Edkins advocates trauma time is the time of national unity. Edkins further writes that "traumatic events tear us apart from ourselves, bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in lives that our not our own" (Edkins 110). In such trauma, time national media are demanding to "rally around the flag" (Navasky XII). Media narratives creates the community of anxiety, as Edkins argues, by combining the trauma of other. In addition, that sense of anxiety is exploited by state to go for war. Therefore, the problem faced by Perowne is not the loss in 9/11 but being a citizen of first world, he is potential victim. He also wants to keep those outsider out of his 'home'. So he is dilemma whether take part in street and "rally around the flag" or not. Perowne is resisting the language of media. Media in returns have taken this form of language from the then President George Bush. This is perception towards any Islamic countries. The media should have dealt why do they hate us. But they only deals with how and what.



Perowne feels helplessness, as advocated by Edkins. Trauma is associated with helplessness in two ways. Firstly, the victim feels being betrayed. Such betrayal "is a betrayal of trust that threatens that relationality: relationality expressed as national or familial belonging turns out to be unreliable" (Edkins 109). Whether violence occurs in family, community or nationwide, that threatens the stability of any individual. In the context of 9/11, the very secure and dominant structure of superpower is challenged, attacked and destroyed. People like Perowne are not sure about the significance of the attacks. Therefore, Perowne failed to describe the events. Perowne failed to grasp the events because he is a mere consumer of the media products. At such historical juncture, media failed its historical function: informing citizens with possible objective news and views. Instead, in such moment, media become victim of patriotism. Media personalities become true patriotic citizens. They lack critical distance to the events. To quote CBS anchor Dan Rather "...those who questioned national policy were giving aid and comfort to the enemy" (XII). As a result, such patriotism in media rushes towards War on Terror.

Perowne as a traumatic character wants to have, what LaCapra calls, critical perspective to the events. In his attempt to make critical judgment, he takes refuse of media narratives. LaCapra writes that a mourning character "...involves an attempt to counteract the tendency to deny, repress or blindly repeat them, and it enables one to acquire critical perspective allowing for a measure of control and responsible action, notably including a mode of repetition related to the renewal of life in the present"(90). Perowne is not blindly repeating

the actions desired by media. As a mourner, to use trauma terms, Perowne accepts "the burden of change" (Ray 2). Nevertheless, he is more traumatized towards the end of the novel that media are not giving his desired critical perspective in discussion for and against war.

Perowne discusses war in private not in public space. He is not actively engaged. Within his family members, he is arguing about the heralding war in Iraq. Even his thoughts are not stable. His thoughts are fluctuating. His thoughts "quickly drifted from the erotic to Saddam" (39). Though Perowne is not engaged actively, he is in constant touch. He is detached but psychologically engaged. McEwan is achieving nearness to Perowne's grief. This is the dilemma of commoner after 9/11. Thus, media narratives are creating "community of anxiety". Through media narratives, Perowne got the sense of victimhood. He imagines himself a potential victim. So when he can't change the world order, what he can do is constantly consume the narratives and become the part of community of anxiety. The reason for Perowne being the members of community of anxiety is his attempt to know whether the war is legitimate or not. In this process, he has become a passive observer of jingoistic media coverage. As Edkins suggests the trauma time is the time of national unity. "We" feelings prevails in trauma time. As a result, of such emotional attachment, one becomes less objective. Consequently, such subject is always fluctuating become never stable.

Perowne's media engagement is fully isolating. He is passively engaging because of media structure of connecting people. Common consumer, like Perowne, thinks that he is in touch with world but that imagining belongingness is

at the cost of replacement of active mass solidarity. Narrator asks Perowne in novel:

Does [Henry] think he's contributing something, watching news programmes, or lying on his back on the sofa on Sunday afternoon, reading more opinion columns of ungrounded certainties, more long articles about what is most surely going to happen next, predictions forgotten as soon as they are read, well before events disprove them ? (180)

Perowne is compelled to live passive life as a result of media structure. As a result, he is debating the war in his private sphere. In this connection, what Perowne is doing is not watching news, but he is imagining himself into the event through media narratives.

Perowne's helplessness is shown by his direct reference to 9/11 where he imagines himself a victim: "its already almost eighteen months since half the planet watched, and watched again the unseen captives driven through the sky to the slaughter, at which time there gathered round the innocent silhouette of any jet plane a novel association. Everyone agrees, airliners look different in the sky these days, predatory or doomed" (16). This is the way he views London of early morning. 9/11 memory is still vibrant and he is working psychologically. After eighteen months of the 9/11 attacks, Perowne is trying to make sense of the psychological impacts of the event. Here he is giving what Cathy Caruth calls "belated" responses. He feels he could have been dead in that deadly attacks.

Despite these things, Perowne is optimistic. As a result, he is consuming media narratives "to collapse his own ignorance" (McEwan 19). He wants to engage in opinion making. However, his desire for collectivity can be fulfilled through media. It might be that he is in crisis and dilemma. Our dependency over media increases when we are in grave crisis and Edkins "trauma time". In the case of 9/11, media supports administration's decision to go for war. The reason for administration is that 9/11 is "an epochal event" (Holloway 1), which can be responded through military actions to bring justice to victims. In this way, in such trauma time media always seems to back ideology of the state.

How media narratives should have engaged Perowne actively? How there should have been a relationship between government, media and individual? What we have found in novel is media narratives are exploited by state agency to legitimate their use of violence to keep outsiders out. As quoted in previous sections media rush to demand to "rallying around the flag" (Navasky xii). When Perowne failed to find an active role, his faith over system has been diminished significantly. He was to take part in public debate but he is in ambivalence. He is not able to make clear opinion. His ideas are always shifting.

Perowne's shifting thoughts in relation to War on Terror are the result of his dwindling faith in media narratives and state. Narrator says that "he suspects he's becoming a dupe, the willing, febrile consumer of news fodder, opinion, speculation and of the crumbs the authority let fall. He's a docile citizen, watching Leviathan grow stronger while he creeps under its shadow for protection" (180). He does not perceive the state power to be benevolent. Narrator makes us realize

the Perowne's condition who thinks himself a pure observer. "He's lost the habits of skepticism, he is becoming dim with contradictory opinion, he isn't thinking clearly, and just as bad, he senses he isn't thinking independently"(181). He thinks himself a fool who is consuming the media narratives and is in contradictory positions. He is unable to make his own independent rational opinion. Politics and media paralyze Perowne.

*Saturday* not only critique Perowne's inability to involve in active mass solidarity but also the protests. Through narration, McEwan is passing comments, that the protesters are carrying placard which is very often repeated is "Not in my Name". "Don't attack Iraq. Placard not yet on duty are held at a slope, at rakish angles over shoulders. Not in my name Past a dozen times"(72). This slogan reflects the will of the common citizen. But Perowne is very skeptical about it. He thinks that rather than action these participants are not ready to get blame.

Daisy, Perowne's wife, has different views and she has more faith in democracy and system than Perowne. She is against the invasion. In discussion with Perowne she says:

You are saying let the war go ahead and in five years if it works out you're for it, and if does not, you are not responsible. You are an educated person living in what we like to call a mature democracy, and our government's is taking us to war... Are you sending the troops in or not? ... I am against this war because I think terrible things are going to happen. You seem to think good will come of it, but you won't stand by what you believe'. (188)

She is clear that "terrible things are going to happen". More than that, she also indicates the problematic of Perowne that he "won't stand by what [he] believe[s]". The main ideas here are indicated by the media narratives because "the speech she gives is a collation of everything she heard in the park, of everything they've both heard and read hundred times, the worst guesses that become facts through repetition"(186). So these individual are not thinking. They are thinking, as media wants them to think about.

At this time, third point of view as represented by Theo, Perowne son. He says that keeping outside the world of politics is best way. Theo's thoughts are narrated:

"On a recent Sunday evening Theo came up with an aphorism: the bigger you think, the crappier it looks. Asked to explain he said, 'When we go on about the big things, the political situation, global warming, world poverty, it all looks really terrible, with nothing getting better, nothing to look forward to. But when I think small, closer in – you know, a girl I've just met, or this song we're going to do with Chas, or snowboarding next month, then it looks great. So this is going to be my motto –think small". (34)

Theo's ideas are in contrast with his father who is always ready for narratives "Let's wait for the news"(34) and "it's time for the news"(35). Theo is not interested to engage in politics. But Perowne says that he can't think and act like his son, Theo. The reason Perowne is reading papers repeatedly who is unable even thinks independently. "It can't trouble him the way it does his father, who

reads the same papers with morbid fixation"(32). Thus, *Saturday* shows us how individual is trying to make sense of situation in violent culture and "community of anxiety". Almost all responses are mediated by state and media narratives. Individual do not have choices. They either can pay attention to media like Perowne or abstain from it like Theo "the bigger you think, the crappier it looks" (34). So, neither of them is able to think independently.

Daisy wants to take part in anti-war demonstration. Theo is not ready to think big. Perowne is not independent. So, he remains isolated. As a result, he is 'dupe' to media and state. It is not because of his inability but because of his media structures. Mass media in critical times tries to make unity. They do not allow common people act and take responsibility individually. Thus, media inculcate their consumer with sense of permanent threat. Towards the end of the novel, Perowne tries to find order in his life. He is attempting to work with his anxiety and trauma. He "tries to find reassurance in this orderliness" (272). He is observing life closely but he is detached because he is at his house. Still he perceives a threat to his city. He thinks, "London, his small part of it, lies wide open, impossible to defend, waiting for its bomb, like a hundred other cities. Rush hour will be a convenient time... Berlin, Paris, Lisbon. The authorities agree, on attacks inevitable" (276). He is worried about life. He is thinking that his city is "waiting bombs". Still he is not able to associate with the people in the street. The people he meets in the street are having low privileges. It shows that he has different perspective. When he saw "three black columns" (124), the women wearing Burhhas, he does not feel connected with them.

We already discussed that Perowne had collision with Baxter. That collision brought them together. After that incident, Perowne come to know that, there lays codependency in society. But, how their relationship is going on towards the end. Baxter, along with his friends, is threatening Perowne. Perowne is using his knowledge in his diagnosis of Baxter. What is the main idea here is, this encounter reveals the perowne's sense of fragile security. The encounter of Baxter and Perowne has other significances too. Despite grave violence against Perowne and his family by Baxter, Perowne is not ready to charge him. Perowne thinks that he is also not completely innocent at the car crash. Is this the conclusion that Perowne reached after consuming the various narratives? Alternatively, is he critiquing the way of solving problems through military way?

Perowne is not ready to pass judgment to Baxter. His thoughts are narrated like this "[Henry] must persuade Rosalind, then the rest of the family, then the police, not to pursue charges. The matter must be dropped. Let them go after the other man. Baxter has a diminishing slice of life worth living"(278). Henry might be thinking not to charge against because that might escalate the violence and also that he had also abused this knowledge. He is even ready to share it as a shared weakness. It might be because of Edkins "trauma time" which does not allow Perowne rationales the things what had happened. Anyway, through Perowne, novelist conveys a message that violence is not going to give any solutions.

When there are no solutions, Perowne is in dilemma. The reason is he is thinking and reflecting about the day: news, violence, party etc and he is trying to sleep. He is totally de-centered because he "feels himself turning on a giant wheel,



like the Eye on the south bank of the Thames, just about to arrive at the highest point- he is poised on a hinge of perception, before the drop, and he can see ahead calmly"(272). Because of his rationality, Henry is "poised on the edge of perception". At the end, how Perowne is perceiving London which he perceived to be very vulnerable. Through Perowne's thoughts, McEwan has shown the conflicts of western, liberal democratic society and plight of commoner in media saturated world.

In this way, *Saturday* shows a very uneasy tension between faith in democratic order as represented by media and knowledge of their failures. McEwan has portrait Perowne as exactly as it is possible as a first world member who is in un-decidable situations. At the beginning he is happy and involved in family reunion but towards the end of the novel, he is feeling uncertainty and fragility thinking about his self, family and global political order.

Still Perowne could not answer what "will cure or disperse this enabled army haunting the public places of every town" (272). Therefore, Perowne is in more confusion when he thinks of himself along with family, London, Bagdad etc. So even totally, personal is closely tied up with nation and international vulnerability. Edkins calls such connections in trauma as relationality. So even very personal becomes concern of the nation and so on. Thus towards the end, Perowne conclude which is not discussed by jingoistic media. Perowne thinks not only London even "Bagdad is waiting for its bombs" (277). However, novel ends with a question to Perowne "will he revive his hope for firm action in the morning? All he feels now is fear" (277). His fear is the fear of violence that the

attack will produce in return. He fears that the "war on terror" will unleash greater violence. In this sense, the novelist resists the jingoistic media's voice and battle cry for revenge by going against the grain of trauma.

Ian McEwan in *Saturday*, at the beginning seems to present a view in favor of war. Perowne is saying that "[Iraq] war is going to happen with or without UN" (62). He even hates the protesters who are in the street against war. He furthermore has a firm belief that this war is going to make first world secure. In this way, he is reiterating the language of media. Perowne seems to be a true patriot citizen. Nevertheless, his clash with Baxter and Baxter's violence questioned his firm conviction.

Towards the end, because of his changed thoughts, the narrator questioned Perowne's former conviction to dethrone Saddam: "Bagdad is waiting for bombs. Where is Henry's appetite for removing a tyrant now? At the end of this day, this particular evening, he's timid, vulnerable...Harder now to recall, or to inhibit, the vigour of his row with Daisy- the certainties have dissolved into debating points"(277). Perowne is uncertain whether the war is just and he should be in support as the demand of media or not. Consequently, he is not ready to charge Baxter. Finally, the narrator left us in uncertainties whether Perowne "will he revive his hope for firm action in the morning?" (277). Perowne is afraid that any action against Baxter can unleash further violence. Perowne is ambivalent towards using force against anyone. The narrator says in the final paragraphs that Perowne is "scared of the way consequences of an action leap away from your control and breed new events, new consequences until you're led to a place you never dreamed

of and would never choose- knife at the throat"(277). Here through narrator, McEwan seems to conclude that violent solutions can lead to further consequences. Thus he clearly questioned the jingoism advocated by media.

McEwan, through narrator, asks question to Perowne in his decision not to press charge against Baxter: "Is this forgiveness? .... Or is he the one seeking forgivingness?"(278). In this connection McEwan is clearly opposing the violent solutions as advocated by state and media. McEwan seems to suggest that rather than violent solutions, the forgiveness or openness can make world more safe and secure. Perowne learns this lesson from the Baxter incidents from his own experiences, which is against the propaganda blitz of administration and xenophobic media representations.

## Conclusions

From Speaking the Unspeakable Trauma to Resistance of Media Narratives

*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer is largely faithful to the unsayable grief of the major character Oskar. Every subtle possible behaviors, feelings and pains are minutely presented and analyzed. He has shown genuine behaviors of trauma victims. Not only Oskar but also all other major characters- Mr. Thomas Schell and Mrs. Schell- are depicted in their way of coping with the trauma. By reflecting their ways of dealing with trauma, novelist has shown how novel can closely depict the unsayable grief of trauma survivors.

In this novel, Thomas is truly melancholic character. He failed to accept the reality and even failed to communicate his traumatic feeling and guilt. Though he encourages his wife to share her traumatic feelings, he is not ready to do that himself. Nevertheless, his wife, who is also the survivor of the same trauma, seems coping better, though not in desired way. She has even shown some suicidal tendencies. The major character, Oskar Schell, is in his way of coping with trauma sometimes he tilted towards mourning type and sometimes to melancholia type. Above all, his behaviors are bizarre. As a result, we cannot classify him in fix type. He persist various things by himself. He even does not share his search with everyone who is in close acquaintance. He spends most of his time inventing lots of things in his mind in his room. These are melancholic characteristics. However, he is ready to share his trauma even with complete stranger like Mr. Black. In these senses, he is close to working through. Thus,

whether these characters are melancholic, mourner, or swinging between them, novel conveys their trauma very finely.

Similarly, Ian McEwan *Saturday* ends leaving main character, Henry Perowne, in dilemma. He wants to support war in Iraq. But he is in dilemma that war might be a Pandora's box. It might further lead to solutions that are more violent. Despite being a close observer of media, who are demanding strong actions, he is resisting at least towards end of the novel. He is not ready to accept the jingoism that war in Iraq- Afghanistan-will bring sense security at first world.

Perowne is constantly consuming the media narratives. He has made his mind out of the media narrative that Iraq war is a just war. The reason is that he has no other alternatives than to be a dupe citizen and consume narratives. He has no choices. Thus as a passive consumer of the narratives and the representative of the community of anxiety, Perowne represents the first world individual and a true traumatic character of the then west. Perowne is rich, a successful neurosurgeon who values detached observation and fear of cultural differences. He is anxious due to narratives. He is in dilemma at the end. Therefore, towards the end of the novel, McEwan, through Perowne, does not seem to offer any solutions. Novel presents Perowne who is not ready to charge Baxter, emerging out of this media saturated world. Perowne seems to suggest that the best alternatives to violence. He suggests that more than dividing the world into, as the then President George W. Bush declared "with us or with enemy" (Asad 7), we have to forgive and cooperate with them. Perowne is indicating what appears truly Derridian thesis that "forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable" (Derrida 32). Thus, he clearly

goes against the mainstream media narratives of battle cry for revenge through war. However, his traumatic feeling, guilt and pains are depicted as far as possible. Therefore, Perowne goes against media by asserting that rather violent solutions, the cooperation and forgiveness can make the world safer and less and less violent.

The both novelists have not sentimentalized and sensationalized the events. They have not even propagandize the situation. These novelists have shown that sentimentalism of the event is not the way of literature of violence and trauma. Literature at the trauma and violence should depict the unspeakable horror that tortures the individual victims. They have shown that it is possible to depict the trauma of the victims without political and patriotic bluster. They have shown that the closer examination of the victims' trauma can lead to closer depiction of the unspeakable grief in fiction.

Likewise, the novelists have resisted the patriotism of the media narratives. The then American media mainly demanded revenge and supported war describing the event as an attack upon the freedom of the first world. We have seen Characters like Perowne were not able to get out of such media narratives in media saturated world. Media narratives even assisted that only termination of terrorism and terrorists in the world can brought peace at home. These media never fully informed the public that why people hate them and their hate is culminated in the grave 9/11 attacks. Rather than giving the proper context of the event, they propagandize the event. The propaganda even sways the common people like Perowne at first. However, character like Perowne later realizes the

propaganda and interconnectedness of human life. Thus, he resisted the xenophobic representation of media and rejected the violent solutions as a response to the 9/11 attacks.

Thus, Foer and McEwan become able to say the unspeakable trauma of the victims of 9/11. They manage to say it without patriotic bluster and without sentimentalism. They remain true to the grief of the victims in their narratives as far as possible. In addition, they have even resisted the propaganda blitz of the administration and xenophobic media representations. In this way, they have managed to speak the unspeakable trauma of 9/11.

## Works Cited

- Asad, Talal. *On Suicide Bombing*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Bell, Duncan. *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflection on the Relationship between Past and Present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Berger, James. "Trauma and Literary Theory". *Contemporary Literatures*. Wisconsin University Press, 1997. 569-582.
- Caruth, Cathy. "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History". *Literature and the Ethical Question*. Yale University Press: 1991, 181-192.
- Davis, Walter A. *Death Dream Kingdom: The American Psyche since 9-11*. London: Pluto, 2006.
- Edkins, Jenny. "Remembering Relationality Trauma Time and Politics". *Memory, Trauma and World Politics*. Ed. Duncan Bell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 90-115.
- Foer, Jonathan Safran. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. New York: Mariner Books, 2006.
- Fierke, K M. "Bewitched by the Past Social Memory, Trauma and International Relations". *Memory, Trauma and World Politics*. Ed. Duncan Bell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 116- 134.
- Holloway, David. *9/11 and The War on Terror*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008.
- LaCapra, Dominick. "Revisiting the Historians Debate: Mourning and Genocide". *History and Memory*. Spring /summer 97, Vol. 9 Issue 1, P 80-112.
- McEwan, Ian. *Saturday*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2005.



- Mill, Cheryl. "9/11 and the Novelists". *Commentary* 126.5 (2008): 32-35.
- Navasky, Victor. Foreword. *Journalism After September 11*. By Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan. London: Routledge, 2002. xii-xviii.
- Ray, Gene. *Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory: From Auschwitz to Hiroshima to September 11*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Redfield, Marc. "Virtual Trauma: The Idiom of 9/11". *Diacritics* 27.1 (2007): 55-80.
- Zehfuss, Maja. "Remembering to Forget/ Forgetting to Remember". *Memory, Trauma and World Politics*. Ed. Duncan Bell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 213-230.
- Zelizer, Barbie and Stuart Allan. *Journalism After September 11*. London: Routledge, 2002.