Trauma and Recovery: Cognitive Approaches to Trauma Narrative in Three Post-9/11 Novels

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Abstract

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 gave rise to a new literary sub-genre, post-9/11 literature, which has considerably influenced the recent history of modern American literature. Post-9/11 literature mainly delineates a panoramic picture of anxiety and fear in the Western world. The characters in these novels experience different presentations of post-traumatic stress disorder. They are then rehabilitated with recuperative tools through various means such as empathy, dialogic communication and epistolary writing. Some novels concentrate on telling the stories of the collective or individual traumatic experience in the aftermath of 9/11, where the characters are suffering from spiritual and survival crisis, and thus are seeking a salvation journey to mental recuperation. Some works set New York City as the backdrop to an urban elegy; some fictions explore the topic from a political perspective, such as discussing the relationship of democracy and politics, foreign policy and terrorism.

This thesis analyses the trauma narrative in three selected post-9/11 novels: Johnathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, and Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* through the lens of cognitive poetics—mainly from the theories of textual world, possible world, deictic shift, conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending. Cognitive poetics is an innovative theoretical approach, especially suited to investigate trauma narrative. The thesis combines psychological trauma theory with cognitive poetics to understand how 9/11 novelists reproduce the catastrophic 9/11 experiences in literary form and how these stories reflect the process of transferring traumatic memories into traumatic narrative. The primary concern is not simply how post-9/11 fictions create meaning through the representation of 9/11 trauma, but also how 9/11 trauma narratives are understood and interpreted by readers. This project aims to provide a clear and holistic understanding of the intricacies of the three post-9/11 fictions and help refine the methodology of cognitive poetics.

Statement of Candidate

I hereby state that the following thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree in any university or educational institution.

All sources of information used in the thesis have been indicated and due acknowledgement has been given to the work of others.

Signed: 

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Reasons for Selection

At the turn of the millennium, the defining moment was the explosive news of the terrorist attack and the destruction of the World Trade Centre that happened on the morning of September 11, 2001. The collapse of the buildings symbolizes the fall of American power and capitalism, according to some commentators. Jürgen Habermas once claimed that "The attackers did not just cause the highest building in Manhattan to collapse; they also destroyed an icon in the household imagery of the American nation,"[1] since the Twin Towers were the "powerful embodiment of economic strength and projection toward the future."[2]

The role of the 9/11 attack and the fall of the skyscrapers might be regarded as the literal or figurative source for complex literary rendering. The cataclysmic events of 9/11 and their aftermath exerted great repercussions on world politics and also extended reflections in various forms of representation, such as theatre, art and the corpus of literary fiction. The aftermath is often referred to as post-9/11 since the attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre was such an overpowering event, which became the impetus for a literary subgenre—post-9/11 literature. The global anti-terrorism campaign after the 9/11 event gradually spawned a deep contemplation of the meaning of individual life itself, which all were reflected in the literary texts of so-called post-9/11 literature. This event became a way of framing the literature of the entire American nation, not least because it remodelled ordinary people's consciousness.

Post-9/11 novelists have the capacity to transform either a personal trauma or a national calamity into a deft handling of the relationship between literary writing and the psychological construction of national culture, and historical narrative, as well as ideology. In a broad sense of globalisation, post-9/11 literature integrated literary imagination with reflections which revealed the traumatic memories, mental endurance and the quest for redemption of the ordinary American

[1] Borradori, Giovanna (editor). *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2003,p.28.

[2] Ibid.

people after the 9/11 terrorist attack. A group of writers seek to examine the terrorist attacks with a comprehensive vision and also inject historical reflection: writing urban eulogy or depicting the disastrous experience of the common people; criticising the terror, violence and hatred of the era of globalisation. Furthermore, this emerging subgenre attempts to reflect trauma, write trauma, interpret trauma and even transcend trauma from the perspective of humanity for the purpose of trauma redemption and humanistic solicitude. This is what shapes the distinctive features of trauma narrative in post-9/11 context.

Post-9/11 literature entails rich connotations in both literary content and in literary form and rethinks human destiny, freedom and the meaning of life in this tragic epoch. The 9/11 event became the momentum for a literary paradigm transformation. Post-9/11 novels usually reveal the anxiety and dysphoria in ordinary people's lives and integrate the literary fictional trauma with the witnessing of trauma, traumatic memory and trauma narrative, thereby representing a distinctively postmodern narrative aestheticism. The narrative mood is somewhat interrogative and open-ended. To some extent, the 9/11 historic phenomena is fictionalised via representations of personal experience, as some traumatic experiences were long-lasting and sharable, some were temporary and private. Many narrators in the story not only tell the traumatic event the characters experienced, but also play the role of commentators since they interpret and even moralise the event.

Literature, as a less immediate reaction to 9/11, is different from media representation. Particularly the novel，can reproduce the 9/11 event from an internalised artistic perspective and achieve the depiction of a character's internal psychological status. Novels represent traumatic memory in fictional and sympathetic ways. As 9/11 was a publicly shared, tragic event, writers can articulate what had occurred by presenting readers with fictionalised characters who were confronting the same traumatic events as they were in the storyworld; readers, thus, will be captivated and relate to their fictionalised counterparts. Compared with the media images and factual news of the attack, readers are more receptive to the fictional stories of the event, because they have an opportunity to process the experience for themselves and transfer fictional accounts into a mode for alleviating grief.

Moreover, post-9/11 fictions find new ways of expressing and manifesting the mood in the first decade of the 21st century. The most outstanding example is that the writers seek to recount 9/11 events in relation to other traumatic events such as the atrocities of World War II, thus constituting historical resonances and an historical trajectory. Since post-9/11 fictions reflect back on the terrorist attacks, to a certain extent, this genre reveals a sense of anxiety, apprehension and insecurity. The sense of uncertainty makes people particularly nostalgic; they cherish the memory of a prior peaceful life. The focus of this literature is on living on and survival after the 9/11 events.

1.2 Research Scope

The new emerging subgenre of post-9/11 literature has considerably influenced the development of contemporary American literature. For my text analyses in the main body of this thesis, I have chosen three prototypical examples of post-9/11 fictions: Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007) and Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* (2008). The thesis concentrates on exploring how traumatic experience is represented in the fictionalised text and what kinds of innovative narrative strategies to express trauma and terrorism simultaneously have been employed by these three novelists. The 9/11 attack violently reshaped the world view of common American people. New York suddenly became like an urban wasteland in the aftermath of 9/11, which symbolised the wounded masculinity of America.

9/11 novels can be categorised into two main groups: those in which people live in the aftermath and those in which the 9/11 attack was one of a series of global terror events. The fictions of the three authors selected have two interrelated common features. First, each author approaches the 9/11 event from the perspective of a single common American family by setting 9/11 as a backdrop and a crucial component of the plot. Second, all three novels were written from a different frame of reference, and they all have their own unique voice in telling the traumatic experience. DeLillo's *Falling* is an excellent text for dissecting how such historical events with traumatic significance are contextualised in fiction *Man* is an excellent text for dissecting how such historical events with traumatic impact are contextualised in fiction. Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is the most reader-friendly text as the child-like perception of 9/11 events is

both heartbreaking and hopeful. Just as the book's title "Incredibly Close" implies, it brings the reader closer to an emotional reckoning with the day the World Trade Centre collapsed. Foer and O'Neill wrote their 9/11 fictions from the perspective of the Western victim of terrorism, while DeLillo parallels the 9/11 story of victims' traumatic experience with the perpetrators' conspiracy, by adopting the angle of the "perpetrator" as well. This is a bold and courageous attempt to frame 9/11 reflections in a departure from the dominant trend.

DeLillo's *Falling Man*, which was published on May 15, 2007, records the chaotic recollections of different characters through the use of multiple narrative voices. The protagonist Keith Neudecker, a survivor of the 9/11 events, is a 39-year-old lawyer who works in the World Trade Centre. He fortunately escapes from the office with minor injuries. He returns to the apartment of his estranged wife seemingly unaware of what he is doing rather than going to hospital.

This fiction highlights the significance of family and kinship in traumatic experience by revealing the landscape of daily life and dramatising ethical care for those who have witnessed violent historical events and the experience of trauma. It also extends critical thinking on social issues. This fiction depicts the overwhelming impact of the historic event upon the daily lives of common people and their experience of emotional tension and mental trauma in the aftermath.

Jonathan Safran Foer's second novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* tells the traumatic story of an ordinary American family by deconstructing the enigmatic 9/11 events. Many prominent novelists such as Ian McEwen, Don DeLillo and John Updike engaged with the trauma of 9/11 and attempted to depict the post-9/11 social and personal landscape of trauma, grief and loss through engendering a new form of narrative realism that merges written and visual representation. Foer, as part of a young generation of American novelists, has followed their steps by delineating this heartbreaking historic 9/11 terrorist attack with his own distinct literary approach. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* focuses on the nine-year-old boy Oskar Schell who loses his father in the collapse of the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001. A year later, Oskar begins his heroic exploration after his discovery of a mysterious key with the word "Black" in an envelope in his father's closet. He embarks on a quest to find the owner of the key by visiting all the people with the surname Black in New York City. This picaresque journey represents Oskar's healing of the wound from his father's abrupt death and his unassuaged grief.

Oskar's narrative progress permits him to work through trauma and eventually regain a strong sense of self-identity.

Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*, which was published in 2008, was listed as the tenth best book in Time Magazine's Best Books of the year in 2008 and won the prestigious PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction in 2009 as well as the 2009 Kerry Group Irish Fiction Award. The novel is set in post-9/11 New York and has two storylines. The novel adopts a melancholic tone to depict common American immigrants' response to the 9/11 terrorist attack. The first storyline tells the story of an immigrant family. The first-person narrator, a Dutch-born oil futures analyst Hans van den Broek, moved to New York in 1998 from London with his successful British lawyer wife, Rachel. But the September 11 terrorist attack forces them to temporarily stay at the Chelsea Hotel in the immediate aftermath. Rachel suffers from mental stress and psychological trauma and persistently would like to take their infant son back to London under the pretence of security. Their marriage is on the verge of collapse. During the absence of his wife, the dispirited Dutch expatriate Hans encounters by chance the Trinidadian expat Chuck. Chuck, a businessman, has the grandiose dream of building a cricket stadium in New York, but he vanishes in the end. The second storyline focuses on telling their friendship and Hans's identity crisis. Hans strays into Chuck's orbit and participates in the subcultural cricket club as the only white man. Hans reconnects with cricket, the game that he was obsessed with in his childhood. It is just playing cricket that helps him work through his 9/11 trauma and to find he is "at last naturalized" with an America identity by batting with an American style stroke.

1.3 Methodological Approach

Most literary works choose to deal with 9/11 events in terms of psychological trauma. The early definition of the word "trauma" refers to "a wound or external bodily injury in general" in the *Oxford English Dictionary.* The etymology of trauma derives from the Greek meaning "psychical wound," adopted in English in the late 17th century for the purposes of medical pathology. Later the meaning of trauma had been transferred from psychical to mental wounds in the late 19th century because the industrial revolution and modernity brought terrible events, such as factory and railway accidents. Victims persistently suffered from mental distress after such events because of "traumatic neurosis" and "nervous shock".

Trauma studies can be traced back to 1893 when Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer published the essay "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena". They challenged the accepted idea that hysteria was the result of psychical degeneration. Freud and Breuer proposed that "the psychical symptom of the hysteric – the trance states, violent mood swings, amnesias, partial paralysis of the body, and so on – could be modelled on the traumatic effects of accidents."[3] Trauma is intrusive and represented in discontinuous manner in victims' repressed memory. "A physical trauma is something that enters the psyche that is so unprecedented or overwhelming that it cannot be processed or assimilated by usual mental processes."[4] Subsequently, Freud and Breuer co-authored *Studies on Hysteria* in 1895, which makes great contributions towards treatment and cure, proposing the therapeutic effect of recollection and memory transfer to heal past traumas. The core issue is how to externalize the implicit traumatic memory into declarative memory on a conscious level. "The talking cure" refers to the method that Breuer used to treat his patients with verbal therapy; later Sigmund Freud adopted the term into psychoanalysis by arguing that language has a cathartic effect. The publication is significant in paving the way for Freud's later psychoanalytic approach.

Freud developed the concept of "repetition compulsion" in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, published in 1920, which refers to when "individuals and even wider cultures replay their anxieties over and over again, each repetition an attempt to master the traumatic material that has pierced protective filters" [5] In *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* Freud contends that the person "reproduces it (the traumatic experience)not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without knowing, of course, that he is repeating, and in the end, we understand that this is his way of remembering." [6] Both Freud and the French psychologist Pierre Janet acknowledged that the repetition of trauma is a sign of repression. Kirmayer clarifies the relationship between repression and memory as follows:

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[3] Waugh, Patricia, *Literary Theory and Criticisms: An Oxford Guide*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 ,p.498.

[4] Ibid.,p.499.

[5] Freud, Sigmund.(1920) ,"Beyond the Pleasure Principle." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 18. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1957, p.500.

[6] Freud, Sigmund. (1926)," *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*" (2nd ed.) In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 20. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1957,p.150.

> The theory of repression claims that when memories are laden with (or evocative of) intensely painful feelings, they may be warded off over long periods of time. The usual distinction between suppression and repression is that the former involves a conscious effort not to think of something while the latter is "unconscious", which in psychodynamic theory means both automatic (i.e. non-conscious) and motivated (that is, related to conflicts of desire). It is the fear of looking at traumatic memories that keeps them repressed.[7]

Moreover, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) refers to a state of mental disorder after a person has experienced some traumatic event, for instance, warfare, a traffic accident or other violent episodes. The presence of symptoms of disorder may vary from person to person after experiencing a traumatic event. The sufferers may show their distress through different types of behaviour. Some victims may have altered personalities. Early in the 1970s, the term PTSD was utilized to diagnose the American military veterans of the Vietnam War. PTSD was officially listed by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980. Some victims may have altered personalities and suffer from repressed memories since their memories are blocked because of the anxiety disorder.

In the 1990s, trauma study was further explored by theorists and integrated into cultural theory and literary study. Trauma study in literature is regarded as an interdisciplinary research area, which incorporates theories from various disciplines, such as history, philosophy and psychology. The prominent monographs of trauma study in the literary field are listed as follows. Yale critic Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub published *Testimony: Cries of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* in 1992, which investigates the function of memory and the act of witnessing in the trauma of the Holocaust from a literary and clinical perspective. Cathy Caruth edited *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* in 1995. She believes that literature, film and political activism can offer new ways of understanding and responding to the traumatic experience. In her account, traumatic events often exist as memories in victims' mind, which can be thoroughly understood after direct acquisition of facts and exploring the process of conscious comprehension. She also published *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma Narrative and History* in 1996, which

[7] Laurence J. Kirmayer, "Landscape of Memory: Trauma, Narrative, and Dissociation." in Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, eds., *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, New York and London: Routledge, 1996, p.179 .

provides a wide ranging discussion of the relationship between history and traumatic experience by engaging the theories of Freud, de Man and Kant.

American historian Dominick LaCapra's masterpiece *Writing History, Writing Trauma* was released in 2000. This book is a critical inquiry into the significant role of post-traumatic testimonies, especially Holocaust testimonies. He employs psychoanalytic concepts, social cultural and political ideas to explicate trauma and its influences in the cultural context. Anne Whitehead's *Trauma Fiction* was published in 2004, which offers innovative readings on specific texts on the theme of trauma by identifying prominent stylistic features in traumatic narratives. E. Ann Kaplan published *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* in 2005. She contends that artistic literary and cinematic forms can help connect the individual trauma and collective traumatic experience because of the fostering of empathy. She further proposes that the sharing and converting of catastrophe is of vital importance in understanding trauma from World War II to 9/11.

Recently, Caruth published the latest collection *Listening to Trauma: Conversations with Leaders in the Theory and Treatment of Catastrophic Experience* in 2014. This collection is considered a cutting edge approach to trauma research, and contains the interviews with a team of researchers, literary theorists and critics, intellectuals and public leaders. It mainly explores their responses to their personal traumatic experience.

Caruth once said: "Trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena."[8] Trauma may refer to individual or collective shock and fragmented memory disorders. The trauma healing process will not often follow a linear sequence, because memories of trauma are characterised in incomprehensible and fragmentary forms. The recovery somehow is never complete, as the everlasting influence of the traumatic event will continue to reverberate throughout the victim's life. It needs to be tested as to whether fiction can be the appropriate means to act as the therapeutic discourse in the process

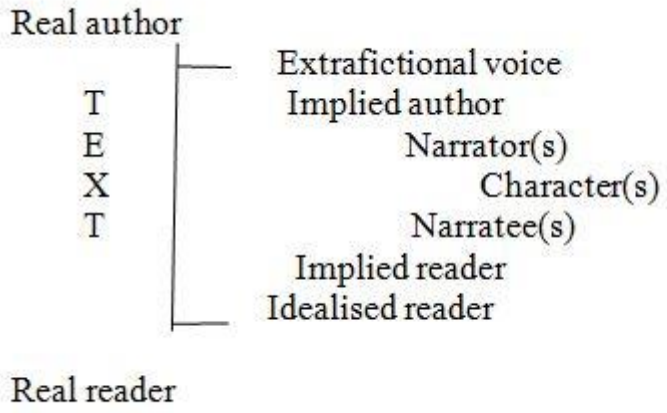
[8] Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p.91.

of trauma healing. In fictionalised traumatic narration, the narrator exposes the anxieties and contradictions hidden in the restatement of the experience of a traumatic event. Despite struggling to forget, the victim's knowledge will be demonstrated in many different forms, including fragmented memories of decontextualised events, episodes of empathy and irresistible intrusive narration of the events. The victims cannot simply extricate themselves from past traumatic events when they restate their sufferings. Therefore, the narrative voice remains as a wary one.. Trauma narrative embodies distinctive characteristics in narrating traumatic experiences, such as non-linear and disruptive narrative, distorted temporality and shifting focalisation, which are completely different from narrative in conventional literary works,. Since "trauma is an event that is not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor", [9]authors of 9/11 fictions have already created many narrative strategies to present the conflicting or incomplete memory, including repeated words, multiple narrative voices, a nonlinear time description, shifted narrative perspectives, metaphor and text fragmentation.

In recent years, cognitive literary studies emerged as a comprehensively new critical way of thinking about textuality. Since it can inject new vigour into old theories, cognitive literary study can provide fresh insights so that literature can better understand itself and what it hopes to represent. Some of the fundamental guidelines of the cognitive process can be applied to interpret literary texts. As the three parties of the reader, author and text are the main participants in the reading process, the reader and author can use strategies and scripts embodied in their human minds. The reader will use this pre-stored knowledge in their mind to process the knowledge that is supplied by fictional mind presentations. It is rather difficult for the reader to be aware of the cognitive process as the following diagram displays that there are many unconscious participants involved in the reading process. The different roles in the process of reading literary works are represented in the following diagram.

[9] Ibid.,p.4.

Figure 1.1 Diagram of different roles in the process of reading literature.[10]



As Marie-Laure Ryan argues,

> every language-based fictional narrative involves at least two levels: a real-world level, on which an author communicates with a reader, and a primary fictional level, on which a narrator communicates with a narratee within an imaginary world.[11]

The dynamic communication among author, reader, narrator and narratee are of vital importance to the understanding of complex literary narratives. Theorists of cognitive-oriented narrative

[10] Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002,p.42. The diagram delineates the different roles involving in understanding the fictional texts. Each of the entity roles can be traced by utilising the theory of cognitive poetics.

[11] Ryan, Marie-Laure . *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, p. 204.

analyses believe that frame-based approaches may probably reveal something new in complex literary narrative comprehension.

Cognitive poetics is an innovative theoretical approach, especially suited to trauma narrative. This thesis will integrate the theories of cognitive poetics with psychological trauma theory to analyse 9/11 texts, in order to understand how the 9/11 novelists tell stories about catastrophic experiences of 9/11 and how these stories reflect traumatic memories. It can be regarded as a cross-disciplinary study that aims to increase our comprehension of the role of narrative in victims' recovery from trauma. A cognitive approach to 9/11 narrative can help us clarify the following questions:

· How does literature deal with the challenges of representation and contribute to shaping the collective memory of 9/11?

· How is the 9/11 event deployed in so-called 9/11 narrative stylistically, thematically and aesthetically?

· In what way could the reader graft his/her emotional responses onto the traumatic event?

· In what way could the novels help ordinary Americans work through the traumatic memory and recover from grief?

Additionally, the thesis pays particular attention to possible world theory, conceptual metaphor theory, deictic shift theory, and conceptual blending theory in cognitive poetics, which have developed into the most exciting fresh paradigms in narrative theory. Furthermore, cognitive narratology can be characterised as "the investigation of mental processes and representations corresponding to the textual features and structures of narrative." [12] It concerns readers' mental models in the reading process and purports to explore how frameworks assist readers' narrative comprehension, as well as the interaction among textual cues, generic conventions and generic interpretive strategies (such as mental models, frames, scripts, schemata and so on, which are interrelated or mutually dependent).

As stated above, the purpose of the dissertation is to justify how the theory of cognitive poetics can be utilised to analyse trauma narrative and help readers understand the recuperation process

[12] Bortolussi, Marisa and Peter Dixon. *Psychonarratology*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003,p.24.

of characters. Indeed, it is intriguing to integrate the trauma narrative of a text with cognitive experience and psychological effect. The combination of trauma theory and cognitive poetics is challenging innovative work. Possible world theory promotes an ontological stance and is promoted as a paradigm to be applied in the explication of 9/11 trauma narrative. To a certain extent, the possibility of considering a cognitive approach as a paradigm to understand the 9/11 texts can maximise the potential utility of the theory of cognitive poetics. Therefore, such an approach intends to reveal the profound meanings underlying the text as well as the ways in which readers reach empathy.

1.4 Structural Framework

The thesis is structured in seven chapters. This first chapter introduces the reasons for selecting this topic for writing and the research scope of the thesis as well as a brief summary of the methodological approach. This includes a brief overview of trauma theory, psychological models of trauma in fiction analysis and introductory information on cognitive poetics.

Chapter Two presents the historical context and background information about the emergence of 9/11 fiction. The newly emerged fiction style subverts the traditional fictional paradigm and protests against terrorism through a literary mode. This post-9/11 writing demonstrated American authors' address to the issue of moral responsibility and their ethical concerns. The characteristics of the trauma narrative of 9/11 fictions can be summarised as non-linear narrative structure with flashbacks and retrospective narration; multiple focalisations, repeated images to highlight the feature of "repetition compulsion" in trauma. Acting out and working through are the necessary roads to recovery. Narrative has a recuperative power, and draws on dialogic therapeutic discourse and epistolary writing, which is consistent with Freud's "talking cure". They all can assist victims in finding self-identity and in making reconnections with society, and ultimately achieving recovery.

The third chapter presents more detailed information about the core scholarly concepts from which this thesis will draw. The cognitive paradigm of reading 9/11 fiction will also be discussed in this chapter. I provide an overview of the theory of cognitive poetics and outline the significant branches, such as deictic shift theory, possible world and mental space theory, conceptual metaphor theory and conceptual blending theory, text world theory and cognitive narratology.

Reading novels is a dynamic decoding process; the interactions between authors, texts and readers will be involved in all cognitive reading processes. The understanding of a narrative account is a process through which readers will reconstruct the mental models of the storyworld and encode the narrative. They will activate their cognitive interpreting frames and scripts to understand the texts and analyse the figures, events and scenes in the storyworld. Moreover, readers will utilise their different cognitive mapping strategies to interpret the 9/11 texts. Different comprehension of the narrative texts will be attained by different readers. 9/11 novelists are aware of the underlying truth of the terrorist attack, so they apply implicit trauma narrative style to articulate counter-narrative voices to criticise the American government's so-called "justice war " to fight against terrorism.

Chapters 4 to 6 put cognitive poetics into practice through analysing three post-9/11 literary texts. These parts present a detailed cognitive analysis of Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* as trauma narratives (as defined in this study). The focus of the analysis is on the externalization of internalised trauma and the syndrome of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many survivors of the 9/11 events are diagnosed with PTSD and suffer from the syndromes of nightmares, flashbacks, numbness and melancholia.

The fourth chapter will concentrate on trauma recovery through the power of narration, including dialogue therapeutic discourse and epistolary writing in Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. Readers will recognise that traumatic events are narrated with variable focalisation by three shifting narrators and the events are described from disparate perspectives to construct each individual's possible world. The inherent heteroglossia and intertextual references highlight the characters' traumatic experiences in a cyclic mode of internal and external stories. Foer consistently employs postmodern strategies in order to create a novel with a visual writing style, as will be explained. Additionally, Foer also applies the "zero narration" approach to foreground children's suffering through inserting icon-text and photographs. As trauma is deemed to be unspeakable and characterised by the feature of "repetition compulsion" as defined by Freud, literal words are unable to express traumatic experience, so a traumatic panorama with visual elements of pictures is manifested in the novel. The protagonist Oskar ultimately achieves self-construction through dialogue, therapeutic discourse and epistolary writing. Here I suggest that

possible world theory has not yet adequately coped with the complexities connected with the conceptualisation of the photographs, thereby assisting readers to have a holistic understanding to the photographs-schematic matching. Furthermore, transgenerational empathy is manifested in both Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* and DeLillo's *Falling Man*. The parents' traumatic memory can exert profound influences upon their children by delivering trauma unconsciously. Children's responses to traumatic events and trauma healing process will also be highlighted.

Chapter 5 presents the cognitive research on the minds and consciousness of the characters in DeLillo's *Falling Man*. The novel not only delineates the direct victim, Keith's traumatic response to 9/11, but also depicts the image of the terrorist in an imaginary and idealized sense. The author employs the means of cognitive defamiliarisation to construct the image of the terrorist, which will deviate from the readers' normal literary expectations. They are presented as tender, flesh and blood, young people, who loath American cultural hegemony and are deceived by the terrorist organisations and ultimately become the perpetrators. The dichotomised discourse of perpetrators and victims is constructed by the implied author of the narrative. The unreliable characterisation on the narrative level can help readers to understand the subjective consciousness of the terrorist characters, which can vividly reflect the cognitive characteristics of perpetrators when they are committing terrorist acts. I use the model of text world theory to analyse readers' different emotional responses to the interactivity of *Falling Man*.

Chapter 6 offers an analysis of the post-traumatic identity crisis in Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* through the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory and conceptual blending theory. Lakoff and Johnson developed conceptual metaphor theory to expound the metaphor clusters embodied in our life and literary texts. Mark Turner further extends the theory of conceptual metaphor to conceptual blending by integrating the metaphor with literary meaning. This section investigates the particular metaphor of the game of cricket as having a recuperative power to assist Hans to reconnect with his family in the aftermath of 9/11.

According to the theoretical analysis of the previous chapters, the conclusion chapter summarises that the success of these three post-9/11 novels lies in their reflection on the distinctive power of the literary in understanding the 9/11 experience. Most fictions concentrate on presenting the anamorphic experience of loss and pain and the endeavour to recover from trauma from an

artistic perspective. Better understanding of 9/11 texts and the implied traumatic meaning can be attained by readers through the cognitive paradigm. Theorists of cognitive poetics have put much emphasis on the significance of mental functioning in reading narrative works. The cognitive approach can supplement the established exploration of these 9/11 texts. Readers who adjust well their reading strategies to the text can arrive at a good interaction with authors in the reading process. Finally, the discussion turns to the expectation of extending the specific cognitive approach to a wider range of literary texts, and in turn the convergence of trauma theory with the cognitive approach can help them to refine each other.

1.5 A Note on Reader and Reading Experience

In the work of literary criticisms, there are some literary terms that need to be clarified in order to provide a clear interpretation. Since cognitive approaches are explicitly reader-oriented theories in the study of literature, readers are invited to engage in the model interpretive process.

Throughout this dissertation, I use the term the reader or readers when referring to the people who are involved in the act of reading and usually those people who comply with the models developed through the theoretical analysis I am proposing. The theories of cognitive poetics also pay attention to readers' roles in creating meaning when reading literary works. Readers are recognized as active participants in completing the interpretation process. Cognitive poetics is also concerned with readers' mental processes of constructing their understanding of specific texts.

It is well known that readers can be categorised into different groups in reader response criticism, which concentrates on readers' or recipients' role in understanding the meaning or experience of fictional works. Readers are considered as active agents participating in the interpretation processes of literature. Readers' experiences of literature can be unique because each individual can create their own text-related performance.

Generally speaking, the schools of reader response criticism regard readers as a theoretical reader. Firstly, Wolfgang Iser proposed the idea of the implied reader (1974)[13], which refers to the reader

[13] Iser, Wolfgang, "The Reading Process: a Phenomenological Approach", in *New Literary History*, Vol. 3/2, 1972.

who is the person that the author imagines when creating the literary work. The reader can be an ideal recipient who can fill in the gaps based on the text and the meaning the text has provoked. Moreover, Stanley Fish (1970)[14] put forward the concept of the informed reader, who understands all the implied information in the fiction. The perfect reader proposed by Leavis (1943)[15] can completely understand the meaning of the text. The ideal reader put forward by Culler (1976)[16] possesses both linguistic and literary competence to understand the texts. The super-reader nominated by Riffaterre (1966)[17] refers to the reader who will never be surprised at what they are reading. The model reader proposed by Eco (1990)[18] can have a clear understanding of the meaning that the text intends to utter. The idealised reader propounded by Stockwell (2002)[19] can achieve ideal interpretation in the cognitive framework.

All these theoretical readers are text sensitive to match the meaning of the texts. They are all readers in an abstract sense. In the study of stylistics, there are real, actual or ordinary readers proposed by Hall (2009)[20] in given reading contexts. The thesis is not intending to debate the differences between these different models of reader, but has settled on a pragmatic approach to the readers' experience as determined by the text itself.

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[14] Fish, Stanley E., "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics", in *New Literary History*, Vol. 2/1, 1970.

[15] Leavis, F.R. *Education and the University: A Sketch for an 'English School*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1943.

[16] Culler, Jonathan, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976.

[17] Riffaterre, Michael. "Describing Poetic Structures: Two approaches to Baudelaire's les Chats"， *Yale French Studies*, No. 36/37, Structuralism (1966), pp. 200-242.

[18] Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1979.

[19] Stockwell, Peter. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

[20] Hall, Geoff. "Texts, readers- and real readers", *Language and Literature*, August 2009, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp.331-337.

The thesis aims to provide an empirical study of the readers' response other than my own interpretation. It is suggested that the possible world theory, the text world theory, conceptual metaphor theory can undertake more challenging research within the field of cognitive poetics or stylistics. My analysis of 9/11 trauma narrative is targeted to sort out the distinctive features of the trauma narrative in the 9/11 context, that is, that conceptualisations within the fictions can trigger cognitive constraints on reader.

Chapter 2 Trauma Narrative in Post-9/11 Novels

2.1 Historical Context of 9/11 Novels

The 9/11 terrorist attacks happened on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. At 8:40 in the morning, four passenger airliners were hijacked by nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists simultaneously, and two of the aircraft were flown into the North and South towers of the World Trade Centre in New York. The terrorists made American Airlines Flight 11 crash into the northern facade of North tower at about 8:46, then United Airlines Flight 175 flew into the South tower at 9:03. The 110-story twin towers collapsed within 102 minutes. Even more devastating was the debris and fires that destroyed the main structure of the other buildings in the World Trade Centre complex and caused extensive damage to the adjoining buildings. The third plane was flown, at 9:37 am, into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the United States Department of Defence. However this only partially damaged the Pentagon's western side. The fourth aircraft was found crashed in Pennsylvania because passengers seized control of the plane from the hijackers. It was reported after interrogation of the accomplices that the target was the Capitol at Washington or the White House.

It is claimed that 2996 people died in the attacks including the nineteen hijackers, and more than 6000 people were injured. The four planes crashed, killing all the 246 passengers and crew. Other deaths of 2606 people occurred in the collapsing World Trade Centre, while 125 people were killed in the devastation of the Pentagon. Additionally, it caused the unprecedented and deadliest incident for the firefighters and law enforcement officers in the US with 411 rescuers killed.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks caused significant damage to the American nation with at least three trillion dollars in total costs—the most costly terrorist attack in world history. The 9/11 event can be marked as a significant historical event that changed the American nation and world order. The immediate response to the attacks was the US launching of the War on Terror and the invasion of Afghanistan. The destruction of the Twin Towers not only caused significant damage to the national and global economy, but also had a major influence upon the national psyche and was reflected in film, television, drama, and literature. These commonly employed the event as a thematic feature and gave different responses to shape a social phenomenon to educate people to

cope with the loss of relatives and overcome the grief. People were worried about homeland security and future attacks; suddenly Americans were living with paranoia and anxiety.

2.2 Overview of Post-9/11 Novels

The so-called post-9/11 literature emerged after the 9/11 event as an opposition to global anti-terrorism and gradually spawned a deep process of reflection on broader issues.Post-9/11 literature deals with traumatic memories, mental endurance and the journey towards recovery of the ordinary American people after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which are characterized by self-reflection and issues of redemption

Unlike explicitly literary representation in 9/11 novels, the official *9/11 Commission Report* demonstrates a commitment to reflect the "truth" of the Septembers 11 attacks. It tells the background stories of Islamic fundamentalists and how the US government tries to deal with terrorism. Ben Yogada argues that this report has a "cinematic structure cutting back and forth between the two narratives."[21] What's more, the report utilises a lot of literary techniques, such as foreshadowing and entering *in medias res*. Richard Posner, column writer for *The New York Times*, applauds the literary qualities in the report by commenting that it is "uncommonly lucid, even riveting" and "an improbable literary triumph."[22] Artistic conception has a prominent place in the report, it can be argued that the official 9/11 report may have influenced 9/11 novelists when they began to write fictions.

However, artists render 9/11 trauma more effectively by incorporating different media types: film, drama and written text as well as exemplifying the power of fictional elements in representing historical events. Readers can understand that fictional characters endure the same misfortunes and traumas as people in the real world. Examining historical events from the literary and artistic

[21] The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorists Attacks upon the United States (New York: Norton, 2004). It is an official report of the 9/11 events prepared by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. The final report was publicised on July 22, 2004. Later another edition of the report adapts graphic images as characterized by comics, which gained much praise for its startlingly touching capacity.

[22] Richard. A Posner, "The 9/11 Report: A Dissent", in *The New York Times*. First published on 29, August, 2004 [http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/29/books/the-9-11-report-a-dissent.html?_r=0, accessed 19 April 2016.]

perspective will show the relationship between language and the world by way of aesthetic and political debate.

The uniqueness of 9/11 literature lies in the fact that it integrates the topics of terror, politics, violence, familial structure, love and hatred through a literary rendering. It does not mean that the novels do not relate to a specific ideological context. It is by engaging with the disputes that 9/11 fictions extricate themselves from the category of patriotism, mourning and grief, and become historically significant.

Novelists consistently doubt whether it is possible to write about the 9/11 events since here they encounter the same predicament as in witness literature, or Holocaust literature. The fictionalized texts and works are seeking to represent historic trauma as suffered by a nation; the event itself thus seems to approach what is unspeakable and unpresentable. Thus the fictions of 9/11 are attempting to utter the unspeakable. Although the terrorist attacks were anticipated in some films, TV series and novels before the event actually took place[23], the fictional adaptation of a real traumatic event is always a contentious issue for writers. Immediately after the attacks, numerous writers interrogated the future and the possibility of writing about the event. Their response echoes philosopher Theodor Adorno's notable declaration: "writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric."[24]

The imbalance in critical scholarship parallels the complexity and difficulty of 9/11 novels, since literary criticism of this subgenre embodies the inherent contradictory predicament of 9/11 literature. It is the mission of American novelists to radically rethink history. Against this background, not only did they provide a cohesive representation of the daily life of the individual after the terrorist attack of 9/11, but they also chose to focus on issues ranging from individual trauma and personal identity to national security, even re-evaluating the structure of literary form

[23] Tom Clancy's novel *Debt of Honour* (1994), Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997), *Cosmopolis* (2003) The Pilot episode in the TV show *The Lone Gunmen* and films such as *Turbulence* directed by Robert Butler (1997) and *The Siege* directed by Edward Zwick (1998) all feature the plot of an airplane crashing into the Twin Towers.

[24] Theodor Adorno, *Prisms* (1967: reprint, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981.:34 Adorno argues here that artistic representation of traumatic experience has to employ a new language to reflect the real experience, differentiating it from ordinary language.

in order to adapt to the needs of their investigations. Moreover, the event has increased social tensions and racial hatred towards people with Arabic appearance, including Arab-Americans. Mainstream white Americans reacted to these events with a focus on reiterating that they were the traumatized group

Until now, there is no consensus on the categorization of 9/11 novels. It is even controversial to define 9/11 fictions as a subgenre. Broadly speaking, many texts have received the label of 9/11 fiction simply because the 9/11 event is mentioned or they allude to anti-terrorism. It is an over-generalization to define 9/11 fiction so broadly. For instance, there are some novels that simply mention the event of 9/11 in passing, for instance, there are minor allusions in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010).

An incomplete list of post-9/11 novels until 2013 is briefly discussed below, including the most high profile examples. Post-9/11 fiction can be divided into three groups by thematic analysis: the first group focuses on depicting the characters' lives in the aftermath, the second group mainly lays emphasis on the moral issue of 9/11 terror, the third group takes the point of view of the non-western Other. Most 9/11 fictions take the opposing stances of victims or the side of the perpetrators. Most novelists depict the traumatic effect upon victims, except some novels such as John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006), Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007) and Martin Amis's *The Second Plane* (2008). These literary texts attempt to describe perpetrators' consciousness from the Other's perspective and represent how Muslim characters share similarities and differences with the victims.

Theme 1: Victims lives in the aftermath

The first category of novels focusses on narrating the individual's traumatic experience in the aftermath of the attacks. Most novels reproduce the scenes of the horrible day and explore the influence the events had on people's lives in the gloomy days that followed. It is apparent that most of the fictions deal with people's struggle to live on in the shadow of 9/11. Below are some examples of fictions which directly address characters' responses of emotional shock and depression to the attacks of 9/11, and meantime reflect humanity at their best.

French writer Frederic Beigbeder published *Windows on the World* in France in 2003, which was then translated into English by Frank Wynne and released in 2005.This is considered the first fictional depiction of the 9/11 events. The time span of the novel is between 8:30 and 10:29 a.m. on the morning of September 11, and it focuses on representing the events from the point of view of two protagonists with two narrative voices. Beigbeder incorporates many multimodal elements to represent the dilemma of 9/11 and invests the novel with metafictional reflection.

American cartoonist Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004) is a graphic memoir, which depicts his own reactions to the syndromes of PTSD after witnessing the destruction of the Twin Towers.

American writer Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) tells the story of a nine year old boy's pilgrimage through New York city as he searches for the answers to questions about his father's death in the 9/11 events. It is one of the post-9/11 fictions that will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Contemporary American journalist Ken Kalfus published *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* in 2006. The novel entails a sense of black comedy in telling a completely ludicrous story where a couple are on the brink of divorce, both think the other has perished in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and they feel disappointment when they see the other arrive home safely. It also presents how private life was encroached on by the cataclysm and how people are left in a state of disorientation.

American novelist Jay McInerney published *The Good Life* in 2006. The novel portrays the lives of two Manhattan couples who encounter each other when participating in volunteer jobs near Ground Zero immediately in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. They pursue extra-marital relationships seeking a sense of renewal. It reflects how New Yorkers acted out the collective trauma through doing volunteer jobs. It is the power of community that helps victims work through trauma. It is an open-ended novel in which readers are not informed as to whether the characters recover or not.

American writer Claire Messud published *The Emperor's Children* in 2006. It portrays the intersections of three well-educated friends and their life in Manhattan in the aftermath. Messud

approaches September 11 straightforwardly by depicting that heartbreaking moment that changes each protagonist's life forever.

Prominent American novelist Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007) investigates how the lawyer Keith Neudecker escapes from the collapsing tower and reacts to the traumatic experience. Detailed discussion on this novel will be provided in Chapter 5.

Irish American novelist Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* (2008) tells the story of a Dutch banker whose marital status is on the verge of failure and he finally attempts to reconnect with his wife. The fiction focuses on the process of how he seeks his self-identity through playing the game of cricket (which becomes a metaphor) and his friendship with Chuck, a member of an ethnic subculture. The second layer of the story concerns the dreams and living conditions of Chuck as a member of a minority group in post-9/11 era. The metaphorical meaning of cricket in helping Hans restore his identity and work through the trauma of 9/11 will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Irish writer Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2009) sets the backdrop in New York City by way of two distinctive storylines which display the disparate lives of people in the city. The first one concerns the tightrope walk of Philippe Petit between the Twin Towers in 1974, while the second event copes with the more earthly story of the fictional courtroom trial of a prostitute.

Theme 2: Terror and Politics

A second group covers novels which accentuate the significance of the political and of terror. These provide a treatment of large-scale historical event in literary works. Terror and politics undoubtedly play a crucial role in these 9/11 novels as novelists appropriate the historical events for literature. Some fictions choose to depict other fictional terrorist attacks but risk becoming predictable and cliché.

John Updike published *Terrorist* in 2006, a novel which belongs to the group of post 9/11 fictions that are directly concerned with the psychological state of the perpetrators, the terrorists themselves. This novel caters to the reader's curiosity and confusion about terrorism. The psychological portrait of a potential teenage Islamic terrorist depicted by Updike is particularly intriguing. The storyline unfolds of how a teenage perpetrator would willingly act as a suicide

bomber to execute a terrorist attack. The complexity of *Terrorist* is that the terrorist was himself American, which demonstrates clash of religions and different beliefs in the contemporary United States.

Ian McEwan's *Saturday* was published in 2005, and was set in the background of the demonstration that took place on 15 February 2003 to protest against America's invasion of Iraq. McEwan tells the story of a series of things that happened to the protagonist neurosurgeon Henry Perowne all on one Saturday. The middle-aged, outwardly successful surgeon's life and thoughts on that particular Saturday are presented to readers in a vivid manner. His witnessing of an air crash (Henry presumably considered it as a terrorist attack like the 9/11 event), his daily routine surgical operations, his weekly squash game with his American-born colleague, his car accident and hatred for Baxter (the burglar), his visit to his mother in the nursing home, his participation in his son's rehearsal, and his family reunion disrupted by the retaliatory burglar and his companions (a miniature version of a terrorist attack) are all presented to readers like a slideshow. The novel demonstrates human beings' capacity for endurance in the modern world, beset by terror.

Eminent American novelist Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* (2004) tells the story of a Jewish American family from the point of view of young Philip. He is confused about terrorism and American politics. It rewrites the presidential election of 1940 in that, in this alternative history, Roosevelt is defeated by Charles Lindbergh. Literary critics regard this political novel as a roman à clef, which is in fact a critique of the Bush administration.

British Indian novelist Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* （2005）is set in an imaginary small town in the Kashmir region of South Asia. Shalimar is a tightrope performer in the village known as "Shalimar the Clown". After his unhappy love affair, Shalimar begins to take revenge on people and he participates in Jihadi groups, becoming a renowned assassin. As a chauffeur, Shalimar successfully murders Max, the American ambassador to India who was involved in US counter-terrorism.

Martin Amis's *The Second Plane* (2008) consists of twelve pieces of nonfiction and two short stories that focus on the topic of terrorism and radical Muslims.

Amy Waldman, who was previously reporter on *The New York Times*, published her first novel *The Submission* in 2011. It tackles the subject of the 9/11 attacks by focussing on a Muslim architect, who wins the contest to design the 9/11 memorial at Ground Zero. The result of the award triggers a furious response amongst the public. Thomas Pynchon's *Bleeding Edge* (2013) can be regarded as a detective fiction, which depicts the world as transformed by the Internet with many allusion to 9/11 events in New York.

Theme 3: The Viewpoint of the Other

A third group includes writers from eastern countries who provide another perspective altogether. For instance, Afghan-born American writer Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) narrates the story of a young boy Amir's relationship with his intimate friend Hassan, the servant of his family in Afghanistan. Amir attempts to rescue Hassan's son after a twenty year gap because he wants to atone for his guilt.

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) tells the story of a young Pakistani who transforms himself into an Islamic fundamentalist after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The protagonist, Changez is eager to alter his destiny in the "US," which has a dual meaning in the novel, the name of the country and the abbreviation of the Underwood Samson Company he works for. He becomes aware of his status as the "other" after the 9/11 events. As we will see, the theme of the development of a positive construction of self-identity is emblematic of the entire American condition in the 9/11 context.

2.3 Establishment of the Subgenre

It is generally acknowledged that a literary genre emerges only gradually and it will take time to reach its readership. Non-fictional accounts emerged immediately as the authoritative form of public discourse in relation to 9/11. However, the literary rendering of the 9/11 event emerged after a short period of silence. In the theory of psychological trauma, this kind of "belatedness" is regarded as an innate feature of trauma. Literary writers have the obligation to enter into a new generic territory, which may have profound influence on our understanding of imaginary writing and the historical event. American 9/11 fiction sprung up so quickly only several years after the event as a literary reproduction of a historical event, the immediacy of literary response to 9/11

event propels the popularity of such fiction since it can shape a unique narrative that is different from other nascent genres.

There are many common themes displayed in post-9/11 fictions, primarily concentrating on the crisis of self-identity and familial rupture. The research paradigm of post-9/11 fiction focuses on analyses of the themes of trauma, identity, politics and terror.

The most important monograph on the relationship between terror and fiction is Margaret Scanlan's *Plotting Terror: Novelists and Terrorists in Contemporary Fiction*, published coincidently in the year 2001, which investigates the works of prominent novelists Don DeLillo, Doris Lessing, Philip Roth and J.M.Coetzee. The book received wide attention and anticipates the emergence of the subgenre of 9/11 fiction. Terry Eagleton's *Holy Terror* published in 2005, traces a genealogy of terror in the context of culture and philosophy from ancient to modern times from a historical perspective. He provides a profound investigation of terror by incorporating the concept of terror from many disciplines such as: theology, politics, philosophy and literature. Frank Lentricchia and Jody McAuliffe's *Crimes of Art and Terror* published in 2003 also discusses the interrelationship between literature and terror in the post 9/11 cultural context. They primarily explore how violence and political terror can be approached through literary creativity.

Early in 2004, *Studies in the Novel* focused on "Terrorism and the Postmodern Novel" in its Fall Volume. It was only after a significant number of 9/11 texts emerged that researchers turned their attention to the new genre. Before 2011, there were already various academic journals focusing on analysing post-9/11 fiction, but near the tenth-anniversary of the 9/11 event, a number of full-length critical studies were dedicated to the topic.

It seems axiomatic that literary critics would start to examine a group of literary texts when it reaches a certain scale.

There is disequilibrium in the literary reception of post-9/11 novels. For instance, the editor of *Modern Fiction Studies* in 2011 received more than seventy papers on 9/11 topics, in which fourteen papers focus on DeLillo's *Falling Man*, twelve papers on Foer's *Extremely Loud and*

Incredibly Close, but fewer than eight on other works.[25] The critics reached a consensus that, ten years after the terrorist attacks, since it is an emotional subject, there is still no way of providing a comprehensive evaluation of such novels. Although critics give abundant attention to 9/11, they primarily concentrate on discussing the individualistic trauma, neglecting the broad humanistic implication of literary texts.

Generally speaking, current research on post-9/11 fiction can be categorized into three groups. The first group focuses on trauma, represented by Linda S. Kauffman and E. Ann Kaplan, Versluy's analysis of the unrepresentability of language, Christina Cavedon's thematic explication of melancholia study, Tim Gauthier's emphasis on empathetic response and Arin Keeble's elaboration of trauma and identity. These all intend to combine the new trauma of 9/11 with the traditional discussion of trauma in war literature and holocaust witness literature, aiming to investigate the possibility of recovery through suffering against the background of political terror.

The second group concentrates on the historical research between art and terror or violence; Margaret Scanlan, Georgiana Banita and Marc Redfield are the representative scholars in this group, who aim to reveal the relationship between violence and literature by tracing the history of terror back to romanticism.

The third school was pioneered by Martin Randall and Richard Gray, who focus on literary analysis from a postcolonial perspective. They contemplate 9/11 literature from the angle of ethnic criticism. They argue that American trauma exhibits a catastrophic narrative mode. Ground Zero in New York becomes a multinational, multi-religious and multicultural focus-point, which propels readers to address issues of otherness and hybridity. I will now discuss these critical approaches in more detail.

[25] John N. Duvall, Robert P, "Narrating 9/11", Modern Fiction Studies, Volume 57, Number3, Fall 2011, p.394.

2.4 Critical Responses to Post-9/11 Novels

Kristiaan Versluys published *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel* in 2009. It is the earliest monograph devoted to the study of 9/11 literature and can be considered as a founding work in 9/11 criticism. This book is a critical summary of the 9/11 fiction using the approach of trauma research. The Belgian scholar discusses the fundamental relationship between trauma and narrative and claims that 9/11 is an extreme event.[26] He argues that 9/11 is "a semiotic event, involving the total breakdown of all meaning-making systems" .[27] He primarily examines the inadequacy of language to express the unrepresentability of the traumatic event through an analysis of DeLillo's *Falling Man*, Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Beigbeder's *Windows on the World*, and Updike's *Terrorist,* as examples of the process by which characters work through trauma. He emphasizes the emotional impact of the event and tries to spurn sensationalism. He further acknowledges that the active and voluntary engagement with traumatic memory is the first step towards healing. Overall, the overstatement of melancholic feature of the 9/11 fictions makes Versluys' commentaries a bit narrow.

Marc Redfield published *The Rhetoric of Terror: Reflections on 9/11 and the War on Terror* also in 2009. The first part of the book puts forward the concept of virtual trauma to explicate the fundamental truth of September 11, Ground Zero and the collapse of the World Trade Centre and emphasize the atmosphere of grief and mourning in the novels. He further contends that self-reflexivity becomes the essential characteristic in the artistic representation of the 9/11 events. The second part of his book is dedicated to discussing the notion of the war on terror and its relationship with the sovereign speech act in the postmodern context. Quoting Derrida's philosophical notion of iterability, Redfield exposes the cultural tragedy of the era of globalisation and proposes irenic cosmopolitanism through expounding post-structuralist thought. The feature of self-reflexivity proposed by Redfield is widely acknowledged by other critics in interpreting the 9/11 fictions and can be extended to explicate the relationship between terror and literature, as will be discussed later in this thesis.

[26] Kristiaan Versluys *Out of the Blue : September 11 and the Novel*, New York: Columbia UP, 2009. p.2.
[27] Ibid.

Richard Gray's *After the fall: American literature since 9/11* appeared in 2011. His research is distinct from Versluys' study on trauma. He expands the boundaries of 9/11 fiction to include some fiction that was published before 2001. In the second chapter "Imagining Disaster," he gives his opinion that fiction, such as McInerney's *The Good Life*, Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children* and DeLillo's *Falling Man*, has failed to "come up with an adequate answer", because they "betray a response to crisis that is eerily analogous to the reaction of many politicians and the mainstream American media after 9/11: a desperate retreat into the old sureties."[28] In brief, Gray's work demonstrates an appropriate investigation of the implications of the widely–read post-9/11 novels on American literature and culture.

Anne Keniston co-edited the collection *Literature After 9/11* (2010). This volume is divided into three parts, focusing on the traumatic and incommensurable nature of the event, politics and representation, and the interconnectedness between 9/11 fiction and the literary tradition. The book provides a discussion of the dialogue between how literature attempts to express 9/11 and the exploration of 9/11's effect on literary reproduction by drawing on postmodern theory, trauma studies and political theory.

Gray and Randall both draw on Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity to outline the connections between form and language in post-9/11 fiction. In the third chapter of *After the Fall," "*Imagining crisis," Gray argues that 9/11 fictions have "a strategy of convergence, rooted in the conviction that the hybrid is the only space in which the location of cultures and bearing witness to trauma can really occur." [29] Meantime, Randall contends that "Other more hybrid forms have helped to reveal the profound difficulties of representing such a visually resonant, globally accessible … event."[30] In my view, it is one-sided to disdain realism and domestic writing, regarding these ideas as obsolete; and it is radical to celebrate the concept of the hybrid and the global in 9/11 American fiction. Furthermore, since the fiction subverts "the oppositional language of mainstream commentary—us and them, West and East, Christian and Muslim"—

[28] Gray, Richard, *After the fall: American literature since 9/11* [1st ed.]., Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011,p.16.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Randall, Martin . *9/11 and the Literature of Terror*, Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2011.p.3.

Gray coins the term "deterritorializing America" to refer to the position of the heterogeneous character "in a transnational context." [31]

In *9/11 and Literature of Terror* (2014), Martin Randall investigates the different types of 9/11 writings, including fiction, poetry, films and drama, especially focusing on the works of Don DeLillo, Mohsin Hamid, Ian McEwan, Simon Armitage and Martin Amis. Randall not only gives a detailed analysis of the work written by prominent American writers, for instance, DeLillo's *Falling Man*, but also supplements them with the fictions and short stories created by British novelists, such as McEwan's *Saturday* and Amis's *The Second Plane.* Furthermore, the critical comment on the Oscar awarded film *Man on Wire* broadens the analysis to other artistic forms other than fiction.

Sara E. Quay and Amy M. Damico *published September 11 in Popular Culture: A Guide in 2010*. It records American response to the 9/11 events in everyday life in a chronological order. The book investigates a wide range of texts from literature to television, music, film and visual culture. The chapters of the book consist of a close examination of the influence of the attack on ordinary American culture.

Birgit Däwes' *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel* (2011) is the most ambitious critical work on the subject of 9/11 literature as it covers the widest scope, analysing 107 American fictional works. Until now, there are at least 250 works of fiction dealing with the topic of 9/11, of which two thirds are written by American novelists. The new historicist approach makes Däwes consider the potentiality of the novels' cultural memory, and how they have shaped public consciousness after 9/11. Däwes intends to give a "systematic analysis of the 9/11 novel as a literary subgenre" [32] and "provide a broad foundation for insights into the particular aesthetic transformation of 9/11."[33] She is inclined to label post-9/11 fiction as "Ground Zero Fiction" because of the feature of "geographical hierarchy", which "provides

[31] Gray, Richard, *After the fall : American literature since 9/11* [1st ed.]., Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011,p.17.
[32] Birgit Däwes, *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel*, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH,2011,p.6.
[33] Ibid.,p.9.

textual outlines for a multilateral cultural reorientation and thus makes a significant contribution to the transnational relocation of September 11, 2011."[34]

Moreover, Däwes provides a taxonomy and categorizes the 9/11 fiction into six groups: metonymic, salvational, diagnostic, appropriative, symbolic and writerly. The metonymic refers to fiction rendering the event indirectly. She explicates the "textual silence" by quoting Robyn Warhol's concept of "unnarration" since language and text are inadequate to express the scale of the pain. The advantage of the metonymic category is that it "enables writers to keep a respectful distance while also engaging with the topic and exploring its verberations."[35] Brett Easton Ellis's *Lunar Park* and Jonathan Lethem's *Chronic City* can be cited as the exemplars. The second category, the salvational articulates "the widespread desire for healing, rescue, and closure."[36] The symbolic category investigates the 9/11 events through "their cultural semes of fire, burning and collapsing buildings, twins, towers, terrorism, hijackings, falling people, dust, absence, death"[37], taking Jonanthan Franzen's *Freedom* and Lynne Schwartz's *The Writing on the Wall* as instances. The fourth writerly approach points straightforwardly to the "profound sense of aesthetic crisis" [38] and transforms the "aesthetic challenges into formal and structural innovations."[39] Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* and Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* uncover "a notable self-reflexive dimension to Ground Zero Fiction—both in form and content."[40] It is not surprising that the authors resort to experimental strategies to represent the unrepresentable. The diagnostic category attempts the "global positioning of the memory of 9/11"[41] by subverting the traditional narrative of American exceptionalism. The appropriative approach refers to "appropriations of the perpetrator's voice from the outside." The texts of DeLillo's *Falling Man*, Updike's *Terrorist*, and Amis's "The Last Days of Muhammad Atta" are devoted to constructing the narrative from the point of view of the other—the perpetrators of terrorist act themselves. The book covers a wide scope of 9/11 fiction. Therefore, it is easy to

[34] Ibid.,p.13.
[35] Ibid.,p.133.
[36] Ibid.,p.139.
[37] Ibid.,p285.
[38] Ibid.,p343.
[39] Ibid.,p345.
[40] Ibid.,p344.
[41] Ibid.,p.203.

detect that there are some overlapping descriptions in Däwes's taxonomy because we can find metonymic and symbolic categories in the writerly approach.

Georgiana Banita's, *Plotting Justice: Narrative Ethics and Literary Culture after 9/11* appeared in 2012. She investigates the moral shift reflected in the narrative strategies in post-9/11 fiction and observes "several ethical leitmotifs in post-9/11 literature as preliminary rejoinder to the question of why ethics is a productive theoretical framework." [42] As Banita published this monograph in 2012, she only includes earlier scholarship published prior to 2011 by mentioning Versluys and Gray. Banita largely responds to Versluys' promotion of a "poetic ethical turn" and avoids the politicization of 9/11 fiction, but does not refer to Däwes, Keniston and Quinn.

This book draws on the perspective of narrative ethics and examines the interconnected relationship between ethics and narrative through analysing the texts of DeLillo, Lorraine Adams, Michael Cunnningham, Patrick McGrath, Pat Barker, and Aleksandar Hemon. Banita contends that these fictions can evoke an ethics of equivocation after putting 9/11 discourse in a political context. Attempting to seek and construct the narrative ethics of 9/11 through the historical dimension, she firstly argues that the primary drawback of 9/11 narrative is that it neglects the landmark event—the ending of the Cold War, which unsettles the represented historical and political context. She further argues:

> By attending to literary rhetoric and form, we espy a process of ethical narration that unravels types of knowledge, identification, and sentiment in ways that reaffirm traditional ethical mandates as newly pertinent in the light of September 11 and its continuing aftermath.[43]

She also asserts the increasing uncertainty of selfhood in the process of the ethical reading of some 9/11 texts. Therefore, she advocates "a self-committing system of looking and spectatorship rather than mere visual depiction of Otherness."[44]

The defect in her explication of ethical reading is the inadequacy and inaccurate reflection of the concept of empathy, although there are some allusions to "empathetic response" in the introductory chapter. She observes the power of empathy to produce an ethical and moral reading

[42] Banita, Georgiana. *Plotting justice: narrative ethics & literary culture after 9/11* .Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. p.5.

[43] Ibid.,p12.
[44] Ibid.,p39.

when arguing that "an essential attribute of post-9/11 fiction resides in its concrete suggestions about how the experience of terror can be sublimated into an empathetic code of conduct." [45]

Aimee Pozorski published *Falling After 9/11: Crisis in American Art and Literature* (2014). She examines the image of falling in some exemplary American fictions, for instance Briegbeder's *Windows on the World* , DeLillo's *Falling Man*, Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* as well as Richard Drew's notable photograph, analysing the use of the motif of falling to register the trauma of the 9/11 event in the texts.

Arin Keeble's *Novel: Trauma, Politics and Identity* (2014) is an account of nine 9/11 works, mainly discussing the conflictedness between trauma and politics. It investigates the graphic features in Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, the crisis of representation in *Windows on the World* and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, the issue of marriage and relationship in *Falling Man, The Good Life* and *The Emperor's Children,* allegory in *The Road*, Otherness in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, meta-fiction in *Netherland*, and the multidimensional nature of memorialization in *The Submission.* The profound analyses of the historicized 9/11 texts help us understand 9/11 literature as a critical moment in world history.

In *9/11 Fiction, Empathy, and Otherness* (2015)Tim Gauthier analyses the theme of empathy in some recent fiction such as Jeremy Rifkin's *The Empathic Civilization*, Julinna Oxley's *The Moral Dimensions of Empathy* and Karsten Stueber's *Recovering Empathy*. It evaluates the cosmopolitan values in the clash of civilizations by juxtaposing the narrative of us and them. The book intends to connect the traumatic survivors and the other, who commits terrorist acts, through investigating Western and non-Western novels. Thus the fictions teach us the significance of the complex dynamics in the construction of a globalized community.

Representing 9/11: Trauma, Ideology, and Nationalism in Literature, Film, and Television (2015) is a collection edited by Paul Petrovic interpreting how the 9/11 events are reproduced in various artistic forms, such as popular fiction (Jonathan Lethem's *Chronic City* and Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom*), television shows (*24* and *Homeland*), and films (*Zero Dark Thirty* and *This is the End*), which can expand our horizon in understanding the popular discourse on addressing 9/11.

[45] Ibid.,p295.

Drawing on the analysis of melancholia from trauma studies in the medico-psychiatric field, Christina Cavedon in *Cultural Melancholia: US Trauma Discourses Before and After 9/11* (2015) elaborates the melancholia in the white middle class in the McInerney novel, postmodern melancholia and the fantasy of Tuché in DeLillo's pre-9/11 novels (*Americana,The Body Artist and White Noise*) and the hyperrealism in *Falling Man*. The novelty of the monograph is the way she traces back research to DeLillo's fictions written prior to 9/11 event.

Trauma theory emphasizes the traumatic effect of 9/11 events and questions the signifying function of language. Individuals need to work through the trauma through narrative and semiosis. Therefore, 9/11 fictions transformed themselves into recuperative texts by relieving readers' anxiety and thus playing a recuperative function. Versluys overlooked the distinctiveness of 9/11 fiction when comparing it with Holocaust literature, although he grasps the problems of narrative trauma in 9/11 literature. Banita's research proposes a social, practical literary ethics, which can substitute for identity politics in postcolonialism, providing a new theoretical approach to 9/11 literature.

It is apparent that the disputes and contradictions in the research of 9/11 literature can illustrate how the meaning of 9/11 itself has undergone change; perhaps more time needs to pass before we can historically reflect on and explore this event. Therefore, it is appropriate to adopt an eclectic attitude to the study of 9/11 literature, since there is no prescriptive standard to define and categorize what is successful or not in 9/11 fictions. Paying close attention to the historical relation between witness literature and traumatic literature and the relevant ideological cultural context can provide insight into and refine the form of aesthetic and thematic features in the development of a more complete approach.

Analysing 9/11 fiction through the singular perspective of trauma or from the postcolonial angle provides too restrictive a lens. A better way to explore the possibility of dialogue between 9/11 literature and politics is by setting the language, aesthetic space and social-historical representation in their external context.

To sum up, these critical volumes dedicated to the studies of post-9/11 literature provide solid avenues for further research. My cognitive approach to post-9/11 narrative attempts to show how

the readers' emotional response is relevant in better understanding 9/11 texts, thus it differentiates from the earlier studies of post-9/11 literature.

2.5 Depoliticized 9/11 Trauma Narrative

Literature as a fictional medium differentiates itself from the factual medium by representing trauma through a rewriting of the event. In the aftermath of 9/11, Americans found they were drowned in a sea of headlines. Public discourses were dominated by an increasing patriotic fervour for unity and solidarity of spirit under one-flag. This convergence of the media, the nation, and private interest emerges as an institutional power; with the single objective of cultivating unity and encouraging self-interest. This all-pervasive mainstream institutional power disseminates a political narrative. On the other hand, literary narrative would like to subvert political discourse by depicting a depoliticized trauma narrative by creating fictional characters and concentrating on how these individuals cope with trauma. Readers thus distance themselves from dogmatic political discourse when reading post-9/11 fictions. Therefore, it is crucial for survivors, witnesses, and readers to understand the differences between the official narratives and literary narratives of 9/11 in their relationship to trauma. What kind of role does literature play in effectively communicating trauma as the crucial problem in 9/11 fictions? Since we are bombarded by the media reports on 9/11 in our everyday life, it is imperative to understand the mechanism of trauma in the fictional world.

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony: Cries of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* was influenced by Paul de Man in developing trauma studies in the 1990s by aligning them with deconstruction. Trauma can be interpreted as an example of the dissociation from normal mental cognitive processes. Under the influence of Paul de Man's theory of the performativity of language, Ruth Leys asserts that there is "a set of widely shared assumptions about the constitutive failure of linguistic representation in the post-Holocaust, post-Hiroshima, post-Vietnam era." [46]

[46] Leys, Ruth, *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2000, pp.267-268.

Before we come to discuss the features of traumatic narrative, we should clarify the different representations of PTSD. The most common symptoms of PTSD are nightmare, flashback and intrusive memory when someone is re-experiencing the traumatic event. The major difference between flashback, nightmare and intrusive memory lies in the current situation of the victim. In a flashback, the victim is reliving the trauma and is put into the past condition, while intrusive memories just keep a victim's mind infiltrated by memories of the trauma—the victims are still keeping a connection with the present. Nightmares are recurrent disruptions to a victim's sleep, and which may include the detailed depiction of past traumatic experience.

Dominick LaCapra defines the term "emphatic unsettlement" as a state of "being responsive to the traumatic experience of others, notably of victims, implies on the appropriation of their experience [47] (41). He further claims there is a crisis of representation in trauma: "Working through trauma involves the effort to articulate or rearticulate effect and representation in a manner that may never transcend, but may to some viable extent counteract, a re-enactment, or acting out, of that disabling dissociation."[48]

Moreover, the explication of traumatic memory and intrusive memory can help us further understand trauma fiction. Traumatic memories may lack sequence like normal memories because the brain suffers from terrifying dislocations. As traumatic memories force victims to relive the unwanted experience, they disturb normal brain processing. Victims are depressed on an unconscious level. To increase the degree of verisimilitude, literary writers intentionally intimate victims' dissociation through undermining normal narrative conventions, thus shaping a unique depoliticized 9/11 trauma narrative.

> The theory of repression claims that when memories are laden with (or evocative of) intensely painful feelings, they may be warded off over long periods of time. The usual distinction between suppression and repression is that the former involves a conscious effort not to think of something while the latter is "unconscious", which in psychodynamic theory means both automatic (i.e. non-

[47] LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.p.41.

[48] Ibid.,p.42.

> conscious) and motivated (that is, related to conflicts of desire). It is the fear of looking at traumatic memories that keeps them repressed. [49]

Post-9/11 novels subvert the traditional novel paradigm, by providing a wider field of view and multiple viewpoints on the terrorist attacks. For US citizens and US novelists, the September 11 attacks create a collective memory of a lingering shattering event of putative evil. American novelists explored a pain that could not be directly expressed in language. Their goal was to depict the psychological healing process through narrative. Writers attempted to break the traditional narrative conventions and adopted numerous postmodern narrative techniques to write the 9/11 trauma, for instance: metalepsis, shift in narrative perspective, flashback, parody, anachrony, the use of loan words and so on, all of which are devices to deal with the problematic relationship between language and trauma.

Trauma narrative not only records the novelists' artistic response to the event, but also deals with 9/11 cultural trauma by attempting to enact catharsis and recuperation, to overcome vulnerability and pain. Victims need to reconstruct the traumatic experience to attain recuperation; which is a process of restoring their contact with community and the world by recognizing the causes and consequences of trauma. In comparison with historical records, memory-based narration of past traumatic experience creates intimacy and an empathic effect which pulls readers closer to victims' mental states.

Firstly, non-linear narrative is one of the most prominent features in post-9/11 fictions. It subverts the linear order of traditional novels by not telling the story from beginning to end in a chronological order and becomes the most suitable way to reproduce traumatic memory**.** Anne Whitehead comments on the characteristics of trauma fiction:

> Trauma fiction emerges out of postmodernist fiction and shares its tendency to bring conventional narrative techniques to their limit. In testing formal boundaries, trauma fiction seeks to foreground the nature and limitations of narrative and to convey the damaging and distorting impact of the traumatic events. [50]

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[49] Laurence J. Kirmayer; "Landscape of Memory: Trauma, Narrative, Dissociation." in Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, eds., "*Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory, New York and London: Routledge, 1996.* p.179.

[50] Anne Whitehead. *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh University Press, 2004,p.82.

Reminiscent narration and flashback are the usual techniques that novelists employ in non-linear narrative structures, shaping the disruptive narrative in 9/11 fiction. Dominick LaCapra explains the unconventional plot progression in trauma narrative by saying:

> One may observe that there are forms of narrative which do not unproblemantically instantiate the conventional beginning-middle-end plot, which seeks resonant closure or uplift and tends to conflate absence with loss or lack. In fact, there are forms that both contest it and suggest other modes of narration which raise in probing and problematic ways the question of the nature of the losses and absences, anxieties and traumas, that called them into existence. [51]

The explication of repetition of the traumatic experience in narrative feature of flashback in fictional characters' mind can be found in Caruth's declaration:

> As modern neurobiologists point out, the repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be re-traumatizing; if not life-threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration. [52]

Secondly, multiple internal focalisation which shifts focus to different narrative voices is another literary technique that post-9/11 novelists use, for instance, Richard Power's *The Echo Maker*, McEwan's *Saturday* as well as Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close.* Particularly, Foer's novel alternates internal focalisation through three different characters, each of whom reflects their subjective perception, memories and intellectual processes. This forms a composite representation of their traumatic stories. Chronological disruptions with alternative narrative focalisation are one of the most conspicuous features in fragmented narration, which implicitly demonstrates PTSD symptoms of nightmares, numbness, melancholia and depression—a fractured psyche. The victims experience a deep sense of loss and anxiety, which causes the phenomenon of repetition compulsion in traumatic representation. The nature of disruptive narrative is intimately related with the disruptive experience, just as LaCapra states: "Trauma is [a] disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence; it has belated effects that are controlled only with difficulty and perhaps never fully mastered." [53]

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[51] LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001,p.54.

[52] Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996,p.63.

[53] LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001,p.41.

Thirdly, recurrent images and reiterative stylistic expression become another apparent textual feature in 9/11 trauma narratives. Anne Whitehead admits that "Images and motifs echo across individual works and across the corpus as a whole, the novels mimic the effect of trauma in their persistent repetitions and returns."[54] The victims are unable to assimilate past experience and are haunted by the unclaimed past and stuck in the condition of repetition compulsion. This echoes with Freud's concept of traumatic latency. Therefore, 9/11 novelists employ stylistic repetition, recurrent images and enact repetition compulsion. "The repetition compulsion seeks to achieve a respective mastery over the stimulus that has breached the defences by developing the anxiety which was previously missing." [55]

Stylistic repetitions, breaks in linear time, and recurrent images are the literary techniques that DeLillo, Foer and O'Neill adopt to show the compulsive repetitions of trauma that may arise in a different context. The three novelists reproduce the traumatic memory, sharing their traumatic memory through dialogue or by writing from an interlocutor's point of view. This is a good way to exchange memory and experience in the text world, which also invites readers to engage in the interpretation process. Readers finally make their own sense by engaging in the process of trauma transfer.

Novelists attempt to reproduce traumatic memory by reconstructing traumatic scenes in the historical moment, and creating artistic representations of traumatic experiences. The reconstruction of the traumatic experience can help victims transfer traumatic memory at a subconscious level to narrative memory at the conscious level. Self-reflective and redemptive narration plays a therapeutic function in alleviating pain and healing. The psychological response to natural disasters and wars, sexual assault, accidents, terrorist attacks, and other violent acts vary from person to person. The victims in the traumatic event are unable to construct their individual as well as collective or cultural identity. This condition is fully exemplified in the post-9/11 novels *Falling Man* and *Netherland.* Here, protagonists are suffering from an identity crisis in the aftermath of 9/11 event; in *Falling Man*, Keith is a direct victim and witness of the events in the Twin Towers, while in *Netherland,* the Dutchman Hans is an indirect victim, as we will see. Novelists delineate the national cataclysm by reducing it to personal trauma. Although the three

[54] Whitehead, Anne, *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh University Press,2004,p.120.
[55] Ibid.,p.119.

fictions frame the 9/11 event as an individual traumatic event, the collective influence of the event and its implication are presented through the archetypal responses of different individuals. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the healing power of narrative in the three selected fictions can be summarised as dialogic communication discourse, writing and the healing power of empathy as a connection.

Judith Lewis Herman clarifies the process of healing by stating:

> Recovery unfolds in three stages. The central task of the first stage is the establishment of safety. The central task of the second stage is remembering and mourning. The central task of the third stage is reconnection with ordinary life."[56]

Identifying traumatic syndromes is the prerequisite to therapy. It is difficult to have an appropriate diagnosis of the victims' prolonged, repeated trauma since PTSD is often hidden.

Dominick LaCapra identifies three different responses to trauma: denial or disavowal, acting out, and working through. He argues that acting out may be closely interrelated with working through, but there may be differences;

> In post-traumatic acting out in which one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes—scenes in which the past returns and the future is locked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop. In acting out, tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene." [57]

Additionally, he further explains:

> Working through is an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma (as well as transferential relations in general, one is able to distinguish between past and present and recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future. [58]

In another monograph, LaCapra explicates the features of acting out and repetition compulsion in traumatic healing process.

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[56] Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery*, New York: Basic Books, 1992,p.156.
[57] LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p.21.
[58] Ibid.p21-22.

> Acting out and repetition compulsion are frequently related to an affirmation or acknowledgement of posttraumatic fragmentation, disjunction, and instability wherein the impossibility of any final unity or "suture" may become tantamount to the unavailability or elusiveness of any durable bonds or "suturing " at all. [59]

As novelists know, acting out and working through are the two compulsory processes that victims should undertake for healing. Accordingly, they create the dialogic therapeutic discourse and use epistolary writing as the main narrative therapies for characters to recuperate. The dialogic therapeutic discourse shares some similarities with Freud's "talking cure", which requires victims to rearticulate their past experience to others; the process gradually becomes a form of catharsis. They all can assist victims to find self-identity and make reconnections to society and ultimately achieve recovery. The importance and particularity of writings lies in the power to explore dreams and wishes on the blank page or screen. Its transformative power is amazing. Victims are empowered to revise the traumatic past. Writing becomes a safer means in which to express the unspeakable event. Therefore, the therapeutic function of writing is exemplified in various post-9/11 fictions.

What is crucial in Kaplan's book *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (2005) is her explanation of how the reinterpretation of 9/11 events as traumatic events works because "events … produced a new personal identity." [60] The pursuit of a new identity and self-preservation in post-9/11 world is the common theme of my analysis of 9/11 trauma narrative in these three fictions. Trauma destabilizes identity, so victims struggle to preserve their sense of self through dialogic communication and writing as a narrative of healing as well as empathic healing through connection. The recovery processes of the separate characters in the three fictions will be explicated in detail from a cognitive approach in the later chapters of my thesis.

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[59] LaCapra, Dominick. *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996.p.193.

[60] Kaplan, E. Ann. *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature,* New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005.p.2.

Chapter 3 Descriptive Framework of Cognitive Poetics

3.1 Overview of the Theory of Cognitive Poetics

A "cognitive turn" in literary criticism has been recognised recently since many critics regard cognitive poetics as providing a new approach to re-evaluating reading. Etymologically, 'cognitive' here refers to the science of cognition, while poetics is derived from Aristotle's definition of poetics to mean a "theory" or "system" of textual creativity. Cognitive poetics developed rapidly and is gradually becoming mature as a discipline. The science of the mind has started to exert influence on literary theory and make literary theory shift towards science and cognitive-oriented paradigms. Cognitive poetics has taken insights from the findings of many disciplines, such as cognitive science, cognitive linguistics, cognitive psychology and stylistics, but differs from these disciplines in taking literature as an object of interpretation. Unarguably, the emergence of cognitive linguistics was of vital significance to the development of cognitive poetics, as early as the 1970s when scholars who specialized in the field of story grammar had conducted research in readers' and characters' mental lives in terms of story grammar units. Since stories are coded for information, the story grammar units are the units of information that are the features of stories emphasised by readers.

The primary concern of this thesis is not simply about how 9/11 novels represent unspeakable traumas, but also how these traumas can be understood by readers. Therefore, cognitive poetics, as a reception-based theory supplies a dynamic account of the process of reading because it not merely concentrates on the actions, thoughts and even feelings of characters in a fictional world itself, but also investigates the process of readers' understanding of the discourse. Involvement of readers is an inherent part of this theory. As we all know that reading novels is a dynamic process, the interactions between authors, texts, and readers are crucial to the cognitive reading process. The understanding of narrative is a process in which readers reconstruct the mental models of the storyworld and encode the narrative. Readers will activate their cognitive interpreting frames and scripts to understand texts and analyse the figures, events and scenes in the storyworld. In other words, reading is a cognitive process that can be interpreted with reference to general cognitive patterns and principles. Context is a crucial concept in the theory of cognitive poetics, since there

is no universal consensus or unchanging interpretation of the meaning of texts. Different contexts will generate different readings.

The term "cognitive poetics" originates from Reuven Tsur's publication of *Toward A Theory of Cognitive Poetics* in 1992, which is considered as the seminal monograph in the field of cognitive poetics by outlining an interdisciplinary approach to literary study through utilizing the tools of cognitive science, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, linguistics and the philosophy of science. The book attempts to explain cognitive theories systematically through analysing the relationship between poetic texts and their aesthetic effects from an interdisciplinary perspective and explore how poetic language is framed by brain processing in the analysis and organization of subjective experience. Tsur shows how it is meaningful to pursue the potentiality of combining cognitive science to the disciplines of literary and linguistic studies.

Cognitive poetics perceives literature as a particular form of daily human experience and concentrates on the word "cognition", which is the perception derived in our cognitive capacities for understanding the world. The theory of cognitive poetics has acknowledged the crucial role of context in creating meaning, so cognitive poetics is closely related with stylistics and can be regarded as a school of reader-response criticism. *Metaphors We Live By* was published by Lackoff and Johnson in 1980, which is regarded as the pioneering seminal monograph that bridged cognitive science and literary criticism in an interdisciplinary approach and emboldened the idea of cognitive poetics as an integrated and comprehensive theory of literature concerning the mind.

Many of the frameworks of cognitive poetics, such as deictic shift theory, possible world and mental space theory, conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending theory, text world theory, and cognitive narratology, are primarily utilised here to analyse 9/11 texts. Therefore in the following sections, I will elaborate detailed accounts of these theoretical terms.

3.2 Deictic Shift Theory

Deictic shift theory refers to shifts in cognitive deixis between person, place and time. The concept of deictic projection propelled the advancement of deictic theory, which has ties to the cognitive reading process. Apparent marked patterns of deictic expression in literary works can

be generally categorized into person, place and time. The etymology of the concept "deixis" stems from the Greek term for the "point of reference" that indicates a speaker's stance. It was employed in linguistics as an expression for the spatial or temporal location as judged from a specific articulator's position. John Lyons states the definition of deixis as:

> By deixis is meant the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee.[61]

The point of anchorage typically lies in the speaker's position in a face-to-face interaction. This applies, for instance, when you can see the top of a mountain from a window. The default "deictic centre" generally depends on the point where the speaker is standing and their orientation.

Space deixis, also known as place deixis, refers to spatial positions and specific locative references in terms of the distance between the deictic centre and other perceived positions. In contemporary English, the most salient expressions are "this" and "here", which refer to the proximal deictic expression, since the locations are perceived as close to the default deictic centre. Whereas, the expressions "that" and "there" belong to non-proximal deictic expressions, because the locations are far from the default deictic centre where the addressee is standing. It should be highlighted that this sense of proximity is subjective and relies on the context of the utterance.

Time deixis, also known as temporal deixis, involves reference to the expression of time in an utterance. Time words such as "now" and "then" or different tenses are also the expressions of deixis because of the grammaticalization effect. What's more, the time when an utterance is made refers to "encoding time" according to Fillmore, while when the utterance is heard we are concerned with the "decoding time". [62]

Personal deixis is concerned with the roles of addresser and addressee in an utterance. The addresser and addressee can be directly or indirectly involved in a discourse. Some personal deixis also can be re-categorized as perceptual deixis since the expressions are all related to the

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[61] Lyons, John. *Semantics: Volume 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p.637.

[62] Fillmore, Charles J." Deictic categories in the semantics of 'come'", *Foundations of Language*, Vol.2, No.3 (Aug.1966)*2*, pp. 219–227.

perceptive participants in the text. Perceptual deixis contains a wider range of references including personal pronouns, demonstratives and definite articles plus definite references and even mental states such as "thinking and supposing". The personal pronoun "I" is one of the most prototypical examples of deictic expression in the novel.

The theory of cognitive poetics adapted terminology from computer science to identify the deictic shift level. For example, a fiction which commences with the deictic field centred on a narrator may shift its deictic centre "down" to a time earlier in the narrator's life. "The deictic shift here goes deeper into the story, which is called a push. While the deictic shift goes further out of the story or moving up a level is called a pop." [63]Pushing in and popping out are the actions of the deictic shift in narrative. The real author and real reader are at their most distant from one another here. The in-between ones are the implied author, narrator, idealized reader and so on. David Herman asserts that:

> The storytelling involves a shift of deictic centres, whereby narrators prompt their interlocutors to relocate from the HERE and NOW of the act of narration to other space-time coordinates-namely defining the perspective from which the events of the story are recounted. [64]

Therefore, the understanding of the positions across a spectrum of deictic levels is of paramount importance when reading a fictional text. Stockwell further argues that examples of pushing into a deictic field include "entering flashbacks, dreams, plays within plays, stories told by characters, reproduced letters or diary entries inside a novel, or considering unrealised possibilities inside the minds of characters,"[65] which are the common narrative techniques that authors prefer to deploy in post-9/11fictions.

Except from those major grammaticalized types of deixis named by Fillmore, many other instances of cultural deixis should also be taken into account when analysing texts. Discourse deixis, or text deixis involves the part of a text or utterance contained in the continuing use of expressions. Social deixis refers to the social indications, such as the social status or rank from

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[63] Stockwell, Peter. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction,* London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p.47.

[64] Herman, David, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002, p.271.

[65] Stockwell, Peter. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction,* London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p.47.

the perspective of a speaker's position in a family or institution. Empathetic deixis is the use of language to express emotion. Furthermore, the relational deixis involves "expressions that encode the social viewpoint and relative situations of authors, narrators, characters and readers, including modality and expressions of point of view and focalization; naming and address conventions; evaluative word choices,"[66] which are similar to the social deixis proposed by Fillmore.

Textual deixis involves the expressions that foreground the textuality of the text, including explicit "signposting" such as chapter titles and paragraphing; co-reference to other stretches of text; reference to the text itself or the art of textual production. Compositional deixis refers to the external factors of representation of the text, such as the cover of the book, the typography of the fiction and the format of the text, which can play an important role in deciding the text's register because a shift in register will presumably shift the compositional deixis. Therefore, it is significant to perceive even single words or expressions as deixis. The process of reading fictions in this sense is dynamic because it involves shifting context construction by following the different anchor-points in deictic expressions.

The 9/11 novels alternate referent pronouns with every change of narrator or speaker. Therefore, it is meaningful to identify the deictic patterns in each particular 9/11 novel to further understand the themes expressed in the fiction. For instance, in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Foer uses flashbacks, diary and reproduced letters, stories within stories, which can suffice to illustrate the pushing of the deictic fields. Foer intuitively employs flashbacks to recall the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Dresden Bombing to the current time. It is noticeable that the novel is narrated by three different protagonists telling their traumatic stories respectively. Accordingly, the deictic centre pushes immediately from Oskar to Grandfather and then Grandmother. The reproduced letters of Oskar's grandfather function as an embedded narrative level in the novel, since the compositional deixis of the letters with red circles reveals some underlying information which implied readers are required to decipher and interpret. The unspeakable trauma of the two generations was immersed in the minds of characters and manifested to readers through these shifting deictic fields. The most attractive part of deictic shift theory is the analytical frameworks of directions that help readers engage with the texts and identify who they are themselves when they are reading.

[66] Ibid., p.46.

3.3 Possible World and Mental Space Theory

Possible world and mental space theory involve how texts and meanings are reconstructed in readers' minds. Possible world theory originated from the presumptions of philosophers and logicians when calculating the true value and meaning of a statement or a sentence. Borrowing from Leibniz, possible world theory was later extended in the field of narratology and semiotics to analyse the features of fictional texts. In *Discourse on Metaphysics* in 1686, Leibniz argued that God chooses the actual world which is the best and most perfect in all the possible worlds after careful analysis. [67] The concept of possible world is concerned with philosophical meaning, and deals with the ontological status of non-actual entities. The actual world is the only true world where we in fact live. There are other possible worlds which differ from the actual worlds in terms of their ontological status.

The philosophical application of the concept of possible world had been explained by many literary critics. In the late 1970s, the narratological school of French structuralism, thinkers such as Tzvetan Todorov and Claude Bremond started discussing the mode of existence of narrative events and the possibility of finding fictional worlds with corresponding rules in real worlds, which paralleled the concerns of possible world theory. The possible world is linked to the actual world by way of its imaginative accessibility.

Then at the end of the 20th century, the analytic school (Lewis, Kripke, Rescher, Hintikka, Plantinga) developed the theory and employed it as an approach to analyse the semantic problem. Philosopher David Lewis adopted the philosophical concept into the analysis of narrative in fictional worlds in the paper "Truth in Fiction" in 1978. Subsequently, other literary theorists, such as Umberto Eco, Thomas Pavel, Marie-Laure Ryan, Brian McHale, Uri Margolin and Alan Palmer, also participated in the further adaptation of the possible world theory.

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[67] Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Discourse on Metaphysics and the Monadology* (trans. George R. Montgomery). Prometheus Books, 1992 (first published by Open Court, 1902).

Pavel is another pioneering scholar in incorporating the idea of possible worlds into narrative theory. He first published the essay "Possible Worlds in Literary Semantics" in 1975 and then put the book *Fiction Worlds* in print in 1986. He contends that readers will embrace a new ontological viewpoint to understand each new model world. Meantime, readers should realize that there is a boundary between fictional worlds and the actual world, which is very important for literature's ethical and didactic significance.

Lubomír Doležel develops possible world theory in *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* in 1998, which makes great contribution to the discipline of literary theory. He is distinguished from Lewis's earlier interpretation of truth in fiction by putting forward the principle of minimal departure. It is widely acknowledged that every fictional world will not have all properties and includes certain indeterminacy, so it is very difficult to have complete information. The unknowable information in the fictional worlds shapes an ontological gap. Additionally, the typology of plot is another dimension that Doležel investigates. The categorization of the system into the alethic system, the deontic system, axiological system and the epistemic system relies on modal logic.

Another influential scholar in possible world theory is Umberto Eco. He assumes that the domain of narrative is a universe consisting of many different possible worlds, not only one possible world. The first types of possible worlds are asserted by the author; the second types are subworlds that exist in the imaginary minds of characters, the third involves the ideal reader's perspective on the first two types of possible worlds. [68]

The philosophical logic of possible worlds was applied in literary studies to distinguish truth or falsity in the fictional universe. Fictional texts construct a literary world, which is regarded as a particular type of possible world in contrast with the possible world in logic. The distinctiveness of the fictional universe rests on the ground that fictional texts possess their own system of modality, including both actual events and possible events.

[68] Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1979.

We cannot judge assertions simply by real-world conventions. The 9/11 terrorist attacks launched by al-Qaida are in the historical record, but in the imaginary literary world, novelists can rewrite history to make the perpetrators as victims, in other words, the victims and perpetrators can change positions in the possible world. This is consistent with analytic truths or universal assertions by definition. For instance, the mathematical equation of 1+1=2 is obviously true in the real world, but it may be false in imaginary places in a fictional world according to that world's rules. Therefore, the comprehension of the primary concepts such as literary truth, functionality, the nexus between fictional world and reality need to be addressed by literary critics using possible world theory. The literary universe possesses autonomy since physical objects and non-physical objects can coexist in the same chronotope. The fictional world can be further categorized into fictional truth and fictional falsity after we apply a logical view to the background information provided in the fiction.

It is generally acknowledged that fictional entities are not complete because of the indeterminacy of semantics and context. Readers must rely on textual evidence to make a sound judgment. The interactions between readers and the possible worlds from the narratological and cognitive points of view shape the discourse world. Stockwell writes:

> a discourse world is the imaginary world which is conjured up by a reading of a text, and which is used to understand and keep track of events and elements in that world. It is a principle of cognitive poetics that the same cognitive mechanisms apply to literary reading as to all other interactions, and so we can understand a discourse world as the mediating domain for reality as well as projected fictions.[69]

New York in the 9/11 fictions is the counterpart of actual metropolitan New York, but is differentiated from the actual New York in the aftermath because the counterpart possesses different properties. The city in the fiction is not the real city that people live in, but the space that the fictional characters live in. The city under the pen of the novelist is delineated from some actualities in conventional history. It has been further proposed that trans-world identity should be negotiated to understand the relationship between the worlds. Moreover, the concept of trans-world identity refers to the same object existing in more than one possible world, where the actual world is regarded simply as one of the possible worlds.

[69] Ibid., p.94.

The text entities represented in the worlds of the real author, implied author, narrator and character are different. Different possible worlds are embedded within each other whenever the character has a flashback or flash-forward. Readers need to keep pace with the current discourse world and each of its counterpart. It is the reader's task to follow the storyline and differentiate different possible worlds in the fiction to better interpret the plot.

Here is a list of six of the categories of alternative possible worlds:

1. Epistemic worlds—similar to knowledge worlds; what the characters believe to be true in the fictional world;
2. Speculative extensions—expectations of the characters or prospective extensions of knowledge worlds into hypothetical worlds;
3. Intention worlds—what the characters want to accomplish and deliberately change the current world to achieve ;
4. Wish worlds—what characters wish and desire, which may be different from their current world
5. Obligation worlds—different versions of the world filtered through moral commitments and prohibitions from the character's sense of moral values
6. Fantasy universes—the worlds of characters' dreams, visions, imaginations or fantasies.[70]

Taking Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* as an instance, the possible worlds in the mind of the protagonist Oskar are multiple. The epistemic world refers to Oskar's common belief in the fictional world, such as the fear and anxiety that is permeating his mind when he encounters Arab people. The speculative extensions projected in the character of Oskar are his anticipation of working through the puzzle of his father's accidental death. Furthermore, the intention world in Oskar's mind is prominent, because he plans to find the owner of the key and resolve his sense of bereavement. The wish world in the fiction is also apparent since Oskar always wishes his father had not died. The obligation world presented in Oskar's sense relates to

[70] Peter Stockwell. , *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction,* London and New York: Routledge, 2002.pp.94-95. Revised by myself.

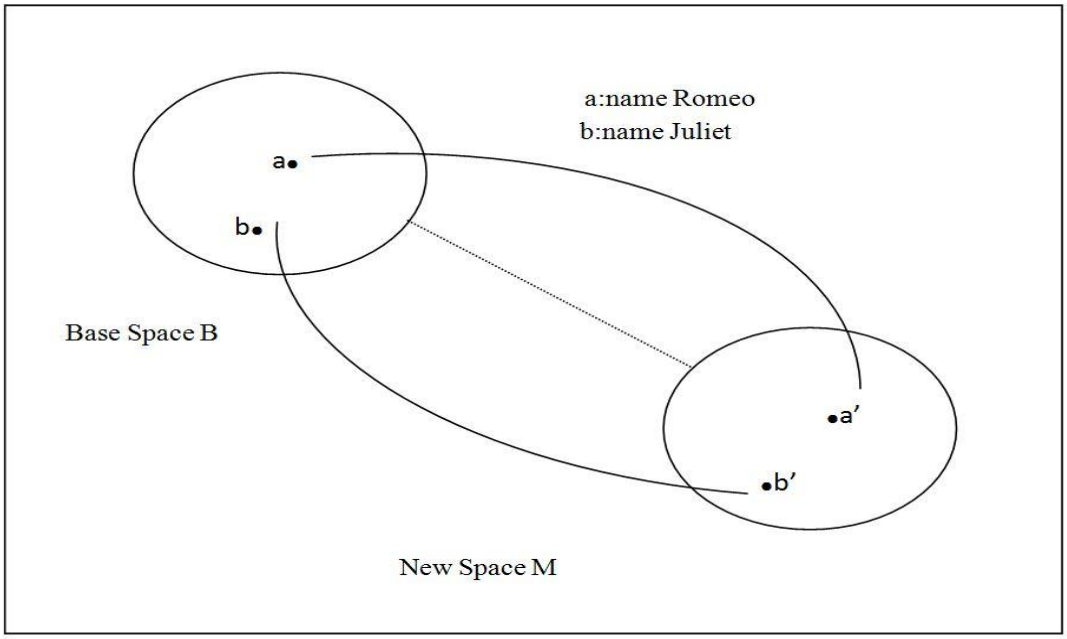
his commitment and moral obligation to unravel the enigma of the loss of his father. The fantasy universes demonstrated in the fiction are Oskar's imaginations and fantasies to invent gadgets and reverse the order of the man falling from the twin towers in the famous photograph. The detailed explanation of the application of possible world theory to this novel will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Mental space theory is regarded as a supplement to possible world theory. It provides a systematic and consistent approach to understanding the references in the descriptive passages in stories, no matter if it occurs currently or remotely, is real or imagined or hypothesized, historical or present. Four main types of mental space are time spaces, space spaces, domain spaces and hypothetical spaces. The reality space is the mental representation of reality that human beings use to perceive the world. Any imagination or prediction or assumption based on this reality space is considered as the creation of a projected space. The creation of fictional space can also operate under an equivalent process, which is built up as part of the ongoing narrative. For instance, mental spaces are constructed using spatial prepositions, such as the chapters of the narration of Oskar's grandfather "Why I'm not where you are" in Foer's fiction is supplemented with different dates of letters. The shifts in time and location break the narrative sequence and embed a complicated narratological framework in the fiction.

The following figure introduces Fauconnier's mechanics of mental space analysis of the comprehension of the sentence: Maybe Romeo is in love with Juliet.

Figure 3.1 Diagrammatic representation of the mental space configuration (Adapted from Fauconnier 1997:43)[71]

[71] Fauconnier, Giles, *Mapping in Thought and Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press . 1997, P.43



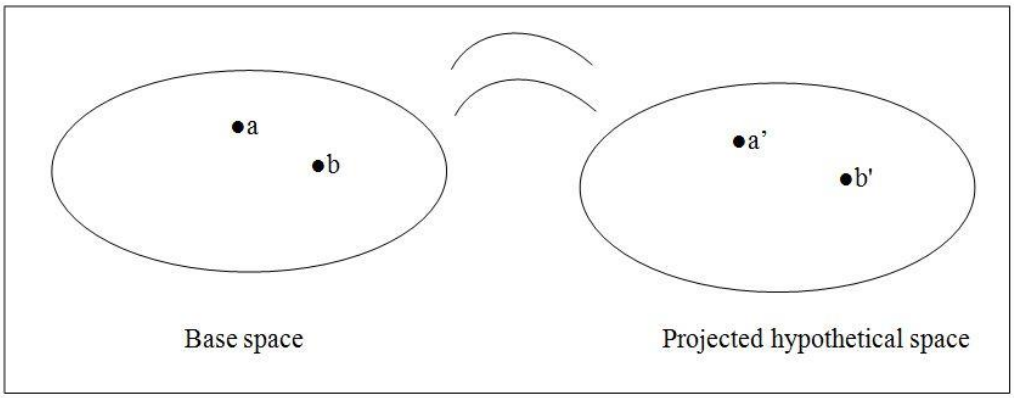
It is apparent that there are two mental spaces involved in the comprehension of this sentence. The first space is the Base Space B including two elements a and b, which are accessed by the names "Romeo" and "Juliet". The second space is New Space M, which is derived from the Base space through space builder words, like "maybe", the linguistic expression triggering the new space's construction. The word "maybe" builds the new space by way of possibility, where a' is in love with b'. M functions as the Focus space, where materials are being added and derived by the sentence. B functions as a Viewpoint space. The dashed line illustrates the Focus space, which is set up relative to the Viewpoint, while the curved lines demonstrate a relationship of identity between elements in the two mental spaces. Furthermore, Fauconnier defines the 'Access Principle' as "the possibility space contains two entities a' and b', which are two counterparts of a and b in the base, and are accessed by means of the same names." [72]

Mental space theory is associated with the notion of conceptual blending in terms of the introduction of new spaces, namely a generic space and a blended space. For instance, the mapping between two spaces which share common structural relationships shapes them into a

[72] Ibid.,p.41.

generic space, whereas the specific features that emerge from the mapping, creates a new blended space.

Figure 3.2 The structure of how the hypothesis builder creates new projected space[73]



Adverbials such as "actually" and "really" can be considered as examples of a reality space. Conditionals such as "if", "when" and "provided" imply that a new space is opening or focus is shifting to a new existing space. Therefore, space can be constructed through grammatical usage, such as tense, mood and aspect. Copulative verbs are the linking verbs that connect the elements in different spaces.

Four main types of mental spaces are listed as follows:

Time spaces -- current space or displacement into the past or the future, typically indicated by temporal adverbials, tense and aspect.

Space spaces -- geographical spaces, typically indicated by locative adverbials, and verbs of movement.

Domain spaces- an area of activity, such as work, games, scientific experiments, and so on.

Hypothetical spaces- conditional situations, hypothetical and unrealised possibilities, suggestions for plans and speculations. [74]

[73] Peter Stockwell. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002. p.97.
[74] Ibid.,p.96. (Revised by myself.)

The various concepts in cognitive poetics are interrelated in the way they motivate literary interpretation. It is apparent that these concepts can be merged; supplementing one another to reproduce useful models for cognitive poetics as a new approach in literary criticism.

3.4 Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory

Conventionally, metaphor has been described as a figure of speech whose aim is to achieve rhetorical effect by comparing the similar properties of two separate things. Metaphor was defined by Aristotle in the *Poetics* as "… giving the thing a name belonging to something else, the transference being … on the grounds of analogy".(*Poetics* XXI, 1457b) Metaphor is prototypically ubiquitous in literary expression and poetic usage.

In contrast to the traditional view of metaphor, cognitive linguistics researchers George Lakoff and Mark Johnson propounded conceptual metaphor theory in their publication of *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980. They linked cognitive science and literary criticism together towards an interdisciplinary approach and proposed cognitive poetics as an integrated and comprehensive theory concerning mind, in which literature plays the central function .

They claim metaphor is a pervasive and omnipresent phenomenon in everyday language. Apprehending the function of metaphorical patterning in the cognitive process has injected new vigour into the study of mind. Later the theory was further elaborated by scholars within the field of cognitive semantics and linguistics, such as Gibbs (1994), Steen (1994), Kövecses (2002, 2005), and Evans and Green (2006), to name only some. This section primarily illustrates the fundamental ideas of conceptual metaphor theory, provides implications for the study's description of human cognition and outlines directions for further research in literary criticism.

In cognitive semantics, the metaphorical use of languages and expressions are the linguistic manifestation of conceptual knowledge. The basic assumption of conceptual metaphor theory is that metaphor operates at the level of thinking and is regarded as comprehending one conceptual domain using words associated with another domain. In other words, we conceptualize our world by using metaphors. In order to understand conceptual metaphors, we need to clarify the two domains, "source domain" and "target domain". The "source domain" includes a set of literal

entities, which are expressed in related lexical words. It is the conceptual domain from which we draw a metaphorical meaning. Linguists sometimes delineated these expressions as lexical sets or fields. The "target domain" is the real topic of discussion and is usually expressed in abstract form to link the relationship between entities. It is the conceptual domain we attempt to understand.

The supporters of conceptual metaphor theory argued that thought overrides language. They usually compare two things which are not alike in most ways, but are similar in another conceptual way based on people's general practices and common life experiences. Lakoff and Johnson coined this notion as "conduit metaphor", which implied that the author or speaker can put ideas into containers, and then send them through a conduit or channel; the receiver or reader can make meaning through the expression and understand the underlying or implicit ideas.

Example of domain mapping (Science is buildings.)

Explanation:

Science is built with facts just as a house is built with bricks， but a collection of facts cannot be called science any more than a pile of bricks can be called a house.

Science		**Buildings**
Scientists	→	Masons
Facts	→	Bricks
Argument	→	Construction
Foundation set	→	Foundation built

The analysis of this metaphor proposes that buildings would be the source domain and science would be the target domain. The scientists are working like masons because they collect the facts just like masons pick up the bricks, but the cohesive and significant issue lies in the argument which is like construction in the building of houses. This illustrates the correspondence between the entities and elements in the two domains. They are a systematic explanation and

demonstration of the mapping of cognitive models from one domain to the other. It is understandable that the nature of the two entities is not the same; therefore, it shows the creative nature of metaphorical concepts. Tracking the mapping between spaces constitutes the crucial part of cognitive work and the interpretation of how meaning is constructed.

Conceptual blending theory also refers to conceptual integration theory, which postulates similar claims as conceptual metaphor theory. It is a theory of cognition proposed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner with the publication of *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* in 2002. Mark Turner had already published *The Literary Mind* and stated that "conceptual blending is a fundamental instrument of the every day mind, used in our basic construal of all our realities, from the social to the scientific."[75] According to this theory, existing and new conceptualizations are blended in a subconscious and spontaneous process, which is presumed to be omnipresent in everyday thought. Additionally, this theory offers an insight into cognitive poetics by exposing the relationship between metaphor and other linguistic phenomena as explained by mental space theory. Furthermore, Stockwell expounds the notion that conceptual blending "involves the mapping between two spaces and common general nodes and relationships across the space are abstracted into a generic space." [76]

> Conceptual blends are the mechanism by which we can hold the properties of two spaces together, such as in metaphorical or allegorical thinking, scientific or political analogy, comparisons and imaginary domains involving chatterers form disparate areas.[77]

The new blending space emerges when the mapping occurs across the two existing spaces. It can be clarified as follows:

Cross-space mapping— the partial mapping of counterparts in two spaces

Generic space— a reflection of the abstract common elements and structure

Blend— a fourth "blended" space, combining the other spaces – emergent structure

Composition— new relations become apparent in the blend

[75] Turner, Mark. *The Literary Mind: The Origins of Thought and Language*, New York& Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p.93.

[76] Peter Stockwell. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002. p.96.
[77] Ibid. ,p.97.

Completion — frame knowledge fits the blend to wider knowledge

Elaboration — 'running the blend' through its emergent logic[78]

Cross-space mapping usually involves two spaces, the real space and the hypothetical space. The generic space is formed by the commonalities and relations across the two spaces. Some specific characteristics will emerge from the mapping and construct a new blending space.

3.5 Text World Theory

Text world theory was originally propounded by Paul Werth in the 1990s, specifically in relation to fiction. Its fundamental tenets are drawn from a wide range of disciplines mentioned before, such as possible world theory, stylistics, cognitive psychology, and cognitive linguistics. Werth published *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse* in 1999, which contributes to the discourse analysis of contextual factors and how these factors can be integrated into a systematic approach to help interlocutors to understand texts and discourse. In particular, Werth put forward a theory of language "genuinely relating the domains of cognition and language in a practical way which respects what we know about each domain", which he defined as "the Unified Field Theory of Linguistics." [79] The monograph explores how discourse studies and cognitive linguistics can be incorporated into a unified theory of text and discourse.

Werth defines the discourse world as "the situational context surrounding the speech event itself." [80] The text world is a conceptual scenario which represents a certain state of affairs. Elena Semino regards the text world as a conceptual space where producers and recipients will construct the conceptual space when they are interacting with texts. It is a dynamic process because the interaction makes the meaning to be constantly in process. It is a world-building process when the participants evoke their personal experience.

Furthermore, Werth offers an extensive and pragmatic application of text world theory to illuminate texts. It is an exemplar of how to use theoretical concepts to analyse texts in detail. Text worlds can be further described as being made of "world-building elements" and "function-advancing propositions". "World-building elements account for the sense of time and place and

[78] Ibid.,p.98.
[79] Werth, Paul, *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse,* London: Longman, 1999,p.xi.
[80] Ibid.,p.83.

objects and characters of the text. Function-advancing propositions account for the states, actions and processes that move a story forward. ”[81] The world-building elements are the background information setting in the fictional story, while the function-advancing propositions are the actions taken by the characters and propel the plot to move forward. Detailed explanations of the world-building elements and function-advancing propositions can be found in Table 3.1.

For Werth, modality refers to the “situating of the information with respect to the current context”, [82] which plays a pivotal role in understanding the construction of the text world and can be categorized into three layers: viewpoint, probability and interaction. In other words, it is consistent with the classification of the sub-world into three levels, namely, deictic sub-worlds, attitudinal sub-worlds and epistemic sub-worlds. Viewpoint refers to the deictic space which presents the point of view of a speaker, sometimes in direct speech or in flashback. Probability copes with truth and is intimately linked with mental representation. Since interaction deals with relationships between participants in a fictional discourse, readers and authors will interact at the discourse level to understand a complex speech event. Readers may find characters with different types of relationships may project various kinds of mental spaces, desires and hypotheses. It is this layered outlook that forms the characteristic of the text world model.

Attitudinal sub-worlds refer to participants’ expression of propositional attitudes, but not their acts, which include desire worlds, belief worlds and purpose worlds. The epistemic sub-worlds refer to modal propositions in the supposition and conditional mood. [83]

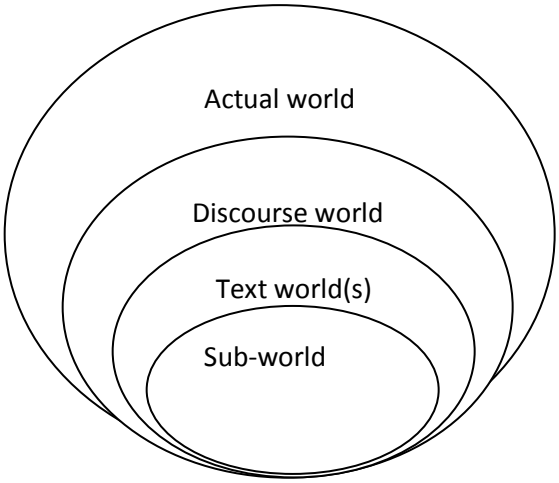
World building is a dynamic cognitive and decoding process, and also is a process of information incrementation and updating. The foregrounding technique in literary works can be regarded as information accommodation, which refers to “the presentation of new information in a background way.”[84] Mental space theory focuses on the analysis of words and sentences, while text world theory extends this approach to discourse analysis. According to Werth, there are three levels in discourse analysis, namely, discourse world, text world, and sub-world.

[81] Burke, Michael, *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*, London:Routledge,2014,p.508
[82] Werth, Paul, *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*, London: Longman, 1999, p.157.
[83] Ibid.,p.216.
[84] Ibid.,p.280.

"The text world is the conceptualization of a state of affairs in the memory or the imagination of who speaks or hears." [85] Most critics agree with the statement that the participants create text-worlds from discourse. A text world is a deictic space, which is defined initially by the discourse itself, especially by the deictic and referential elements in it. Werth contends that characters are "essentially agents who are capable of carrying out the actions and of bearing the properties which are ascribed to them."[86]

World-switching refers to "a narrative moving between worlds within the texts" [87] and depicts the dynamic construction process in the text world. The schemata and picture can briefly be summarised by the different narrative layers and focalisation in Figure3.3.

Figure 3.3 Summary of different layers of worlds in Text World Theory



[85] Ibid.,p.87.
[86] Ibid.,p.189.
[87] Burke, Michael, *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*, London:Routledge,2014,p.508.

Table 3.1 Brief summary of what has been included in the diagram of text world

World-building Elements	***Function-Advancing Propositions***
World Builders:	**Plot Advancing Narration**
Entity(identification)	
Time	
Location	
Character	
Object	
Other settings	
Subworlds	**Description**
Participant accessible	Scene/ person /habit advancing
Time	Individuation Framing
Place	
Character accessible	
Propositional attitudes	
Modalizations	

It can be seen that the world-building elements are composed of the setting information such as the identification of characters, time and space and subworlds. The subworlds can be classified into two groups: participant accessible and character accessible subworlds. The determinant factors in these two groups are different because the participant is passive while characters are active in plot-advancing. Function-advancing propositions propel the narrations which move the plot forward. There are two kinds of function-advancers, the group of actions and the group of alternative circumstances.

Text world theory has been extended to non- literary discourse recently (e.g. Gavins, 2000, Stockwell, 2002). It is a theory that attempts to consolidate the crucial ideas of human discourse processing. The theoretical basis of text world theory lies in the idea that humankind can understand discourses through constructing mental representations in their minds, which refer to the "text world". The speakers in a conversation, or author and reader, or the letter sender and receiver are considered prototypical discourse participants in the discourse world.

The cognitive and psychological complexity in communication processes deserves to be investigated, as this will effect receivers' own production and reception of the discourse itself.

Thus, the cognitive theory has the practical objective of offering a detailed aid in any account of communication processes, since it advocates the principle of 'text-drivenness' in the systematic clarification of the reading context. The process that readers activate their selected fields of existing knowledge when encountering the discourse is referred to as text-drivenness in the theory of text world theory, which is a crucial term in understanding the semantic process. Moreover, it can also be used to show how the text itself offers relevant inferential information and specifies the route to a particular domain of knowledge for participants.

Numerous factors such as pre-stored knowledge, memories, dreams, imagination and beliefs will influence discourse processing. Proponents of text world theory claim that discourse participants will only extract the relevant information, not the totality of information. The notion known as "common ground" can be understood as the ideological consensus agreed to by the engaged participants. The incremental elements of context in the common ground will have an effect on the ongoing process. The common ground itself is not static, but new concepts will emerge and old ideas are abandoned because of irrelevance. When talking about a recent art exhibition held in the art gallery with classmates, for instance, participants need only activate the area of art knowledge. The experience of traffic rules or culinary recipes remains redundant because it is irrelevant to the theme of discussion in the course of conversation unless these topics will be mentioned specifically.

Therefore, Peter Stockwell concluded that

> text world theory is innovative, then, firstly in providing a specification of how contextual knowledge is actually managed economically; secondly, in placing text and context inseparably together as part of a cognitive process; and thirdly, because it is founded not on the analysis of sentences but on the entire texts and the worlds that they create in the minds of readers.[88]

The recognition of the significance of text world theory marked by Stockwell proves the status of text world theory in literary criticism. Radically different interpretations of texts can be accounted for analysis by using the description of discourse world and participants.

[88] Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002.P.137

3.6 Cognitive Narratology

Narratology has experienced a resurgence since the late 1990s and taken a turn into postclassical narratologies. The term "cognitive narratology" itself has emerged as a subfield within "postclassical" narratology, which incorporates many concepts of classical narratology to supplement their inadequacies in story analysis. Cognitive studies can inject new vigour into old narrative theories. It is in this innovative research and the fresh insights it provides that literature can find a better understanding of itself and even beyond itself. Recent cognitive narratology played a foreshadowing role in the development of narrative theory, which because of its scientific approach had risen to dominance after classical narratology.

Recently literary scholars have paid increasing attention to the theory of cognitive narratology with the result that it developed into one of the most important fresh paradigms in narrative theory. Cognitive narratology can be characterized as "the investigation of mental processes and representations corresponding to the textual features and structures of narrative".[89] Cognitive narratology concentrates on researching the nexus between narrative and mind. The mental states of narrative experience have been the subject of close attention and are the focus of the theories of cognitive poetics.

Cognitive narratology can be regarded as an interdisciplinary research program as it integrates many ideas stemming from the philosophy of mind, psychology, artificial intelligence and cognitive science. Cognitive approaches to narrative are a comparatively new domain of inquiry. Some of the fundamental guidelines of the cognitive process can be applied to interpret literary texts. As the three parties of the reader, author and text are the main participants in the reading process, the reader and author can use strategies and scripts embodied in their human minds. The reader will use his or her pre-stored knowledge to process the knowledge that is supplied by fictional representations or the consciousness of the characters. It is rather difficult for the reader to become aware of their own cognitive processes since there are many unconscious factors involved in reading. Cognitive narratology also concerns readers' mental models in the reading process and purports to explore how frameworks assist readers' narrative comprehension. The interaction among textual cues, generic conventions and generic interpretive strategies (such as

[89] Bortolussi, Marisa and Peter Dixon. *Psychonarratology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.24.

mental models, frames, scripts, schemata and so on) shows how they are interrelated or mutually dependent. Marie-Laure Ryan once claimed that:

> every language-based fictional narrative involves at least two levels: a real-world level, on which an author communicates with a reader, and a primary fictional level, on which a narrator communicates with a narratee within an imaginary world".[90]

The dynamic communication among author, reader, narrator and narratee are of vital importance to the understanding of complex literary narratives. Critics who are cognitive oriented believe that cognitive-based approaches in narrative analyses will render something new in complex literary narrative comprehension.

Indeed, within the development of cognitive poetics and narratology, we have already witnessed more than one change of paradigm, and every change contains a re-evaluation of what impact narratology has had. Narratology is a conceptual programme under constant revision and update. In the near future, a broader interdisciplinary approach will develop in the study of mind-narrative nexus, which will be a hot topic for further investigation. It can be optimistically anticipated that cognitive research will reap huge rewards. More theories, insights and inter-illuminations will enrich and propel cognitive theory because this is a conceptual programme under constant revision and update.

[90] Ryan, Marie-Laure . *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, p.204.

Chapter 4 Trauma Transfer and Trauma Recovery in Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*[91]

4.1 Cognitive Logic of Internal and External Stories --A cyclical multimodal model

Jewish-American novelist Jonathan Safran Foer tells the traumatic story of an ordinary American family by deconstructing the indecipherable 9/11 events in his second novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005). The novel was adapted into a film directed by Stephen Daldray in 2011 starring Tom Hanks, Sandra Bullock, Thomas Hall, Max von Sydow, Viola Davis and John Goodman. The film was nominated for two Academy Awards, Best Picture and Best Supporting Actor for Max von Sydow. Foer attempts to depict the post-9/11 social and personal landscape of trauma, grief and loss through engendering a new form of narrative realism that merges written texts with visual interludes through the perspective of a nine-year-old boy.

It is commonly acknowledged that the September 11 events have become one of the largest subjects in the contemporary political landscape, exerting great repercussions on the Western literary field. The title of the novel has a significant implication because the phrase "Extremely Loud" has a thrilling resonance with the World Trade Centre's collapse on September 11, 2001, whilst the phrase "Incredibly Close" brings readers closer to an intimate emotional reckoning with the day the terrorist attack happened.

4.1.1 Multimodality

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close focuses on the nine-year-old boy Oskar Schell who lost his father in the collapse of the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001. A year later, Oskar began his heroic quest after he discovers a mysterious key with the word "Black" in an envelope in his father's closet. He embarks on a quest to find the owner of the key through visiting all the people

[91] Some ideas of this chapter has been presented in an essay entitled "Narrative Space of Redemption in Post-9/11 Fiction: Analysis of Heteroglossia and Chronotope in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*" at the *International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture and Sustainability* in Singapore in January, 2015 and has been published by the Centre of Excellence for Scientific& Research Journalism. (COES&RJ-SG15/1)

whose surname is Black in New York City. This picaresque journey represents Oskar's healing of the wound from his father's abrupt death and his unassuaged grief, since Oskar's narrative progress permits him to work through trauma and he eventually regains his stable sense of self.

Oskar displays many symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, such as insomnia, panic attacks, nightmares, numbness, melancholia and depression. The choice of employing the character of a precocious child invites readers to reshape their thinking and to view the world from an alternative perspective. We should admit that adult individuals sometimes lack this capability to deal with complex traumatic emotions, while inexperienced and precocious children possess such intellect because they can communicate and transmit their emotions effectively when encountering horrific events. Foer himself has explained his preference for using a child's perspective to examine violence in this way: "Oskar is a kind of expression of that level of vulnerability or being exposed. I wasn't playing any games. I just wanted to tell the story as forcefully as I could."[92]

Foer's choice of the child protagonist aims to get readers closer to the event since it is easy to evoke their emotion and subjective response by eschewing political issues. Readers further come to understand that the precocious child's self-healing ability in the elementary stages of learning and development is stronger than adults; additionally, the childlike nature of the recuperation mode can trigger adults to think profoundly themselves about their own way of tackling trauma in the aftermath of catastrophic events.

Oskar's narration is interwoven with his grandparents' lingering melancholia. The narrative levels of the novel are displayed in Table 4.1. The grandparents are the victims of the Dresden firebombing of World War II. Foer juxtaposes the two cataclysmic events—World War II atrocities and 9/11 terrorist attacks—in the composition of the novel through constructing a prominent narrative framing of trauma because he intends to demonstrate the current trauma through the narration of previous historical traumatic experience..

[92] Guernica, "The distance between us: An interview with Jonathan Safran Foer", *Guernica: A Magazine of Art & Politics*, first published on March 12, 2008.
[http://www.guernicamag.com/interviews/73/the_distance_between_us/.>,assessed on 11 June,2014]

Table 4.1 Narrative levels of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

Objects	Levels	Narrative Content	Chapter Number
Main plot	Extradiegetic	Homodiegetic narration: Oskar's search for the key	1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17: Quest for the truth / self-healing gradually
Event-story	Intradiegetic	Oskar's father perished in the 9/11event	ALL chapters
Second-level narrative act	Intradiegetic	Grandparents suffer from dual traumas—Dresden bombing and the 9/11 terrorist attacks	4, 8, 12, 16: Grandma's narration with the same title "My feelings"
			2, 6, 10, 14: Grandpa's narration, "Why I am not where you are" epistolary writing with different dates 5/21/63, 5/21/63, 4/12/78, 9/11/03
Embedded narrative	Metadiegetic	Telling the catastrophic Dresden bombing story	10: "Why I am not where you are" 4/12/78

The novel demonstrates the complexity and the long-lasting impact of trauma, and the diversity of post-traumatic syndromes through delineating the traumatic experiences of three protagonists and other survivors' and witnesses' tragic lives in the 20th century. Trauma becomes the common experience that can cross boundaries, nations, sexes, ages, classes and races.

Foer expresses his belief in redemption by exploiting a multilayered and meta-textual narrative structure to construct the sense of the narrative space of redemption. The narrative structure in this fiction virtually separates into two main lines: Oskar's picaresque journey of tracking down the owner of the key after 9/11, and his grandparents' painful recollection of Dresden and their enduring distress. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* has many visual features which won it

the V&A 2005 Book Illustration Award, as well as the reputation of what *Booklist* calls "undoubtedly the most beautiful and heartbreaking flip book in all of literature." [93]

Foer's novel provides an enigma for readers to decode; he defies the conventional styles of writing and boldly experiments with the novel through pastiche and the mixture of literary genres, with visual elements and texts as well as multiple narrative voices. Readers are forced to follow his steps and position themselves as learners. Most of the novel is designed in a conventionalized block style with some visual elements, especially the higher imagistic designs, photographs, drawings and graphics which all intend to enhance and subvert verbal meaning as well as attempt to evoke readers' emotional responses through this kind of multisensory communication.

The new literary term that can best describe this novel is "multimodal novel". Foer incorporates a range of literary techniques in creating the multimodal novel, which contains a high percentage of visual pictures without specifying what the images are. These photographs invite readers to construct their own interpretation. It is challenging for readers to associate these photographs with the text because of visible gaps and a lack of elucidation. The multimodal novel invites readers to revaluate the conjunction between the text and visual elements. Similarly, many other techniques, such as epistolary form, name cards, notes, emails, colourful markings, and the cover of both paperback and hardcover books serve to reinforce the multimodality feature. Foer himself firmly believes that the typography including the fonts and size of margins, rainbow colours will be vital to impact readers' reading process, without wanting to distract readers from the harsh tragedy of the narrative. Foer once clarified the reason why he prefers to use this kind of visual experimentation in an interview: "September 11 has such a strong visual component, the most visually documented event in human history. Nothing's ever been seen by as many people as that was. Our experiences of the day, our memories of the day are just so tied up in images of buildings falling and bodies falling."[94]

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[93] Bookview. Washington County Cooperative Library Services [https://catalog.wccls.org/Mobile/BakerAndTaylor/Review?ISBN=0618329706&UPC=&position=1> , assessed on 11 June,2014

[94] Guernica, "The distance between us: An interview with Jonathan Safran Foer", *Guernica: A Magazine of Art & Politics*, first published on March 12, 2008.[http://www.guernicamag.com/interviews/73/the_distance_between_us/.>,assessed on 11 June,2014]

4.1.2Visual Writing

Many literary critics disagreed with the visual and experimental devices deployed in the novel, such as the red lines for underlining the grammar and orthographical errors, and blank pages for mute expression. Michel Faber's trenchant criticism of Foer's novel is one of the representative voices: "it is a triumph of evasion, enhanced with dozens of otiose photographs, rainbow colours and typographical devices, whose net effect is to distract the reader (and Foer) from harsh truths." [95]

Furthermore, some reviewers consider that the childish narrative fabrication is inappropriate given the gravity of 9/11; they also doubt the appropriateness of Foer's use of the visual devices in his fiction. John Updike wrote in his review for *The New Yorker* that "the book's hyperactive visual surface covers up a certain hollow monotony in [the novel's] verbal drama."[96]

The novel also contains: underlining with red pen, which may imply grammar or orthographical mistakes or can function as accentuation (10, 208–16)[97]; three blank pages appear when the grandfather is lost for words (121–3); there are also reprinted business cards (4, 99); and file cards (158–9, 286).

However, there are many positive responses to the multimodal approach since they think that the graphic images and visual devices are indispensable to the novel's verbal narrative. Some critics accentuate the significance of multimodality as used here. Many critics, like Sien Uytterschout and Philippe contend that the images can convey the traumatic experience of 9/11 and other events because of the inadequacy of language. The graphic images thus can be seen to provide a supplement to verbal narrative, are not distracting to readers, but invite readers actively to engage with meaning construction in a conceptual blending process. Moreover, when reading the passages underlined with red marks, Birgit Däwes comments that the visual devices can "invite the reader's response into their multiple epistemological layers and thus interfere with any linear

[95] Faber, Michel. "A Tower of Babble." The Guardian 4 June 2005. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2005/jun/04/featuresreviews.guardianreview22>.)
[96] Updike, John. "Mixed Messages." The New Yorker 14 Mar. 2005:138.
[97] The citation of the novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* refers to its publication by Houghton Mifflin Company in 2005.

or hierarchical construction of meaning."[98] This argument further testifies why conceptual blending theory can explain readers' interpretative process.

The book's experimental and visual strategies allow readers to grasp gradually the facts about characters' past experience. The experimental arrangement of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* in tackling trauma echoes other 9/11 novels such as *Falling Man*. They both approach the trauma stories in a distortion of temporality and history. Both fictions attempt to convey the violent moments of 9/11 in disruptive narrative voices, which can create a sense of defamiliarisation and invite readers to engage with the historical events and interact with the text. Such arrangement of temporality in both fictions can help readers trace the encapsulated memories of the characters' traumatic moments.

The character Oskar is an ideal subject for Foer. He is always dreaming up some innovative gadgets and elaborate technological fantasies in order to evade harsh realities. Oskar's inventive intellect provides readers with refreshing images, it forms a sharp contrast with the melancholic atmosphere in the aftermath of 9/11 events. Some critics like Johnson even consider it as exhibiting the technique of black humour. This inventiveness and emotional urgency can keep readers in heightened awareness of Oskar's unique characteristics. The conjunction of the historic traumatic events with linguistic typographical and visual devices makes readers come close to the protagonists' experience. Since language is inadequate to convey the disruptive nature and meaning of trauma, the visual elements became complementary to the trauma narrative. However, the indexicality and random display of images provoke many hostile responses to Foer's creation of flipbooks since Faber regards it is inappropriate to the theme.

Figure 4.1 Foer (2005) *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*: The pictures of Doorknob appear six times in preface page, page 29,115,134,212,215.

[98] Däwes, Birgit. "On Contested Ground (Zero): Literature and the Transnational Challenge of Remembering 9/11."*Amerikastudien / American Studies* 52.4 ,2007, p.534.

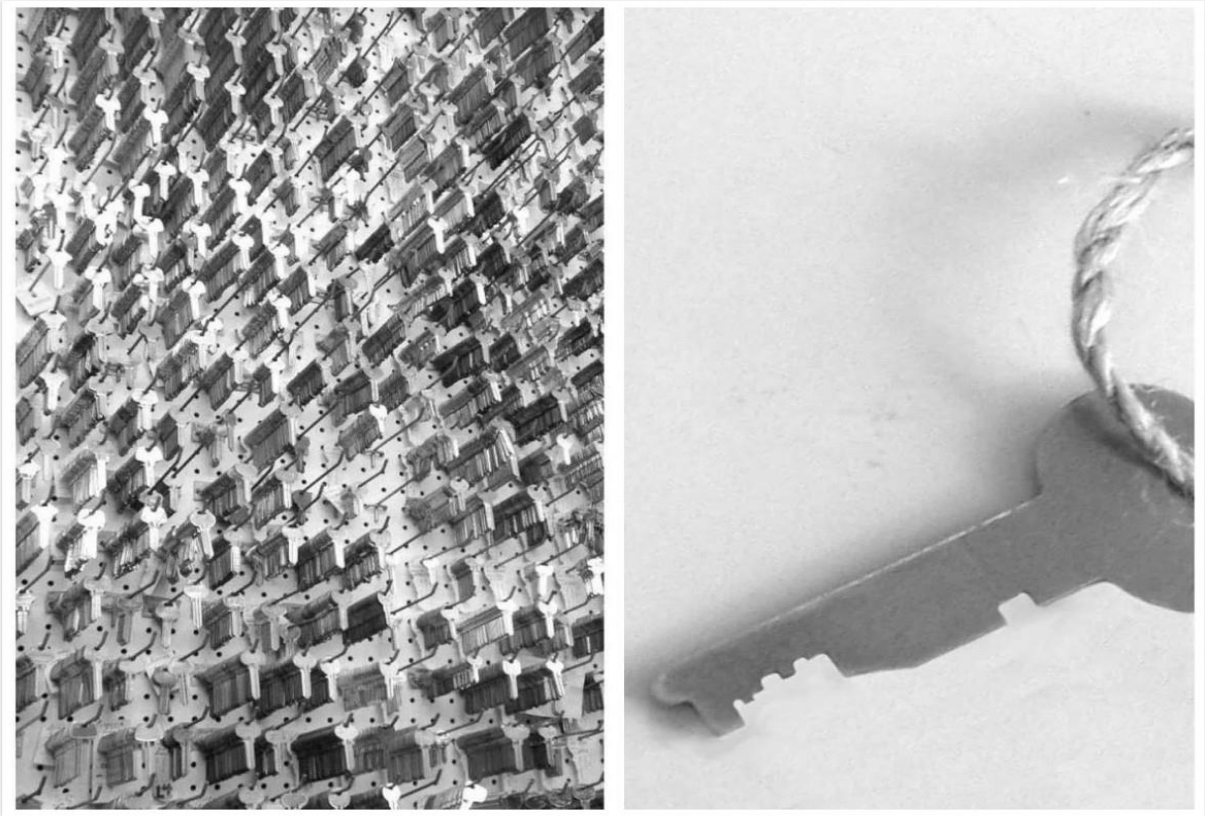





The visual elements push the whole narrative forward by concentrating on the main storyline of telling of Oskar's quest to discover the owner of the key. The photographs parallel the plot, so readers can fill the gap between visual elements and textual narrative and then construct the relevant meaning themselves. As shown in Figure 4.1, the six pictures of doorknobs are featured with different shapes, only the last picture in page 265 shows the keyhole, which symbolizes Oskar eventually finding the right keyhole thus solving the puzzle of the key.

It is evident that the picture of thousands of keys hung on the wall in page 53 signifies the complexity of finding the right owner of the key. Near the end of the novel, there is one picture of the key with a string on it. This reveals that this key is the right key that Oskar is eager to find. Finally Oskar solves the puzzle of the key and discovers that the key ultimately fits the lock of the safe deposit box of someone named William Black (see figure. 4.2) Although what he finds cannot resolve Oskar's central problem, the process of questing offers him some consolation; metaphorically, it is the process of his self-growth and self-preservation.

Figure 4.2 Foer (2005) *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* :The pictures of keys appear twice in page 53 and 303.



Oskar collects various images and documents from his daily experience in the scrapbook he has called *Stuff That Happened to Me*, which can aid him in expressing his feelings about ineffable things. This is a channel for working through his personal memories. The first explicit mention of the scrapbook (42) comes after a series of graphic images (53–67). Oskar admits the significance of the book in his life: "I pulled *Stuff That Happened to Me* from the space between the bed and the wall, and I flipped through it for a while" (52). The photographs reflect the processing of Oskar's memory, which pushes readers to fully engage with him emotionally, in other words, it offsets up multiple interactions between the text, images and readers. Unbound and non-linear narrative is a good way to record victims' traumatic memory— as occurs with Oskar's random memories of his experience.

Readers can easily enter into Oskar's mental space since the visual diary serves as a mirror of Oskar's immediacy and curiosity. Some of the photographs are playing a foregrounding function to lead readers to stand in Oskar's position to prepare them for subsequent plot progression. For

instance, the pictures of doorknobs in the cover page will help readers predict the relationship of doorknobs and the key as well as the importance of searching for the key's owner in the storyline. Some pictures are already clearly elucidated in the fiction, but some photographs are fragmented so the narrative unity and continuity is disrupted. For example, Oskar mentions "It had taken us four hours to get to her house. Two of those were because Mr. Black had to convince me to get on the Staten Island Ferry" (240). A picture of news reporting the accident of a ferry death is printed on the next page. It is a fully explicated picture and can be regarded as evidence to explain why Oskar is afraid of taking the ferry and of water.

Furthermore, these visual images can be regarded as an analogous realist storytelling technique to connect the causalities of the story. The images seem to provide readers with the opportunity to see precisely what Oskar perceives and thinks. For instance, the scrapbook vividly demonstrates Oskar's state of mind and guides readers to find cross-references between key episodes in the fiction.

The visual images can be incorporated into the verbal narrative to make sense, following the model of textual combination outlined by Kress and van Leeuwen who define a text's "lexical-grammatical level, i.e. the level where the depicted people, places and things (lexis) are combined into meaningful wholes (grammar) within the individual images."[99]

Where images are displayed in some passages without explanation, we can see that the sequence of Oskar's recall is indeterminate. Oskar himself took many photographs in the novel; this action explicitly refers to his mental state and can almost be seen as analogous with the use of sound in film. The photographs here are functioning as an extra voice. Again, taking the instance of the picture of the ferry accident, it can be considered as an extra voice to accentuate Oskar's fear and anxiety of taking ferries because it is obviously hazardous.

Foer challenges the traditions of fiction with the "playfulness" of his language and the use of topographic features. It is bold for Foer to juxtapose two historical tragedies through an experimental writing style, which features idiosyncratic typography in the text's formatting. It is

[99] Kress, Gunther and Leeuwen, Theo van. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2 edition), New York and London: Routledge, 2006. p.1.

considered as a selling point to make the pages colourful and permeated with pictures.

There are two photographs of old people's palms crossed with the words Yes and No (see figure 4.3), before Chapter 14, when his grandfather is writing the letter in 2003, on the two-year anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Although the subplot of the mute grandfather is not as compelling as Oskar's quest, the function of this storyline is twisted together with Oskar's narration to heighten sympathy. The broadening of the historical scale highlights how the miseries of the protagonists cross generations and countries.

Figure 4.3 Foer (2005) *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*: pages 260-261

In his first novel *Everything is Illuminated*, Foer employs similar techniques. Foer offers many different illustrations related to typography in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close.* Many

suggestive full-page lines are interspersed with black-and-white photographs because such kind of photographs can intensify the grief and melancholic mood. The heartbreaking flip book appearing at the end of the novel shows the reverse of the normal order of events, from descending to ascending, from the secular world to an unseen heaven. Furthermore, the flip book appears to subvert the order of a person jumping from the doomed World Trade Centre from the bottom toward the top. Foer apparently believes this bathos can make readers meditate on the mutuality between history and time, the reversal of time in Oskar's imagination and fantasy world. Readers can completely understand the relevance of the phrase "We would have been safe." The use of the subjunctive mood here makes readers recognize the effect of magic realism that it is impossible to realize this scenario in the real world. It was a dream of Oskar's and the only use of "possible worlds" in the fiction. Whether or not hope is an expression of extreme depression, this is a way of making sense of the trauma.

Many critics acknowledge that the stylistic heterogeneity in the novel, including the use of inserted photographs, topographical oddities, and polyphony of voices, not only reinforce the universality of trauma but also disseminate the trans-generational and transnational traumatic transfer. The use of images and different colours in the photos does not conflict with the gravity of the subject, but justifiably represents Oskar's state of mind in the process of self- exploration and recovery. For example, Versluys claims that "as the atomic bombing (again by the American air force) of Hiroshima also obliquely serves as a 9/11 analogue, the novel universalizes grief."[100] Furthermore, Däwes contends that "the principle of dynamic, multilaterally structured, and complex communication is at the centre of Foer's novel; and it entails political and ethical responsibilities which transcend the boundaries between nations and cultures." [101] It is apparent that the two critics admit that the complex multilateral narrative structure is appropriate to express the two historical events and trans-generational trauma.

The problem of the status of American victimhood in the terrorist attack is foregrounded by the juxtaposition of these historical cataclysms, therefore it is complicated to easily attribute guilt, as it is a moral grey zone. The author raises a difficult ethical dilemma and leaves readers to decide.

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[100] Versluys, Kristiaan, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel.* New York: Columbia Press, 2009, p.82.

[101] Däwes, Birgit. "On Contested Ground (Zero): Literature and the Transnational Challenge of Remembering 9/11."*Amerikastudien / American Studies* 52.4 ,2007, p.538.

Versluys argues

> Within a highly contentious political context, in which the Bush administration tried to instrumentalize the events of September 11 for its own partisan purposes … this book launches a strong plea for tolerance, refusing to take sides or more precisely, it takes the side of the victims, irrespective of their national original or allegiance. [102]

Employing visual elements to communicate with readers is a technique that Foer accentuates because language and text are inadequate to convey the protagonists' emotion effectively. Readers automatically turn to the images as the photographs elicit an emotional response. Perry Nodelman explicates why images can substitute for language to evoke empathetic reading in *Words About Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books*,

> The emotional quality of what is asserted must be conveyed by the pictures, which then inform those who look at them about the tone of voice in which to read the works—the attitude to take toward them.[103]

Images inspire readers' emotional responses, it is the reader's role to search for the meaning when approaching the photographs—thus they can form a new reading in filling the gap between images and texts.

4.2 A Text World Theory Response to Trauma Narrative

The knowledge of readers of the discourse world and their emotional responses to 9/11 will play a significant role in comprehending the 9/11 fictions. The recognition of the novel as a product and response to the psychological resolution of trauma is crucial in a cognitive-poetic approach. The reader is always accompanying Oskar as he ultimately works through his pain.

Foer demonstrates trauma transfer in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* in two cyclical sequences of storylines: on the nondiegetic-level of narrative structure; and on the diegetic level

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[102] Versluys, Kristiaan, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel.* New York: Columbia Press, 2009,p.82.

[103] Nodelman, Perry. *Words About Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books,* Georgia :University of Georgia Press, 1988,9.42.

of focalization. The heteroglossia in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is unremitting. This is prominent on the nondiegetic-level. There are three narrators in the novel, namely Oskar, his grandfather and his grandmother, and each has distinctive narrative styles. Therefore, every character has their own "possible world" and it is legitimate and justifiable to recognize their existentiality in their own "possible world". [104]The complexity of the embedded narrative in every character's possible world promotes the development of the plot. For instance, the embedded narrative of Oskar's Grandfather's telling of his traumatic experience of the Dresden Bombing gives the reader access to his psychology and ultimately helps the reader understand his aphasia. The identification will be significant for readers as they negotiate the different possible worlds. The three possible worlds are inherently similar in their way of dealing with traumatic events. They all serve the same goal of working through trauma.

Foer challenges the traditional media coverage of 9/11 events and accentuates the wide reaching and diverse repercussion of the events. There is no singular literary response to the attacks, but multitudinous emotional reactions can be found in this fiction.

Attention to the traumatic and the tragic nature of the experience will risk creating a depoliticizing effect, so an approach which discusses the social-political context is needed to complete the analysis comprehensively. If there is no reconstructive narrative acknowledging the event's broad context, or there is no recuperative therapy to help them work out the trauma, characters will be perpetually locked in past events. The grandfather exemplifies the inactive response to tragic events because he lost the ability to reconstruct himself after experiencing Dresden trauma. He confines himself to a melancholic state, in which he becomes paralysed. Only when the victims appreciate or understand the political context can trauma be dealt with properly.

The ability to rework the experience into a logical narrative either in spoken or written form can be a catalyst for the healing process since there is a recipient to appreciate the subject's tragic experience. I have mentioned before that Dominick LaCapra summarises an individual's response to trauma in terms of three reactions: denial or disavowal, acting out and working through.

[104] Stockwell, Peter. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction,* London and New York: Routledge, 2002,p.148.

Narrative through dialogic communication or epistolary writing becomes the most effective way for characters in this fiction to reconstruct their self-identities. Many prominent scholars, such as Sigmund Freud, Judith Herman, Pierre Janet and Cathy Caruth, argue that traumatic experience cannot be understood by normal mental and cognitive processing since the victims are unconsciously fixated on the past traumatic experience and cannot work through the pain.[105]

The meaning of the fictional works can be shaped in readers' minds with various interpretations, because they configure the meaning from their individual experiences and the cues the text provides. Stockwell argues that cognitive poetics allows us to have "a principled means of understanding exactly how readers construct and engage with the context arising from reading a literary work." [106]The embedded worlds occur when the character has a flashback or flash-forward, and even has some unrealized plans. Readers should keep an eye on the character in the ongoing discourse world as well as the different versions mentioned before or later. In other words, readers should follow the non-linear paths to track the complex plot and connect the current text with previous allusions.

Few fictions can provide a single right way to recover from catastrophic tragedy, but the fiction of Foer offers readers a way of understanding how Oskar works through his trauma and grief. It demonstrates the author's desire to write about the 9/11 experience, and the recognition of the individual impact as well as social impact, but it is difficult to find a good way to cope with the topic. Richard Gray asserts in *After the Fall* "If there was one thing writers agreed about in response to 9/11, it was the failure of language: the terrorist attacks made the tools of their trade seem absurd."[107]

Foer cleverly designs the typographical markings of typeface and typesetting to represent three narrative voices. Oskar is the central narrating character. His narrative chapters are characterized by standard and correct punctuation, which are interspersed with the episode narrated by his grandparents. The grandmother's chapters include blank pages and extended gaps, while the

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[105] Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

[106] Ibid.,p.92.

[107] Gray, Richard, *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11* [1st ed.]., Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011,p.1.

grandfather's episodes are fragmented and contain short sentences without full stops.

The grandfather sends the coded message to his wife in the US when he desperately tries to dial the phone to communicate to his wife "the sum of my (his) life".(269) The two pages of numerically coded sequence printed in the text is an enigma and remains indecipherable for readers as do the blank pages which were what the grandmother typed of her life stories without a ribbon in the typewriter. The three blank pages in the novels seem to be a puzzle. Only ideal readers can decipher it because it is mentioned in the previous chapters that it is the grandfather who pulled out the ribbon from the typewriter. Consequently, when the grandmother types her life story, it came out with blank pages. In this episode, Foer consciously highlights the unreliability of the narrator. Most visibly, the possible explanation of the name change of Thomas's Jewish identity can be explained in the letter with the name Eli. The name Eli is used by the grandfather before the war in Foer's first novel *Everything is Illuminated*.

4.2.1Repetition Compulsion

Foer creates the narrative voices that refract each other, embodying his use of Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia. Bakhtin writes that

> such languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically.[108]

Foer links diverse traumatic narratives through juxtaposing the post 9/11 events in the populous metropolitan city New York with past traumas such as the Dresden bombing in World War II and the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima. This linking of multiple stories and narratives also helps explain why the author employs heteroglossia. The multiple possible worlds in the fiction are comparatively independent from one another. Oskar keeps his wish world and fantasy world separate, although there are some overlapping counterfactual propositions linking his fantasy and

[108] Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays.* Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.p.292.

dream. The private embedded narratives of three characters are interwoven in a complex web of people, nations, age, sex and images, all of which constitute the complicated relationships between the characters. As a whole novel, each character's possible world is interconnected with the others' through spatial and temporal connection as well as the inherent resemblance between them. The consistent appearance of the doorknobs with different shapes symbolizes the working through process of Oskar's pain and his endeavour to find the right key for the doorknob.

There is no direct description of the catastrophic 9/11 events. Foer presents the disaster through a brief glimpse on a TV screen, when the grandparents sit before the screen which shows the effect of the looping media:

> The same pictures over and over.
> Planes going into buildings.
> Bodies falling.
> People waving shirts out of high windows.
> Planes going into buildings.
> Bodies falling.
> Planes going into buildings.
> People covered in gray dust.
> Bodies falling.
> Buildings falling.
> Planes going into buildings.
> Planes going into buildings.
> Buildings falling.
> People waving shirts out of high windows.
> Bodies falling.
> Planes going into buildings. (230)

The stylistic repetition of this paragraph disrupts the linear narrative. The phrases are on a loop like a rolling video playing on the TV, the continuous present tense of the verbs demonstrates the action that "planes are going into the buildings" is in a kind of eternal presence. Repetition compulsion is one of the symptoms of a traumatized mind because of a persistent feeling of entrapment. The tight interlaced stories of the three narrators are told in a sequence of Oskar–Grandpa–Oskar–Grandma. This pattern is repeated four times to constitute 16 chapters, and the

final chapter is narrated by Oskar and signifies that he has ultimately worked through the trauma and remakes his own post-9/11 world by claiming "We would have been safe" (326).

Oskar intersperses his narrative with examples of his curiosity. He even writes letters to some prominent figures like Stephen Hawking and Jane Goodall. The postmodern experimental writing techniques used by Foer can connect readers intimately with the experience of trauma, while also giving readers the chance to make sense of their own traumatic recuperation. Oskar's favourite book is *The Brief History of Time* written by British theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking. At the critical moment in his search for the key's owner, he receives four letters, each containing the same content from Hawking, and this is of vital importance in encouraging Oskar on his quest.

The title of the grandmother's narrative "My feeling", is repeated four times. While the grandfather's narration, named "Why I'm Not Where You Are", is presented in epistolary writing with different dates indicating the day the letter was written. They both reflect that repetition compulsion is a prominent feature of trauma. The repeated images such as flying birds and the closed doorknobs form sharp contrasts in depicting freedom and confinement. There are eight pictures portraying the closed door, which serves to interrupt the emotional communication among the characters. Another repeated image is Abby's house, which appears twice because Oskar visited there twice. The second time he went there is the time he ultimately solves the puzzle. The repeated behaviour of visiting different Blacks in the city is one of the representations of repetition compulsion and the approach of acting out. The 101-year-old Black also suffers from the trauma of losing his wife. He admits "I've hammered a nail into the bed every morning since she died! It's the first thing I do after waking! Eight thousand six hundred twenty-nine nails." (161) Moreover, temporal relativity is another element in which traumatised individuals differ from normal experience. The 101-year-old Black said "she (his wife) died twenty-four years ago! Yesterday, in my life."(154) Even after only one or two years passed, Oskar can still vividly recall his father's death, which seems just like yesterday in his life.

The collection of idiosyncratic adult characters who respond to Oskar's heart-wrenching quest symbolizes common responses to 9/11 trauma amongst New Yorkers. The 101-year-old Mr. Black's friendship with nine-year-old Oskar provides the novel with a sense of tragi-comedy and irony. The 101-year-old Black "had reported almost every war of the twentieth century, like the Spanish Civil War, and the genocide in East Timor, and bad stuff that happened in Africa" (154).

Later he further ironically contends that "Did you know that in the last 3,500 years there have been only 230 years of peace throughout the civilized world?" (161) This argument manifests the author's criticism of war and terror through the mouthpiece of a war correspondent.

The novel also displays the joy and happiness of life as experienced before the horror of destruction. This forms a sharp contrast between joy and trauma and connotes the sense of black humour. Oskar is a boy with a mind given to sur-reality and fantasy, who treats the serious and mournful event in a satirical manner. Foer eschews writing about 9/11 but can assess the Dresden bombing straightforwardly because the 9/11 attack is too recent a catastrophe; it is too hard for people to accept; as time passes by, people can reflect on traumatic events and make them more easy to accept as reality. Remarkably, as the only survivors in their family after the Dresden firebombing, the grandparents cannot reconcile themselves to their traumatic condition. They met coincidently in a cafe after emigrating to US and impulsively marry just in pursuit of mutual relief. Grandfather's fiancée Anna died in the Dresden air bombing, so grandfather married the grandmother simply because she is Anna's younger sister and she can help grandfather re-invoke the memories of Anna. Therefore, grandfather literally remodels grandmother into the image of Anna. But unfortunately, the grandfather is unable to reintegrate into present society and still lives in the past. Moreover, he sets a strict policy of dividing the apartment into Nothing and Something Zones in their connubial relationship as it is difficult for the couple to accept each other. The rule of forbidding any use of their native, German language connotes the indelible pain of memories of Dresden. The grandmother adapts herself to the English language, while the grandfather chooses to be mute. Readers become aware of the storyline that grandfather fled back to Germany in 1963 when he knew that grandmother became pregnant. He believed it was grandmother who broke the rules; it is unbearable for grandfather to accept the child since it reminded him of the unborn child that was his and Anna's. He only returned to the United States forty years later after he was informed that his son Thomas Schell perished in the 9/11 attacks.

Additionally, Oskar is incapable of communicating his trauma to his own family members because he lives in a dysfunctional family. They are all victims, particularly the grandparents who suffer from re-traumatisation. Alternatively, he turns to the strangers he encounters in the process of his picaresque journey. Perhaps it is because of their vulnerability that they listen to each other's pain in a trans-historical and transgenerational dialogue. The interlinking of the trauma of

Dresden and Hiroshima with 9/11 at the compositional level demonstrates the author's stance in comprehending trauma in a universal way, just as the victim of Hiroshima said in the interview "If everyone could see what I saw, we would never have war anymore"(189).

4.2.2 Intertextuality

Trauma symptomatology, according to Anne Whitehead, involves repetition and intertextuality. The latter is considered a technique for translating traumatic experience into literary text. The processes of acting out, reformulation of the past and working through memories are all displayed intertextually in the novel through its association with Shakespeare's Hamlet and Gunter Grass's Oskar. The intertextuality of the novel can be traced in two layers.

Firstly, it is apparent that Oskar is the descendent of German–Americans who live in New York City. Not surprisingly, the Oskar Schell in Foer's fiction bears a striking resemblance to Oskar Matzerath in *The Tin Drum* by Günter Grass published in 1959, in the spiritual development of his character as seen from the perspective of a child narrator.

Secondly, with regard to the intertextual relationship with *Hamlet*, both Oskar and Hamlet suffered from the loss of their father, and each eventually managed to find the truth of their father's death. The later chapters are permeated with Shakespearean allusions. "*Now, Oskar, you are Yorick, the fool. But where is the king for you to play the fool to? ... Thoughts plagued me, I began to worry about the political situation. Oskar, in the role of Yorick, began to look for the meaning of life."* (Foer 468-69)

It is at the moment when he is acting the role of Yorick that he becomes conscious of his eccentricity. "I felt, that night, on that stage, under that skull, incredibly close to everything in the universe, but so extremely alone" (145). He learns from history and literature that historical events sometimes seem to be repeated with endless cycles of war and violence. Further he receives an epiphany and realizes that his effort in struggling against reality and his refusal to accept the truth of his father's death are in vain. Time eventually seems to cure his pain. It is a critical development in his self-preservation as well as a sign that Oskar has ushered in his recovery from the gloomy state of depression and phobia. The re-enactment of key motifs from the literary canon serves as a promising sign for Oskar's maturation and working through of his

trauma.

Whitehead believes that "intertextuality is… like trauma, caught in a curious and undecidable wavering between departure and return."[109] Through repetition intertextuality can obtain forceful effect because it provides inspiration from previous literature. Intertextuality and references to the school adaptation of *Hamlet* have a therapeutic effect on Oskar. Oskar involuntarily assimilates traumatic memories and begins to contemplate the meaning of life and death. Techniques of alienation and defamiliarisation immerse readers in the characters' psychological dilemma. As mentioned above, according to Dominick LaCapra, acting out and working through are two states of mind that are typically represented in trauma survivors. Acting out refers to repressed trauma-related memory. The scene in the cemetery shares many similarities with the school adaptation of Hamlet since they are the epiphanic moments for Oskar to become conscious of the meaning of his existence and accepting the truth of losing his father.

4.2.3 Text World Analysis of Embedded Narrative

Readers do not receive a detailed account of the disaster of the collapse of the World Trade Centre nor of Oskar's father's death. However, notably, we do find an elaborate description of the Dresden firebombing. The grandfather's recollection of his experience in the Dresden bombing is the only episode in which Foer depicts devastation in a straightforward manner. Foer employs long sentences and imaginative linguistic expression to delineate the air raids in Dresden through the perspective of the grandfather creating a sense of sur-reality, which is contradictory to his post-traumatic condition because the grandfather, as a heavily traumatised character, is unable to recall his traumatic experience in a coherent narrative. Each chapter clearly provides a different focalization in narration. Different temporal frames and spaces can trigger an epistemic modal-world switch. Readers are required to switch their existing knowledge to comprehend different chapters narrated by different characters.

According to Werth, the two important terms world-building elements and function-advancing propositions comprise the text world. Function-advancing propositions promote the discursive representation of status and processes. While time, place, objects and characters constitute the

[109] Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction*, Edinburgh University Press, 2004,p.90.

world-building elements when describing the scene of the main event in discourse. In text world theory terms, free indirect discourse, like all forms of thought representation, can be seen to construct an epistemic modal world. [110]

There are three layers within text world theory: the discourse world, the text world, and the sub-world. The differences and the relationship among the three worlds can be explained in Figure 3.3. The speakers and interlocutors in a conversation or readers and authors in any written text are regarded as participants in the current discourse world. According to Stockwell, "the cognitive mechanism that is the means of understanding is the text world."[111] The flashback of the grandfather's narrative of the Dresden bombing constitutes an embedded subtext world. Attempting to explore the relationship between readers and the fiction as well as the real world, I apply the features of the alternativity used in recent possible world theory to analyse the world-building elements and function-advancing propositions. The background settings of the Dresden bombing episode are elaborated in the world-building elements, while the plot is developing by way of the function-advancing elements. The attributional and relational predications are expressed by horizontal arrows, whilst the actions and events are demonstrated by the vertical arrows. The function-advancing propositions listed below determine the novel's narrative progression. The sub-text world of the catastrophic delineation of the Dresden bombing would be shown as in Figure 4.4.

[110] Gavins, Joanna. *Text World Theory: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007,p.128.

[111] Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002.p.137.

Figure 4.4 World-building elements and function-advancing propositions in the Dresden bombing

SUBTEXT WORLD

Dresden bombing

World-building elements:

Time:February,1945

Location: Dresden, German

Characters: Grandfather, Grandmother, Anna and their family members

Object: Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, shirt, book, chair, wall, shelters, bombs, cellar,

Function-advancing elements:

People in Dresden → Anna was pregnant → died in Dresden bombing

↓

Shelters, alarms

↓

Explosion

↓

Left home → found Anna → second raid

↓ ↓

Family members died cellar

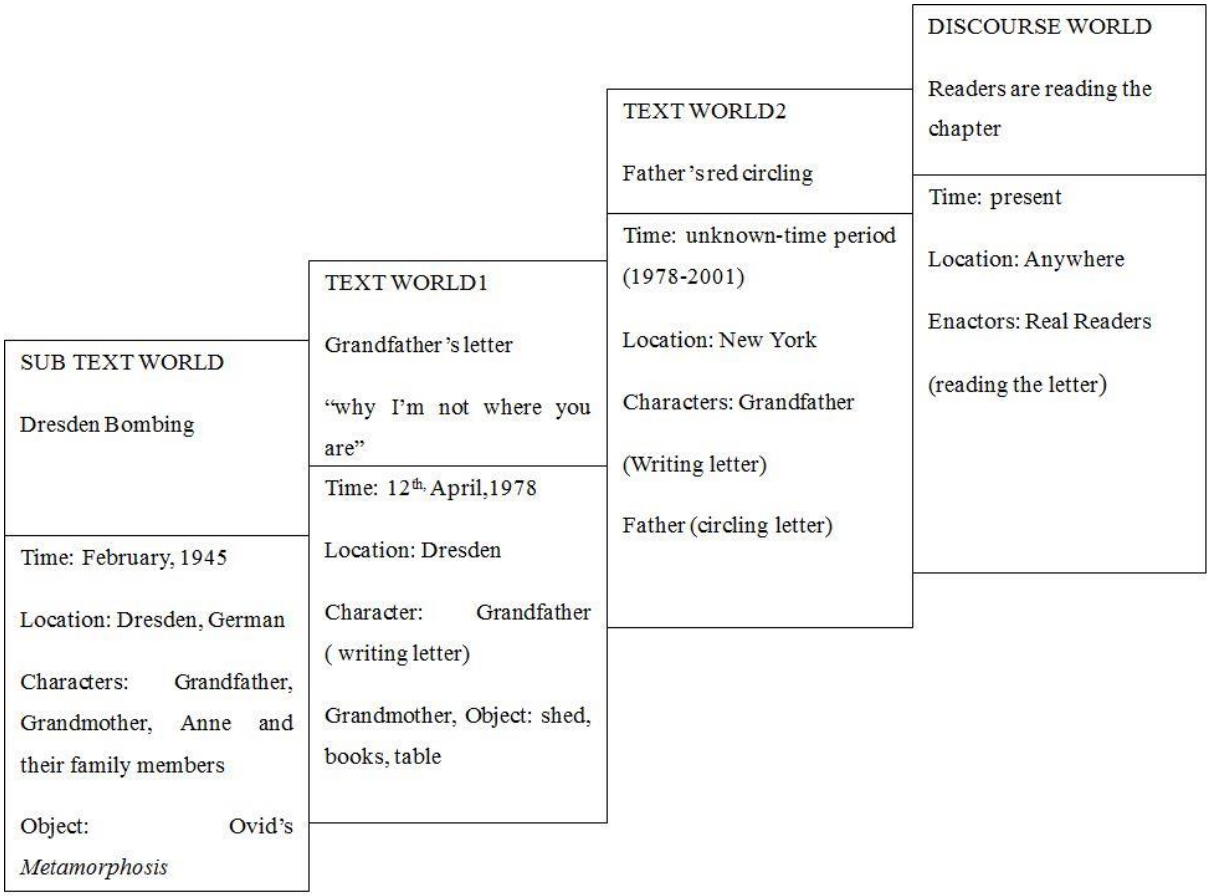
↓

survived

The four chapters are narrated by the grandfather with the same title— 'Why I'm Not Where You Are', but followed by different dates. It is apparent that the recipient of the letter written in Chapter 2 on 21, May, 1963 is "my unborn child" (16). Later, in the letter written on 7, April, 1978 in Chapter 10, the grandfather recollects his traumatic experience in the Dresden bombing. The scenario of depicting the bombing in Dresden constructs a sub-world that is another narrative layer, distinct from the current fictional world in a spatial and temporal sense. This chapter is teeming with red circling in the text. Readers are invited to deduce the significance of these markings. In retrospect, the anaphoric clue can be discovered in Chapter 1 when Oskar recalls his father "marking the mistakes with his red pen" (9). Then a picture extracted from the *New York Times* is displayed to show the red-circled phrase "non-stop looking"(10). According to Emmott [112], the knowledge of context attached to mental representation produces contextual frames, and frame recall refers to the act of reinstating the previous frame. It is through contextual frame recall that readers come to realize that the grandfather circled letters in red in the same manner as Oskar's father. How can the inscription of red circles exist in two separate textual worlds? It can be deduced that it is perhaps Oskar's father who added the red circles to highlight the mistakes in the words, such as spelling, grammatical errors and punctuation. It is the author's foregrounding technique to evoke readers' cognitive model to analyse the embedded layers of narrative in different text worlds. The relationship among the four layers of the narratological worlds in this chapter can be shown as in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Four layers of the narratological worlds in Chapter 10 "Why I am not where you are 4/12/78"

[112] Emmott, Catherine, *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse Perspective*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

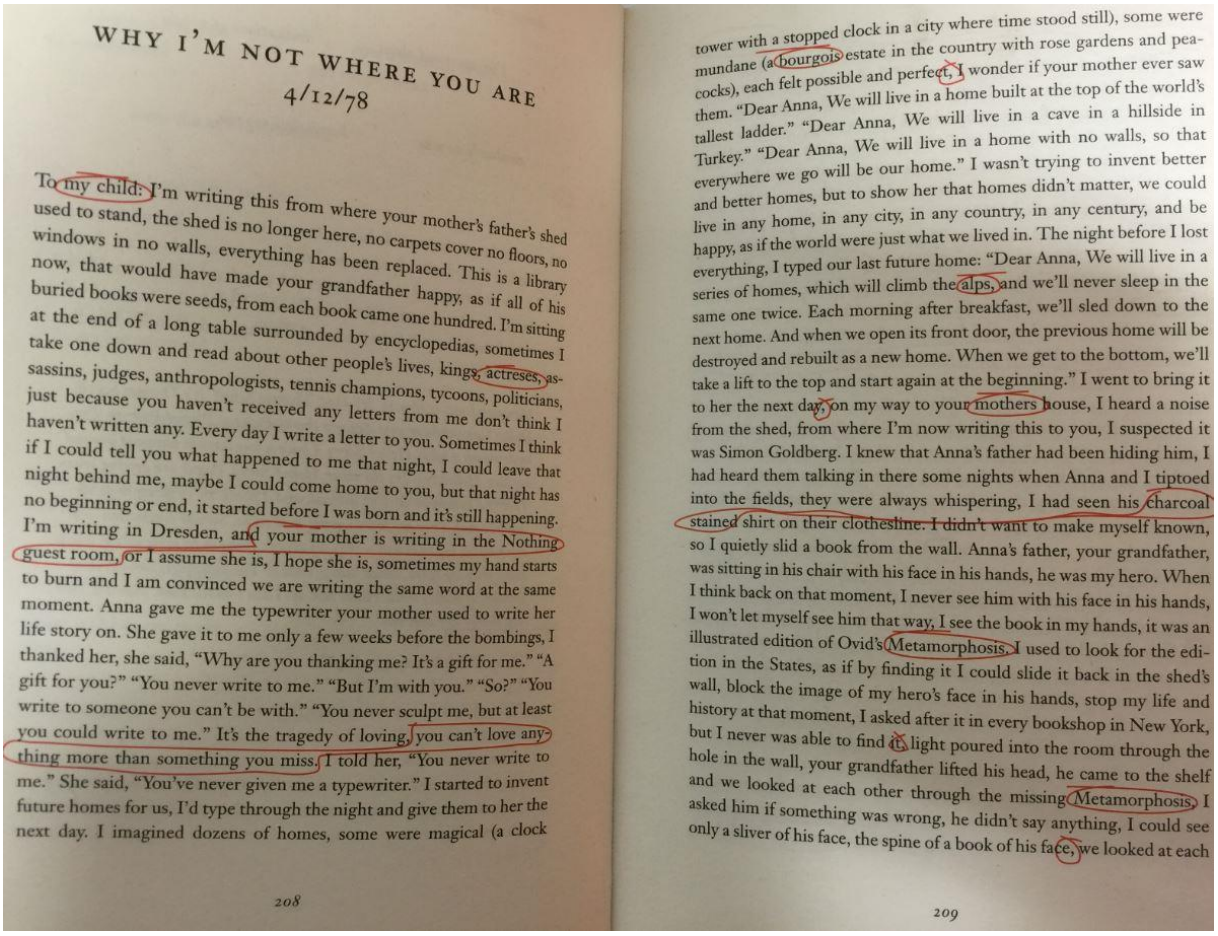


The grandfather writes "I looked for my parents and for Anna and for you" on page 214. In the context of the aftermath of the Dresden raid in this letter, the deictic "you" is not the same recipient as the previous letter to Oskar's father, but it signifies the unborn child of Anna. The deictic "you" can be understood as a double expression: the unborn child of Grandpa and Anna and also Oskar's father. Therefore, it is clear that in the first line of this chapter, the appellation "To my child" is marked with a red circle by Oskar's father because he understands the deictic pronoun "you" does not refer to himself. As for the confusion of the referential second-person pronoun, Codde claims "Foer creates here a very subtle confusion of time levels (typical of trauma patients), as well as a confusion between the surviving son and the chid lost during the moment of crisis."[113] The position 'you' in the letter does not engage readers in responding to

[113] Codde, Philippe. "Philomela Revisited: Traumatic Iconicity in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*." *Studies in American Fiction* 35 (2007),p.251.

trauma.

Figure 4.6 Foer (2005) *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*: pages 208-209



WHY I'M NOT WHERE YOU ARE
4/12/78

To my child: I'm writing this from where your mother's father's shed used to stand, the shed is no longer here, no carpets cover no floors, no windows in no walls, everything has been replaced. This is a library now, that would have made your grandfather happy, as if all of his buried books were seeds, from each book came one hundred. I'm sitting at the end of a long table surrounded by encyclopedias, sometimes I take one down and read about other people's lives, kings, actreses, assassins, judges, anthropologists, tennis champions, tycoons, politicians, just because you haven't received any letters from me don't think I haven't written any. Every day I write a letter to you. Sometimes I think if I could tell you what happened to me that night, I could leave that night behind me, maybe I could come home to you, but that night has no beginning or end, it started before I was born and it's still happening. I'm writing in Dresden, and your mother is writing in the Nothing guest room, or I assume she is, I hope she is, sometimes my hand starts to burn and I am convinced we are writing the same word at the same moment. Anna gave me the typewriter your mother used to write her life story on. She gave it to me only a few weeks before the bombings, I thanked her, she said, "Why are you thanking me? It's a gift for me." "A gift for you?" "You never write to me." "But I'm with you." "So?" "You write to someone you can't be with." "You never sculpt me, but at least you could write to me." It's the tragedy of loving, you can't love anything more than something you miss. I told her, "You never write to me." She said, "You've never given me a typewriter." I started to invent future homes for us, I'd type through the night and give them to her the next day. I imagined dozens of homes, some were magical (a clock

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tower with a stopped clock in a city where time stood still), some were mundane (a bourgois estate in the country with rose gardens and peacocks), each felt possible and perfect, I wonder if your mother ever saw them. "Dear Anna, We will live in a home built at the top of the world's tallest ladder." "Dear Anna, We will live in a cave in a hillside in Turkey." "Dear Anna, We will live in a home with no walls, so that everywhere we go will be our home." I wasn't trying to invent better and better homes, but to show her that homes didn't matter, we could live in any home, in any city, in any country, in any century, and be happy, as if the world were just what we lived in. The night before I lost everything, I typed our last future home: "Dear Anna, We will live in a series of homes, which will climb the alps, and we'll never sleep in the same one twice. Each morning after breakfast, we'll sled down to the next home. And when we open its front door, the previous home will be destroyed and rebuilt as a new home. When we get to the bottom, we'll take a lift to the top and start again at the beginning." I went to bring it to her the next day, on my way to your mothers house, I heard a noise from the shed, from where I'm now writing this to you, I suspected it was Simon Goldberg. I knew that Anna's father had been hiding him, I had heard them talking in there some nights when Anna and I tiptoed into the fields, they were always whispering, I had seen his charcoal stained shirt on their clothesline. I didn't want to make myself known, so I quietly slid a book from the wall. Anna's father, your grandfather, was sitting in his chair with his face in his hands, he was my hero. When I think back on that moment, I never see him with his face in his hands, I won't let myself see him that way, I see the book in my hands, it was an illustrated edition of Ovid's Metamorphosis. I used to look for the edition in the States, as if by finding it I could slide it back in the shed's wall, block the image of my hero's face in his hands, stop my life and history at that moment, I asked after it in every bookshop in New York, but I never was able to find it. light poured into the room through the hole in the wall, your grandfather lifted his head, he came to the shelf and we looked at each other through the missing Metamorphosis. I asked him if something was wrong, he didn't say anything, I could see only a sliver of his face, the spine of a book of his face, we looked at each

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We can suppose Foer deliberately suppresses the description of 9/11 events because he thought readers were too close to this new trauma. Consequently, Foer hopes to present the fictionalized 9/11 in a way that eases the stress caused by the event. The Dresden firebombing can serve as a crucial trauma reference point and a way of displacing the trauma through the link with the events of New York. The new trauma comes into dialogic exchange with the previous trauma. The firebombing of Dresden and the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima are the traumatic events

haunting Foer's consciousness in writing the 9/11 text.

The story of the Dresden bombing was told through the perspective of Oskar's grandparents. The letter-writing narrative form employed by Foer is also a way of tackling the theme of traumatic history. The grandfather's inability to speak connotes many symbolic meanings. Readers feel sympathetic with the grandfather's lack of articulation when he displays his tattooed hands with the words Yes and No. Moreover, the single lines of the question "What are you doing here?" in the section of the grandfather's narration evokes deep emotion. Although it is evident that tragedy cannot be compared in any simple fashion, the similar scale of the two disasters are juxtaposed by Foer in this novel and remind readers of some of the facts of modern American history, asserting that it is necessary to remember the truth of historical violence even when Americans are the victims in the 9/11 attacks.

4.3 Conceptual Blending Theories and the Schematic Matching of Photographs

In this section, I will demonstrate how conceptual blending theory can be applied to analyse the mental spaces of the three main protagonists. Since the photographs are the schematic representations of the mind state of the fictional characters and are distinguished from language in a perceptual way, investigation of readers' gap-filling processes by which they match the photographs with schemas is crucially significant to understand the plot development. The nine-year-old Oskar has great difficulties in adjusting to his role when he loses his father in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, therefore he constructs an alternative fantasy world in his scrapbook. The scrapbook can be portrayed as a "conceptual integration network", a term coined by Fauconnier and Turner.[114] It is a dynamic process of the construction of meaning in which readers are invited to blend different mental spaces. The designs, photographs, drawings and graphics in the text require readers to synthesise one or more schemas to interpret the scenario and synthesise alternative possible worlds. The evocative designs invite readers to blend figurative language with imaginary photographs. The issue of how the linguistic and visual prompt us to create

[114] Fauconnier, Giles and Mark Turner. *The Way We Think*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

conceptual blends is worthy of ongoing discussion especially in literary texts with multimodal postmodern characteristics, like Foer's novel.

Foer utilizes many therapeutic discourses in the process of trauma healing; he makes the narrator expose the anxieties and contradictions concealed in the restatement of the experience of a traumatic event. In the fictional scenes, Oskar's imaginative textual speech world in the opening paragraphs shows some consistent structural and grammatical patterns For instance, the first chapter of the novel begins with

> What about a teakettle? What if the spout opened and closed when the steam came out, so it could become a mouth, and it could whistle pretty melodies, or do Shakespeare, or just crack up with me? I could invent a teakettle that reads in Dad's voice, so I could fall asleep, or may be a set of kettles that sings the chorus of "Yellow Submarine," which is a song by the Beatles, who I love, because entomology is one of my raison d'être, which is a French expression that I know. (1)

Then the second paragraph follows the same syntactical style of the first paragraph as Oskar goes on: "What about little microphones? What if everyone swallowed them…?"(10). It is inevitable for readers to enter into the account of the fantasy world of Oskar's. Oskar's extravagant invention plays a role in his personal desire to rewrite history. Hence he presumes that his father does not lose his life in the 9/11 terrorist attack. His increasing detachment from reality constructs a fantasy world that is difficult for readers to understand.

According to mental space theory, as outlined by Stockwell, the term "base" refers to "the starting point for a space construction". The "focus" refers to "the space which is then internally structured in the process of discourse comprehension". The viewpoint means "the spaces from which other spaces are accessed"[115]. Therefore, in accordance with the terms defined in mental space theory, the mental space of Oskar's status can be explained as in Table 4.2 **Mental space of Oskar's status**. That Oskar's father died in the Twin Towers is regarded as the fact event or base, but Oskar subjunctively imagines that his father would not die. In fact, his assumption is false.

[115] Stockwell, Peter. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction.* London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p.97.

Table 4.2 Mental space of Oskar's status

Oskar's father died in the Twin Towers	Oskar believes	his father did not die,	but he is wrong
BASE	VIEWPOINT	FOCUS	BASE

From the beginning of the fiction, it is apparent that Oskar is constructing his own fantasy world that is unreal, which is indicative of his suffering PTSD, like the symptoms of insomnia, paranoia, self-injury, isolation, guilt, depression and panic. The representation of his symptoms of PTSD can be ostensibly found in the text:

> Even after a year, I still had an extremely difficult time doing certain things, like taking showers, for some reason, and getting into elevators, obviously. There are a lot of stuff that made me panicky, like suspension bridges, germs, airplanes, fireworks, Arab people on the subway (even though I'm not racist), Arab people in restaurant and coffee shops and other public places, scaffolding, sewers and subway grate, bags without owners, shoes, people with moustaches, smoke, knots, tall buildings, turbans. … The average person falls asleep in several minutes, but I couldn't sleep, not after hours. (36)

This portrays the real life condition of the people living in the aftermath of the attacks; most trauma victims of the 9/11 attacks suffer from insomnia, nightmares, despair and panic. Oskar's reaction to the loss of his father is the epitome of New Yorkers' response to the cataclysm. For instance, he is hyper-vigilant and afraid of many things and even has trouble in sleeping, Oskar even does harm to himself by bruising himself, but the physical pain of bruising himself can never compare with the mental trauma and grief of losing his father. The actions of Oskar and the trauma-induced behaviour make the psychiatrist believe that Oskar should be hospitalized because he has the tendency to do harm to himself simply because he lost his father. His behavioural oddities and eccentricity are indicative of PTSD. He believes that his father Thomas was the greatest dad in the world, and his death is a particular tragedy. Before his death, Oskar's father spent many hours with Oskar playing and inventing gadgets. Perhaps Oskar's mother is not as considerate as a parent; Oskar would rather his mother had died, and not his father. This stems from his mother's absent role. Oskar suffered from the absence of love in his deracinated family because his remote working mother is a busy lawyer, although he has a loving grandmother who

endures the dual traumas of the Dresden firebombing and 9/11.

The multiple styles, letters, blurred and jumbled words become the dominating typographic feature in the fiction. The typographic features of the texts parallel with the photographs, such as the objects and animals. These are all the things recurring in Oskar's mind or collected in his flipbook. The series of photographs serves to establish another blended space that readers know is the little boy's mental world.

The fifty-eight photographs appearing in the text originate from Oskar's visual diary called *Stuff That Happened to Me*. Oskar collects the images to record his daily experiences because he cannot put the traumatic experience into words. The nine-year-old boy turns to graphic images to establish some sense of empathy. Some of the pictures commemorate the happy hours he spent with his father; such as the photograph of the tennis player, and some of them are all the assumptions that Oskar makes to imagine how his father died in various kinds of ways, such as the blurring of the picture of a roller coaster. The image of the flock of flying pigeons resonates with Oskar's narration, where he describes "a flock of birds flying from the window (165)". The photography can make up for the deficiency of text and language, thus producing an extended icon-text.

The picture of a couple of apes walking and the peaceful pigeons all symbolize Oskar's subjective pursuit of peace, sublimating his trauma. In addition, many photographs presented in the novel portray characters' states of mind. Although the images are randomly inserted into the text, most of them are contextualized and serve a narrative function. Readers may initially find the pictures in a situation that is totally unforeseen and bewildering. The separation of visual elements and verbal discourse requires readers to deduce the connections.

Alison Gibbons admits that "each image represents a significant theme or aspect of the narrative of the novel." [116] She further recognizes that "the images may work as primers. As such, they prime idealised cognitive models or frames, or cognitive knowledge structures such as lock and keyhole, birds, and house." [117] Gibbons later explains:

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[116] Gibbons, Alison. *Multimodality, Cognition, and Experimental Literature.* New York : Routledge, 2012,p.135.

[117] Ibid.

> these images only serve to prime these idealised cognitive models at a basic level at this point in the reading experience. It is only with retrospective narrative knowledge that the reader is able to connect the images to the themes to which they relate: the search for the lock into the key fits.[118]

It is with retrospective narrative knowledge that readers become aware of Oskar's self-preservation processes. Some of the pictures can be explained in terms of the content of the text, for instance, when Oskar explains the experiment with his cat. He dropped the cat to show how cats reach terminal velocity by making themselves into little parachutes, and that cats actually have a better chance of surviving a fall from the twentieth floor than the eighth floor, because it takes them about eight floors to realize what's going on, and relax and correct themselves (190). A photograph of a falling cat in the air on the next page explicitly elucidates this passage. Oskar mentions that Mr. Black had to convince him to get on the Staten Island Ferry. In addition to the fact that it was an obvious potential target, there had also been a ferry accident recently, and in *Stuff That Happened to Me,* Oskar writes "I had pictures of people who have lost their arms and legs. Also, I don't like bodies of water. Or boats, particularly" (240).On the following page is a spinning picture from a TV, broadcasting the CNN report of the accident of a ferry hitting the pier in Staten Island in New York (241); in the meantime the rolling subtitles with the news of Saddam Hussein echoes the picture of a young Saddam Hussein crowded by a group of soldiers in the third chapter of Oskar's narration (67). The function of these images is to illustrate the verbal narrative.

Some textual explanations may serve as clues for the meaning of the images; for example, the picture of a tennis player lying on his back on a court (64) recalls the text at the beginning of the novel. In the night before his father's death, he and Oskar are lying on the bed and the picture was likely taken from the newspaper his father was reading—"There was a picture of a tennis player on his back, who I guess was the winner, but I couldn't really tell if he was happy or sad" (13).

Some of the images may appear later in the fiction, for example, the iconography of a paper airplane with graph marking can be understood as a paper plane that the father and son would like to design(56). The clues appear later in the third chapter in Oskar's narration titled Googolplex on

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[118] Ibid.

page 70 when Oskar says "Once Dad and I spent a whole afternoon trying to design a paper airplane that we could throw from our apartment into hers [grandmother]". "When Dad was tucking me in that night, the night before the worst day, I asked if the world was a flat plate supported on the back of a giant tortoise" (12). This sentence is reproduced in pictorial form some forty-five pages later when a photograph of a tortoise riding on the back of another tortoise appears (57).

The abovementioned images can be found throughout the novel. The different types of photographs all represent what is happening in the narrative. There is no caption under the photographs, which encourages readers to make their own interpretations after tracking the clues.

Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright discuss the charm of photographs to represent the truth in *Practices of Looking*:

> The aura of machine objectivity clings to the mechanical and electronic images … A photograph is often perceived to be an unmediated copy of the real world, a trace of reality skimmed off the very surface of life.[119]

Pictures and graphs have become the dominant means of conveying information in newspaper reports. The representation of the truth through photography is seen to increase the credibility of journalism. Additionally, we should also notice that the pictures taken by people depend on the photographer's choice of frame and position. Sturken and Cartwright argue for the subjectivity of the photographs by stating that "the creation of an image through a camera lens always involves some degree of subjective choice through selection, framing, and personalization." [120] The reconstruction of the history of 9/11 photography in the fiction is detached from the original scene in order to become a possible world constructed by Oskar in his mental space. Foer implies that most of the photographs were taken by Oskar with his grandfather's camera while he was walking through the city to search for the lock of the key (96).

Some passages directly mention Oskar's act of picture taking. When he asks one lady he encountered during his search:

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[119] Sturken, Marita and Cartwright, Lisa. *Practices of Looking*: *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. London: Oxford University Press, 2009,pp.16-17.

[120] Ibid.,p.16.

> ‘Can I at least take a picture of you?’ She said, ‘That would be nice.’ But when I started focusing Grandpa’s camera, she put her hand in front of her face for some reason. I didn’t want to force her to explain herself, so I thought of a different picture I could take, which would be more truthful, anyway. (99)

A picture focusing on the back of the head of a girl with swept ponytail appears on the previous page (98). It is very difficult to distinguish which photographs were taken by Oskar. Towards the end of the fiction, Oskar mentions “I took pictures of the stars with Grandpa’s camera, and in my head I connected them to make words, whatever words I wanted (317).” Then a picture of a starry sky is display on the next page (318). The function of these pictures is to contribute to the text’s claim to realism. The vivid pictures serve to reinforce the verisimilitude. The photographs can be regarded as evidence of what happens in the novel, it is presented not as a made-up fiction, but as a real occurrence. However, no matter how Foer attempts to make claims to realism, readers can see the visual pictures as strengthening the credibility of Oskar’s possible world.

Photographs in the fiction can be categorized into three groups in terms of what they signify. Firstly, the photos shot by Oskar are amateur photographs that are lacking in focus (98, 103, 166–7, 294). Secondly, there are some written verbal texts to explain the photographs. The interaction of the compositional layout of the text and images has several implications. For instance, the news of ferry deaths and the captions below concerning Saddam propel readers to construct a visual meaning and recall the previous picture of Saddam. Thirdly, the various images of the falling man from the Twin Towers reveal the modality features (59, 62, 205, 327–55), which shows that more than two modes are employed for the strategy of communication, such as images, letters and written texts. Undoubtedly, the image of the falling man plays a pivotal function in advancing the progression of the plot. Oskar is examining and imaging that the falling man could be his father. “Finally, I found the pictures of the falling body. Was it Dad? Maybe” (325). Visually speaking, it is difficult to distinguish the human figure in the picture because of the low resolution of the image. Likewise, Oskar admits “The closer you looked, the less you could see. (293)”

Each of the pictures offers narrative functions to supplement textual meaning. The first three successive black and white pictures are of a keyhole, a flock of flying birds and fire escapes on the outside of a building with many windows. These images appearing in the preface without any

anchorage text are enigmatic since there are no textual clues for the reader to deduce anything. Subsequently, the intimate relationship between the visual elements and verbal narrative begins to clarify. A certain historical knowledge and media knowledge are required to link the visual elements with the text. Readers must blend texts and images in order to reconstruct the relevant meanings interweaving text, layout, and fictional memorial of 9/11 to frame their own experience of trauma.

"The Falling Man" photo became the most poignant of 9/11 images. It was taken by Richard Drew and was shown only once in national newspapers such as *The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune,* and *The Washington Post* on the second day after 9/11. Immediately, these newspapers encountered a public backlash. New renderings of this falling figure can also be found in other 9/11 fictions, for instance, Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America,* Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Michael Chabon's *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*.

This poignant photograph is the only picture in the book directly related to 9/11 events. The aim of the picture is to restore readers' understanding of individual suffering thus magnifying collective impact. The other photographs in the novel are only indirectly connected to 9/11 events. The indirect use of visual images may be confusing at first and require the reader to fill the gap between texts and images.

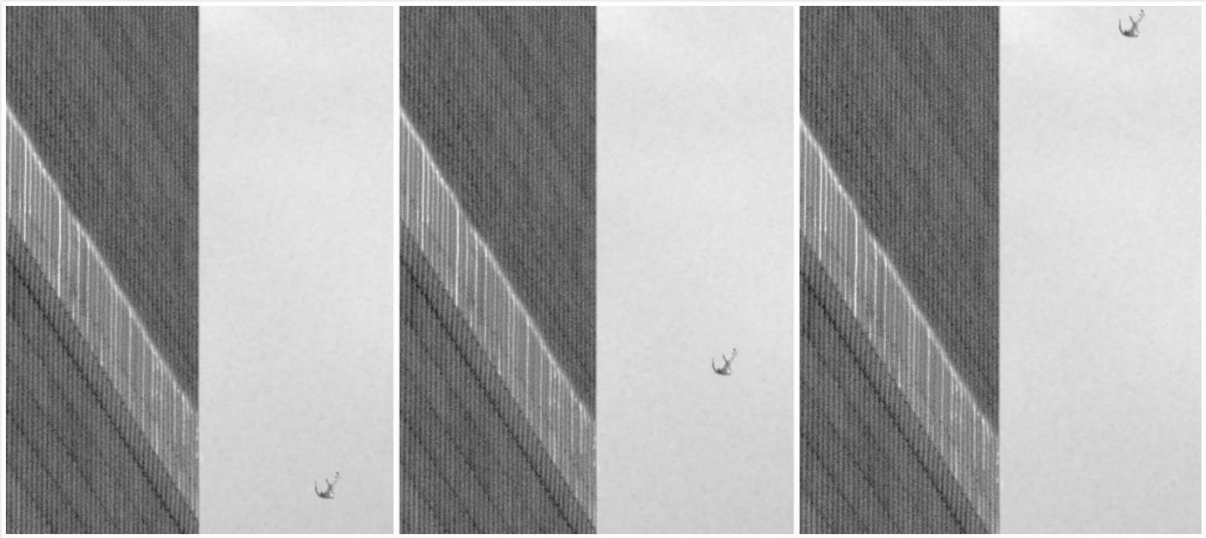
Tom Junod discusses the issue of censorship and why the use of this picture provoked so much complaint by stating that those circulating it were "forced to defend themselves against charges that they exploited the man's death, stripped him of his dignity, invaded his privacy, turned tragedy into leering pornography."[121] Therefore, the image of falling people becomes a taboo that the media avoided. In contrast, eschewing the inclusion of images of the planes crashing into towers and the collapsing towers themselves, Foer reverses the order of the falling man by having him ascend from the bottom to the top in the final pages of the novel. This symbolizes Oskar saying farewell to his transitional period by way of a fantasy that his father is "floating up through the sky" (325). The series of photos achieves a sense of surrealism. The photograph of

[121] Junod, Tom. "The Falling Man." *Esquire* 140, No. 3 (September): pp.177-186, [http://classic.esquire.com/the-falling-man/,assessed on 20 June,2015.]

the falling man appears twice separately in the middle of the novel, and fifteen times successively at the end of the novel. The presentation of this image is risky and again put readers through the traumatizing experience of the falling bodies of 9/11.

This is also reflected in Laura Frost's argument, "Foer expresses longing for the 'still time' of the photograph as a form of memorialization; however, his novel also radically questions photography's efficacy to resolve the trauma of the falling people."[122] Foer himself is conscious of the risk of utilizing the photograph but still challenges us by presenting it in Oskar's fantasy-world. Nevertheless, in the final episode of the novel, the sequence of the falling man images with reversing order in a flip book as an illusion is completely contradictory with readers' common experience and sounds implausible. The reconstruction of the photos of the falling man offers Oskar some resolution in working through the trauma. (see figure 4.7)

Figure 4.7 Foer (2005) Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close: Falling Man in reversing order pages 327-355



[122] Frost, Laura. "Still Life: 9/11's Falling Bodies." *Literature After 9/11*. Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn(ed.) New York, Routledge, 2008. p.185.

The final episode of Oskar's scrapbook provides further examples of blending:

> I felt in the space between the bed and the wall, and found *Stuff That Happened to Me*. It was completely full. I was going to have to start a new volume soon.
>
> …
>
> I saw maps and drawings, pictures from magazines and newspapers and the Internet, pictures I'd taken with Grandpa's camera. The whole world was in there. Finally I found the pictures of the falling body.
>
> Was it Dad?
>
> Maybe.
>
> Whoever it was, it was somebody.
>
> I flipped the pages out of the book.
>
> I reverse the order, so the last one was first, and the first was last.
>
> When I flipped through them, it looked like the man was floating up through the sky. (325)

The blend in this paragraph consists of two inputs. The first input is the conventional representation of the real world as we are familiar with it. The other input is the conventional knowledge about the right order of a falling object, which is from up to down. In the scrapbook with the reversed order we know that it cannot really be a man floating up, but it is Oskar's fantasy.

> Dad would've left his messages backward, until the machine was empty, and the plane would've flown backward away from him, all the way to Boston.
>
> He would've taken the elevator to the street and pressed the button for the top floor.
>
> He would've walked backward to the subway, and the subway would've gone backward through the tunnel, back to our stop.
>
> …

> He would have told me the story of the Sixth Borough, from the voice in the can at the end to the beginning, from 'I love you' to 'Once upon a time …'
>
> We would have been safe. (325–6)

The final scenario describes Oskar's fantasy world of imagining his father resurrected. The syntax pattern, the phrase "would have done" repeated fifteen times in the subjunctive mood, reveals the childish naivety as well as his fantastic illusion. According to the six types of alternativity mentioned above in Chapter 3 of this thesis, Stockwell argues that alternative possible worlds are different versions of the actual textual world. This passage delineates Oskar's wish that there would be no terrorist attacks and "we would have been safe". He even imagines that he can spend a good time with his father again. These declarations allow Oskar to feel relieved. This sentence has to be read through the perspective of a nine-year-old boy in order to understand its significance. The word *safe* here has made many critics suppose that this sentence means he is free from physical harm and free from terrorist attacks. This is not completely accurate. It signifies his feeling of freedom from anxiety and panic and can be regarded as a declaration of his emotional relief from sensitivity and anxiety. Furthermore, it manifests his condition of post-traumatic recuperation and healing.

This excerpt demonstrates Oskar's wish world, which is only one version of the textual world in the fiction. This can be compared with the fantasy world where he imagines the reversed order of the falling man, which is visually presented in fifteen pages of pictures sequentially in the novel's final episode. The desire of making the falling man soar upward and bring him back to safety is foreshadowed in the grandmother's narration:

> In my dream, all of the collapsed ceilings re-formed above us. The fire went back into the bombs, which rose up and into the bellies of planes whose propellers turned backward, like the second hands of the clocks across Dresden, only faster. (307)

Meantime, Oskar imagines that he can circumvent truth and history by moving time back to the night before the worst day and share again the moment of a bedtime story with his father. The resurrection of Oskar's father is a counterfactual scenario. It is just one conception of the possible worlds that differ from our real world. What is important in the reasoning behind this episode is not the fact that it is impossible in every way to resurrect Oskar's father. Yet it is possible for us

to imagine Oskar's father talking with Oskar and reading him bedtime stories. The magical realist technique of reversing time sequences allows us to re-think the interrelation between time and history, which can convey a gleam of hope in the dark depths of post-9/11 history. However, the novel is a self-reflexive metafiction. It is powerless to alter the past and manipulate history, but it can allow readers and characters to transform their own possible world.

4.3.1Conceptual Metaphor 1: Life as a Non-stop Voyage

The narrative voice of Oskar becomes the most engaging part of this novel and readers are compelled to follow Oskar's every step. His odd behaviour of hiding himself from the outside world by "zip[ping] up the sleeping bag of himself (6)" is a representative symptom in his post-traumatic process. However, there are many hopeful signs in the text to indicate that Oskar is able to develop the ability to work through his trauma. His grief gradually dissipates when he receives consideration from other people around him. The understanding and respect he feels from others makes him withdraw from his solitude and start to integrate with the society again and advance the process of self-preservation.

Oskar's father circled the phrase "not stop looking" in the *New York Times* newspaper (10), which also motivates Oskar's interest in incessantly pursuing the lock to which the key belongs. Through the epistemic dimension of Oskar's world, we understand his process of not accepting the truth of his father's death and then the quest for the truth and finally his determination to "find a simple solution to an impossible problem" —just as the title of Chapter 15 indicates. Oskar is obsessed with the revitalization of his father's memory. His particular likeness and attachment to his father make him eager to decode the enigma of his father's death. He had succeeded in his endeavours to visit 246 persons named Black just in the hope of finding a piece of information about the matching lock and deciphering the puzzle of the key. The persistent quest for the matching lock to the key is not completely disillusioning since he at least renewed his relationship with his mother.

Foer resonates with Bakhtin's concept of chronotope through the configuration of time and space in the text's representation of counter-narratives and traumatic discourse. Bakhtin initiated the literary term chronotope in the book *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* in the chapter

"Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" where he defined chronotope as:

> the name *chronotope* (literally, 'time space') [refers] to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The special meaning it has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely).[123]

The reading process links together the two main traumatised cities in the novel—New York and Dresden. Oskar's picaresque journey can be regarded as a new type of chronotope—the chronotope of ordeal, which is symbolized in the ritual journey and final achievement of spiritual transformation and sublimation. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* extends the ineffable response to grief and Oskar's quest for the key is a kind of Odyssey. Although the time and space in the novel are more condensed than *The Odyssey*, the novel can be regarded as an epic. The dimension of the stories in the novel not only concentrates on Manhattan, New York, but also broadens to other scenes, such as the focus of Oskar's grandparents' earlier lives in Dresden, the grandparents' meeting and marriage in the US, and even the grandfather's departure and return.

The quest for the owner of the key is a metaphor of a self-growth process in an individual's life journey. As the main story line in the novel, the photographs in Oskar's narration foreground the theme of remaking his identity in the post-9/11 world. In the text world, discourse serves for the connection of the multiple possible worlds. Being able to transfer the traumatic memory into traumatic narrative through good dialogic communication with all the Blacks, Oskar finally recuperates from his wound of loss. The emblem of a progressive "working through" shares some similarities with the Freudian "talking cure" in the theory of psychological trauma. The configuration of time and space in the two historical events represented in Foer's novel is a heteroglossic structure, which makes readers compare Oskar's experience with that of his grandparents'.

More importantly, Oskar's narration naturally becomes the focalized point of readers' experience.

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[123] Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays.* Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.p.84.

Oskar's perspective can be regarded as paradigmatic for the fiction as a whole. Oskar's narration remains the primary frame for the traumatic experience of the 9/11 events, which are juxtaposed to the grandparents' past-traumatic event of the Dresden bombing. The chronotope of trauma representation may have distinctly different meanings for the three protagonists.

Oskar's heroic journey starts from the Sixth Borough in New York City. This place is of paramount importance in his quest. Central Park can be viewed as a metaphor for the inescapability of growing up. He suffered from most PTSD symptoms and became overactive in thought and actions, which can be regarded as symptoms of panic.

The elevators, subway, airplanes, tall buildings and all the other things mentioned above attach spatial connotation to Oskar's 9/11 trauma. Foer intentionally accentuates the interrelatedness between spatial and temporal aspects of trauma through demonstrating Oskar's emotional and psychological change throughout the fiction. The quest allows Oskar to shift his focus and distract his attention in order to mourn, which also helps him cope with the trauma of losing his father, when he reorganizes the narrative of the story of his father, he tells to the people named Black he encounters.

Trauma narrative features temporal rupture and a clear demarcation between events that happened before or after the traumatic event. Foer's treatment of trauma and deployment of chronotope between the two traumatic cities can be viewed as an experiment in sketching out the relationship among time, space and trauma in this post-9/11 novel.

New York City in the novel is permeated with a sense of mourning as we follow Oskar's quest for the key. The significance of physical space should be accentuated because time and space are interdependent. A couple named Black have built two museums in their house. The senior Black hammers nails into the bed to commemorate his wife's death every day to express his grief, which made Oskar's traumatic memory accessible because he understands every person shares the same pain as him with his incomprehensible loss of father.

4.3.2 Conceptual Metaphor 2: Key to Unlock the Chains of Oskar's Guilt

Oskar's heroic exploration begins after he discovers a mysterious key with a word "Black" in an

envelope in his father's closet (37). Oskar is in pain and struggling for a coherent narrative integration. Attempting to follow his father's ideal of searching for the truth persistently; Oskar embarks on a quest to find the owner of the key through visiting all people whose surname is Black in the telephone directory in New York City. He is determined to visit all the Blacks with a belief that he will get closer to his father, and offer him some relief from his symptoms.

Oskar feels crushing guilt because he had failed to pick up the phone to listen to his father's telephone message which was recorded on the answering machine on the morning of 9/11. Oskar is the only person who has heard the five messages that were sent by his father when he was trapped in the Tower. When he found the key in the envelope with the name Black in his father's closet, he makes a logical deduction that the key is a way to decrypt the message of his father's death, so he decides to move forward with his audacious quest "because anything that could bring me closer to Dad was something I wanted to know" (293). His quest for all the information about his father is just a representation of his way of assuaging his loss because he intuitively thinks it can recapture his memory of his dead father.

The key in the closet is a significant clue that his father had left just like the adventure games they had played before. Accordingly, Walter Kirn wrote for the *Sunday Book Review* in *The New York Times* that "This scavenger hunt recalls the plots of countless children's books as well as the puzzles that Oskar's wonderful father, a retail jeweller and armchair intellectual brimming with erudite fun facts, invented to educate his gifted boy about science, art and history." [124]

Firstly, the pictures we encounter in the preface have profound implications. Initially, the photographs in this book that have no explication may produce an ambiguous effect and influence readers purely on an emotional level. The imagery of the keyhole in the preface is unintelligible for an audience in the opening part of the novel. The escutcheon plate of the lock with a close-up keyhole echoes the book's title "Incredibly Close" but with a different connotation. Gibbson looks at this from "a cognitive–grammatical approach to narratological focalisation," (David). Herman (2009a, 2009b) considers the degrees of 'granularity' in the

[124] Walter Kirn, "*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*: Everything Is Included", April, 3, 2005, Sunday Book Review, New York Times, //www.nytimes.com/2005/04/03/books/review/extremely-loud-and-incredibly-close-everything-is-included.html?_r=0

construal of a scene.[125] The close-up of the keyhole perhaps can be interpreted to mean that Oskar is struggling in coming through the trauma which is like an inaccessible door. The door can be interpreted as well in relation to victims who are resistant to opening their hearts.

The picture of Laurence Kerr Olivier indicates Oskar's mental state—suffering from indecision and contemplating the problem of existence—as the actor played the iconic Hamlet. This has echoes with the play Oskar performed in school and he ultimately realizes and gets a kind of epiphany. Oskar can confront his childhood trauma and tried his best to exorcise his pain of losing his father.

In the first year after his father's death, Oskar navigates New York City in a quest for answers. His searching and navigation is emblematic, as it is a progressive and active process of "working through" and constitutes the core of the story's plot. It is not easy for a nine-year-old boy to undertake this task, but Oskar moves forward and strides across the transitional period gallantly. At first, he suffers a kind of emotional paralysis when he keeps the recorded telephone message of his father in his room. Repetition compulsion is uncovered when Oskar frantically replays the recorded message. Because he feels guilty for not picking up the phone, he imaginatively believes that, if he had picked up the phone and spoken to his father in person at that time, his father would not have died.

This assumption is totally wrong in reality, but in Oskar's possible world, it is true. The repetitive listening to the voices left by his father can be interpreted as the process of "acting out". The key left by Oskar's father finally fits the lock of William Black's safe deposit box. It is significant that Oskar works out his trauma through the communication with all the people named Black. Metaphorically speaking, finding the owner of the key means Oskar resolves the problem.

4.3.3 Conceptual Metaphor 3: Doors as an Uncrossable Image in Melancholia

Additionally, one typical example that Bakhtin gives in the explanation of chronotope is:

[125] Gibbons, Alison. *Multimodality, Cognition, and Experimental Literature.* New York : Routledge, 2012, p.136.

> … the chronotope of *threshold* ... The word "threshold" itself ... is connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over a threshold). In literature, the chronotope of the threshold is always metaphorical and symbolic, sometimes openly but more often implicitly.[126]

The chronotope of the threshold in this novel is the breaking point of the 9/11 events, it is the moment of crisis for the entire family, especially for Oskar as a child. The metropolitan space of the novel broadens to two cities, Dresden and New York, and also narrows to the interior rooms of the grandparents' living space and all the Blacks' homes. The spaces, places and territories in the two cities were tainted inextricably with traumas of the past and present.

It is from observing the perspective of a nine-year-old boy that the different shapes and types of doorknobs and keyholes are displayed in photographs, for instance an enlarged photo of the first picture in the preface with a doorknob and close-up keyhole (115), a picture of a doorknob with a key inserted into the keyhole (134), two glass doors with aluminium frames (198), a picture of a doorknob without a keyhole (212), a key inserted into the keyhole (134), a picture depicting that the doorknob is moving to the lower position and an open keyhole is discovered in the original position of doorknob (265). It can be interpreted that the doors are the insurmountable obstacles for a melancholic person who has the feeling of entrapment in the traumatic past. Exorcising the pain of loss and working through trauma is like crossing the threshold. Oskar is struggling to defeat the past and start a new chapter of his life.

Oskar remembers, "A great game that Dad and I would sometimes play on Sundays was Reconnaissance Expedition. Sometimes the Reconnaissance Expeditions were extremely simple … and sometimes they were incredibly complicated and would go on for a couple of weeks" (8). Oskar connects the dots of the expedition through scrutinizing the map of Central Park and discovers the word "door" and the French word *porte* (door). The repetitive mention of the word "door" seems a possible way to solve the puzzle in the detective journey. The door symbolizes the obstacle that impedes his reconnection with his dead father; therefore, it is the actual reason why Oskar seeks a tangible solution in the journey. He progressively recovers from

[126] Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays.* Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.p.248.

his inability to cope with the trauma, although he understands the quest cannot bring his father back alive.

4.4 The Therapeutic Power of Narrative

Trauma narrative proposes a way of overcoming the dissociation by transforming the disjointed traumatic memory into a coherent narrative memory. Oskar puts this solution into practice through visiting different people named Black and narrating his sad story of losing his father in the 9/11 events—which can also be considered as a trauma externalization through cyclic and multilateral dialogic narration. The loss of a beloved one is healed by the confounding emotion of anger, guilt, fear and even resentment. The recuperative power of dialogical narration offers a path to the process of tackling trauma, because the communication with other Blacks is a great consolation to Oskar and can help him in working through the trauma.

4.4.1 Dialogic Communication

Theorists of trauma studies believe that the non-linear representations of events are compelling devices which can stimulate reader's emotions when reading fiction, for instance in Whitehead's *Trauma Fiction*. When Oskar finally tells the story of the recorded tapes to his mother and Mr Black, it is analogous to some type of catharsis. At the end of the fiction, Oskar ultimately works through his bereavement. He re-establishes an intimate relationship with his mother when he thinks "things are extremely complicated, and her looking over me was as complicated as anything could ever be. But it was also incredibly simple. In my only life, she was my mom, and I was her son" (324). The adverbs "extremely" and "incredibly" echo with the title of the fiction because it attempts to highlight the theme that trauma can only be recuperated by love. The ending part of the novel indicates Oskar's reconciliation with his mother, who was depicted as indifferent to Oskar's PTSD. When his mother kisses him goodnight and says "I love you", the incarnation of love naturally invites readers to understand Foer's designation that love can conquer all kinds of sufferings of generation through the act of dialogic communication, whether in speaking or writing.

4.4.2 Epistolary Writing

Another measure Oskar took to working through his trauma is by epistolary writing. He wrote many letters and received others' comforting words; whereas his grandfather also wrote letters but in the form of letters that he did not send. The grandfather's entrapment within the past makes his present tortuous. Oskar successfully releases his aggression and the outburst of his anger through letter-writing is just his process of "acting out" his trauma.

It is possible that the grandmother perhaps behaves much better as a survivor of the Dresden air raids than the grandfather. The content of her narration consists of short sentences, reflecting that she received little education. She does stay entrapped in the relentless past, but she attempts to make a new life and is motivated to communicate and articulate her own story. The grandmother's process of working through the traumatic past is through writing her biography feverishly, although she just types the words without inserting any paper in the type-writer. Her low self-esteem and self-loathing represent her traumatic suffering. Moreover, she has bad eyesight. Her detachment and emotional numbness become the essential description of a post-traumatic state of mind. The initial impression of the grandmother's reaction to the terrorist attack is her conscious erosion of feeling and repression of memories. The memory of past trauma comes back to haunt her in her dreams. The internal suffering apparently represents her suicidal nature. She lost her son in the 9/11 events, which strengthens her previous trauma in Dresden and her feeling of being abandoned by her husband.

The grandparents fail to reformulate their world because the wounded self has been destroyed twice in two different nations. Oskar's grandfather suffers from aphasia and is unable to share his traumatic experience. He suffered from the loss of his fiancée Anna in the Dresden bombing and lost his son whom he had never met in the 9/11 attacks. Unable to effectively pull together his memories of Dresden, Oskar's grandfather is stuck with the weight of the past. His radical refusal to talk about the past foreshadows his melancholia. His inexpiable hate towards the unrelenting obsession with his pre-traumatic past adds to the new trauma, the dual traumas rooted in his mind make him mute to express the incomprehensibility of trauma; therefore he is deprived of the ability to forget. He refuses to talk; unlike Oskar who talks about his traumatic experience to the Blacks he meets in the search for the key's owner. The grandfather writes at one point:

> To my unborn child: I haven't always been silent, I used to talk and talk and talk and talk, I couldn't keep my mouth shut, the silence overtook me like a cancer … the distance that wedged itself between me and my happiness wasn't the world, it wasn't the bombs or the burning buildings, it was me, my thinking, the cancer of never letting go. (16–17)

There is a conceptual blend when comparing trauma to cancer—it is very appropriate to use the metaphor of trauma as a cancer. Trauma should be treated like a disease and waiting to be excised.

> I went to a tattoo parlor and had YES written onto the palm of my left hand, and NO onto my right palm … I am warming myself with the frictions of YES and NO, when I clap my hands I am showing my appreciation through the uniting and parting of YES and NO. (17)

The grandfather further contends

> I know I'm not alone in this disease, you hear the old people in the street and some of them are mourning, "Ay yay yay, " but some of them are clinging to their last word, "I", they're saying, because they're desperate, it's not a compliant it's a prayer, and then I lost "I" and my silence was complete. (17)

The grandfather imposed many rules on himself, but unsuccessfully so:

> 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, we agreed that we never would look at the marked-off zones, that they would be nonexistent territories in the apartment in which one could temporarily cease to exist. (109–110)

He was imprisoned by the boundaries of past and present, the Yes and the NO, the something and the nothing. He has confined himself to the stasis of melancholia. It is impossible for him to cross the transitional space because he is inactively engaged with the process of working through; for instance, he refused to talk and he wrote the letters to the unborn child but did not send them (216).

The grandfather recognises the significance of writing to alleviate pain, as he says: "it's unspeakable, write it" (124). Additionally, the grandmother took encouragement from him to write her autobiography, which further demonstrates the grandfather's affirmation of the importance of testimony. He writes in the later part, "It was my suggestion, and at the time I thought it was a good one, I thought maybe if she could express herself rather than suffer herself,

if she had a way to relieve the burden" (119). But the consequence is that there was no ribbon in the typewriter, because "just then and far too late, that years before I had pulled the ribbon from the machine, it had been an act of revenge against the typewriter and against myself, I'd pulled it into one long thread, unwinding the negative it held" (124). "I realized that your mother couldn't see the emptiness, she couldn't see anything ... I'd heard her say, 'My eyes are crummy ' (124)." This paragraph involves a deictic shift. It is in the epistolary form in which the grandfather is writing letters to his son—Oskar's father. Readers grasp the key information that it is the grandfather who intentionally pulled out the ribbon in the typewriter, which makes the grandmother's writing void. Despite the grandparents' struggle to communicate and act out their trauma through writing letters or an autobiography in a typewriter without a ribbon, it is impossible for them to articulate and communicate their traumatic past because it is mono-directional, not reciprocal action. The grandfather fails to send the letters to the addressee, his son, while the grandmother writes her life story but there is no possible reader. The mono-directional acting out is deemed to fail since there is no channel to dredge up blocked emotions. Negotiation and meditation between two sides is indispensable to the healing process.

The grandparents are haunted by multiple traumas in the past and present, including the destruction of Dresden, the death of Anna, and their son's death. Unlike Oskar's narration which is coherent and purposeful, the grandparents' chapters are an incoherent narrative; they are incapable of remaking their own world due to the dual traumas they experienced in two cities. As a counterpoint to Oskar's exploration, the grandparents' response to traumas reminds readers that trauma itself is essentially incommunicable. Therefore, readers really appreciate Oskar's endeavour to remake his own post-9/11 world after searching for an holistic sense of self.

Chapter 5 Externalization of Trauma in the Counter-Narrative of DeLillo's *Falling Man*[127]

5.1 Distinctive Narrative Strategies

There is a growing list of fictional works that engage directly or indirectly with the 9/11 terrorist attack, but *Falling Man* which appeared in 2007 become one of the most anticipated novels dealing with 9/11 traumatic experience. It was six years after the 9/11 terrorist attack. But before the publication of this novel, DeLillo wrote the essay called "In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September" just three months after September, which was published in December, 2001 in *Harper's* Magazine and concentrated on discussing the 9/11 event's cultural and collective traumatic repercussions on the nation as a whole. He argued that "literature had the power to create a collective narrative of 9/11, a counter-narrative capable of opposing the official narrative and those that simplify the events."[128] Therefore, he chose to address the psychological consequences and psychic traumatic effects on domesticity and family as his fictional response to the terrorist attack. DeLillo proposes that a literary response can offer a kind of narrative inquiry that news reports and historical accounts cannot.

Psychic trauma novels are different from cultural trauma novels because the former capture the sufferings of the individual while the latter concentrate on the social consequences of traumatic events. There is no doubt that the 9/11 terrorist attacks can be regarded as both a cultural trauma and a psychic trauma. Cultural trauma is also called collective trauma, which refers to the sense of community feeling and the repercussions for the entire group. The dreadful 9/11 events not only challenged the US's national identity as a global power but also particularly affected individuals' sense of being, which is the most important aspect of the psychic trauma for many residents in New York City. According to Cathy Caruth, "the term trauma is understood as a

[127] Part of this chapter has been presented in a paper titled "Emotional Response to Post 9/11 Fiction: A Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*" through multimedia video conferencing in November, 2015 Annual Conference of the Mid-Atlantic Popular & American Culture Association.

[128] DeLillo, Don. "In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September." *Harper's*, December, 2001, p34.

wound inflicted upon the mind" [129] that breaches the victim's "mind's experience of time, self and the world."[130]

DeLillo's novels exhibited a foresight anticipating the 9/11 event and DeLillo himself retained a fascination with terrorist violence in literary creation, which can be categorised as pre-9/11 fictions. For instance, he published *Underworld* in 1977, which contained the haunting cover of the World Trade Centre towers and seemed to uncannily forecast the 9/11 event. What's more, the World Trade Centre appeared repeatedly in DeLillo's other novels, like *Cosmopolis*, published in 2003. The two novels also deal with the theme of terrorism. Thus, it is understandable that audiences and critics were eagerly awaiting DeLillo's fictional response to the 9/11 terrorist attack. They are now categorised as 9/11 novels — the theme and titles, the covers of the books are closely linked with the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre. The pre-9/11 and post-9/11 worlds were moving from a sense of continuity to discontinuity. Most 9/11 novels deal with the emotional response to 9/11, they are actually narrow narratives of protagonists' 9/11 experiences, but are not a panorama of all sufferers. Therefore it is the implication and significance of the narrative structure and the plotting and deployment of the fiction that need further analysis in order to understand the broader significance of trauma.

Readers can feel that when the author chooses narrative disruption to depict the traumatic moment and particularly present the irreversible nature of the experience of death, it is a reflection of the social reality of the post-9/11 period. The 9/11 event was an interruption to ordinary people's lives. By dramatizing American domesticity in a New York City in mourning, the author can achieve a far-reaching meaning in the novel. It is traumatic rupture that is an obstacle to the restoration of equilibrium and bears an implicit resemblance with incoherent narrative. It displays how traumatized survivors are in desperate need for human contact and intimacy in the aftermath of the attacks. DeLillo offers a meticulous account of the discontinuity trauma causes through the mute communication between fictional characters.

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[129] Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p.3.

[130] Ibid.,p.4.

5.1.1 Fragmented Narrative Structure

DeLillo constructed a fractured narrative about an ordinary middle-aged New York couple in *Falling Man* and attempted to deal with New Yorkers' incoherent consciousness in the post-9/11 American world. Since the trauma presented in the fiction is irremediable, Versluys comments "DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* is, without a doubt, the darkest and the starkest." He further describes that "it is the most gloomy of the 9/11 novels" [131]and the pure melancholia does not lead to a therapeutic process of mourning.

The novel is narrated in three main sections with shifting third-person points of view: two sections between chapters delineating the fictitious hijackers' activity and a final section describing the protagonist's success in escaping from the falling tower. The time span of the fiction is wide, extending to the end of 2004, three years after the attacks. The inter-chapters that present the portrait of the terrorists concentrate on their dedication to the mission, holy war, and various moral questions by using repeated phrases; although there is less psychological delineation or ideological interpretation in these sections. The hijackers' activities are not delineated in terms of strategic global issues but as a private plot by focusing on the pathologies of several terrorists who were eager to sacrifice themselves for holy war. Thus some literary critics felt disappointed with the novel and made trenchant comments.

The three main sections are titled cryptically after a character's name, respectively: "Bill Lawton", "Ernst Hechinger" and "David Janiak". DeLillo chooses these names deliberately to display his perspective on identity, to indicate how modern people experience separation and alienation in urban metropolitan life. Separation and alienation are among the overarching themes in the novel which refer to a lack of belonging and connection or communication with others in an environment saturated with information and technology. These names are anonymous or mythical for readers, since they may feel bewildered while reading the title of each section. These names also showcase the technique of collage, which is one of the techniques that postmodern novelists frequently employ. DeLillo's intelligent application of collage builds inter-connections between the intermittent and somewhat enigmatic characters.

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[131] Versluys, Kristiaan, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel.* New York: Columbia Press, 2009,p.20.

Specifically speaking, "Bill Lawton" is the name mispronounced by the children in their conversations. They developed the mythical figure of Bill Lawton who shares many similarities with the real person Osama Bin Laden. "Bill Lawton has a long beard. He wears a long robe…. He flies jet planes ... He has the power to poison what we eat but only certain foods. … go[es] everywhere in his bare feet." (74)[132]

"Ernst Hechinger" is the real name of Martin Ridnour, who is currently a European art dealer, but was a former member of a German radical activist collective named Kommune One in the late 1960s. The group demonstrated against what they saw as the fascist German state. Martin kept a wanted poster of German terrorists with nineteen names and faces from the early 1970s. The number 19 is coincidentally the number of terrorists on the American Airlines Flight 11 that crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Centre on 9/11; which is an example of the author's attempt to connect the threads of left politics to terrorism. And Martin's lover Nina once mentioned Martin's perspective of the 9/11 terrorists as

> He thinks these people, these jihadists; he thinks they have something in common with the radicals of the sixties and seventies. He thinks they're all part of the same classical pattern. They have their theorists. They have their visions of world brotherhood. (147)

Furthermore, "David Janiak", the name of Section Three, is known as the Falling Man. In the first two sections, David Janiak lives incognito. Readers are only conscious of the performance of an anonymous falling man, but finally realize the real name of the Falling Man is David Janiak in the last section. He is a performance artist who hangs upside down from many high urban buildings by modelling the posture of jumpers who jumped from the towers in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which is regarded as an uncomfortable reminder of the bodies falling from the skyscraper during the collapse of the Twin Towers. The anonymity of this character and the polysemic significance of performance arouse readers' interest in following the fate of this artist.

5.1.2 Distorted Temporality and Spatiality

How does *Falling Man* tell a story of the trauma of a common American family? DeLillo's writing engages us in answering this question through a setting of distorted temporality and

[132] The citation of the novel *Falling Man* refers to its publication by Scribner in 2007.

spatiality. The temporal configuration of this novel is the days and years after the 9/11 attacks, with the backdrop of the characters' lives before 9/11 being offered by the diegetic narrator. The chapters are mainly narrated from the perspective of Keith and Lianne, but interspersed with the point of view of Hammad, one of the 9/11 hijackers. The fiction shifts the focalisation from the protagonists Keith and Lianne to other people besides the immediate family, such as Lianne's mother Nina, Nina's lover Martin, Keith's lover Florence and the terrorist Hammad, which forms a narrative ensemble with multi-dimensional and polyphonic voices. It is widely recognized that the narrative complexity of *Falling Man* requires attentive and systematic reading. However, Richard Gray states:

> *Falling Man* is beautifully structured, playing with images announced by the title that are no less resonant for being obvious. But the structure is too clearly foregrounded, the style excessively mannered; and the characters fall into postures of survival after 9/11 that are too familiar to invite much more than a gesture of recognition from the reader. [133]

The novel juxtaposes the storylines by having the victim and perpetrator move in opposite directions. The circular structure compresses the action of the novel into a few minutes between the moment the plane crashed into the North Tower and the moment Keith stumbles onto the street. The narration starts with Keith's walking from the towers when they are collapsing and terminates with the moment of his struggling with his experience in the towers. This configuration is considered as an endless loop and symbolizes a kind of perpetual trauma. The circular structure in the novel purports to depict the dichotomies between life and death, and the communication between ephemeral and eternity. It is this innovative structure that demonstrates the cultural significance underlying the textual events. DeLillo applies multiple narrative modes to tell the story including dialogue, flashback, psychological and mental delineation, objective description of scenery and subjective interpretation of specific issues.

The different sense of time and the significance of transformations of time proposed by DeLillo are metonymically connected with melancholia and trauma. How trauma impacts upon common people and how individuals respond to the trauma and struggle to heal as well as find self-

[133] Richard Gray. *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11*. John Wiley& Sons, 2011,p.27.

preservation in the aftermath are fully represented here. The author interrogates the traditional concept of time and connects the temporal position of episodes in the novel with the 9/11 attacks.

The logic of temporal distortion appears through the text world structure of the novel. There is no linear chronological storyline. Both the opening chapter and final chapter of the novel set the temporal reference points on the morning of September 11 when the attacks took place. The perception of time and the image of the Falling Man are set from the perspective of Lianne. The first exact time indication is Friday, three days after Tuesday September 11, 2001 in the second part of the first section when Lianne has the conversation with her mother, "This was all, a lost moment on the Friday of that lifelong weekend, three days after the planes" (8).

The second indication of time is in the fifth part of the first section when Lianne is lying in the bed with Keith and finds it is strange that their relationship is so altered two weeks after the attack. The beginning scene focuses on Keith's walking and escape from the towers, then the narrator quickly shifts from it to Lianne and her mother Nina's conversation. It is at this moment that we come to realize their marital relationship is unorthodox. "She opened her eyes and was surprised, even now, to see him there in bed, next to her, a flat surprise by this time, fifteen days after the planes" (69).

The desire for intimacy and contact by the couple is not spontaneously passionate, they have sex not from a spontaneous need but consider it as inevitable and Lianne just considers the man lying next to her in terms of a sense of familiarity. "My husband, He wasn't a husband. The word spouse had seemed comical, applied to him, and husband simply didn't fit" (70).

We progressively learn that the deteriorated marriage relationship of this couple improves as 9/11 becomes a catalyst for their re-valuing of companionship. The relationship between Keith and Lianne is altered because they start to rebuild their marriage. The two protagonists renew their knowledge of others and understand anew the significance of life and existence after 9/11. The process of renewal is temporary, but the themes of reconstitution and re-evaluation are manifested in the texts. The 9/11 event reversed the pattern of pre-9/11 normality and affected characters' lives as well as their relationships with others — specifically the characters are engaging in a process of genuine change, which can be called re-evaluation. Re-evaluation of the spousal relationship and life altering implications of the 9/11 events are one of the most

important narrative themes in *Falling Man*. The aim here is to reveal the impact of trauma on ordinary people and on domesticity.

The third indication of time is when Lianne witnesses the performance of the Falling Man. She has difficulty in reconciling herself to witnessing the scene because the art of performance re-enacts her cognitive models of the shock of seeing the real events. She is unable to accept the image of collapsing. “They were bright with urgent life, that's why they were running, and she raised a hand so they might see her in the mass of faces, thirty-six days after the planes” (170). The last mention of the time is three years after the attack. “These three years past, since that day in September, all life had become public” (182). There is no correlation between the four instances of indication of the exact time in the aftermath of the events.

Chronological disruptions are one of the most conspicuous features in fragmented narration. Readers are informed by the author that time and space have also collapsed with the fall of the Twin Towers. The perception of time in the fiction as the temporal deictic centre is indicated in relation to the terrorist attacks, for instance, three days, ten days, fifteen days, thirty-five days, and three years after the event. It is also very difficult for readers to distinguish the time when conversations between characters take place since there is no clear indication to locate whether the conversations are the continuations of the previous chapters or completely new.

We can assess the protagonist’s experience of surviving the destruction of the towers and his life afterwards and even the “real perpetration” of a terrorist attack; it is the precise way that DeLillo would like to commemorate the events aesthetically through images of falling and the body as well as the way in which time and space are altered after the fall.

5.1.3 Circular Narrative

The story is told in a circular narrative form, since the action begins and ends at the same point of Keith Neudecker’s narrow escape from the World Trade Centre. The opening line of the novel begins with Keith’s walking away from the towers through the smoke and debris just after the collapse of the first tower. Keith is referred to only as “he” in the beginning section from the perspective of the narrator. He is a Manhattan real estate lawyer who miraculously survived the 9/11 attacks and unconsciously went back but not to his own apartment, but to the apartment of

his estranged wife Lianne, re-joining her and their son. The author intends to embed the reader in the 9/11 world and convey the unspeakable experience by creating a specific sense of space with the spectacular opening scene. The novel's final scene is correlated with the beginning: "Then he saw a shirt come down out of the sky. He walked and saw it fall, arms waving like nothing in this life" (246).

The temporal setting of the morning of September 11 stops after the beginning chapter and is then restored in the final chapter. The opening part and ending scene are looped together and set the background of the falling tower where Keith attempted to escape from the site of destruction. DeLillo concludes the novel by repeating the opening scene with minor changes in personal and spatial relations because he would like to accentuate the event itself. The final part of the novel is not a conclusive ending, but a vague and suspended ending to express a feeling of melancholia.

The last episode concentrates on the delineation of Keith's struggle inside the tower and the moment he communicates with his friend Rumsey just before the tower collapses. It is an instant in which Keith experiences his near-death where he was "wrestling" between death and survival. As readers of the novel, we ultimately bear witness to Keith's experience of escape in the beginning and the moments of his experience in the tower in the final pages. Hammad, the fictional terrorist, hijacks the airplane and makes it crash into the Twin Towers where Keith works. It is the confluence point in which the perpetrator and victim encounter each other. The author's plot arrangement of this scene intends to assist readers to work through the trauma and become the witnesses of the full process of the attacks. The author employs the simplest syntax to capture this elusive moment:

> A bottle fell off the counter in the galley, on the other side of the aisle, and he watched it roll this way and that, a water bottle, empty, making an arc one way and rolling back the other, and he watched it spin more quickly and then skitter across the floor an instant before the aircraft struck the tower, heat, then fuel, then fire, and a blast wave passed through the structure that sent Keith Neudecker out of his chair and into a wall. (239)

Scrutinising the stylistic feature of this paragraph can help us understand the author's intention in composing such a circular narrative. The author use iterative conjunctions and demonstrative adverbs in this winding sentence in order to represent the moment when the aircraft hit the towers;

it is an accurate and vivid portrayal. It is the first time that we gain access to narrative memory, but one which is focalised upon the narrator rather than on Keith himself. It is also evident that we hear the protagonist's full name "Keith Neudecker" for the first time; which is an unconventional writing strategy to introduce the name of the protagonist in the final chapter. The last episode is narrated from the focal point of the perpetrator. Since Keith is the participant in this discourse world, the introduction of the full name is necessary when the narrator focalises his viewpoint from the perspective of the terrorist Hammad.

When the first plane crashed into the tower, Keith tried his best to rescue his friend Rumsey but failed. The falling image of a white shirt recurs repeatedly in the narration of Keith's experience of barely escaping. It explains why the image of the white shirt frequently perplexes him and becomes a long lingering intrusive traumatic memory.

When the plane hits the tower, the instant is suspended and represented as an image of past and future combined. The irrecoverable moment is portrayed as an apprehension; the image of falling is in Keith's memory and haunts his consciousness. When the tower collapsed, the complete destruction of national morale and the grave loss of life made people feel antipathy toward the building, which had now became the target of terrorists. This passage suggests Keith's sense of self-alienation. Thus, the narrator finds artistic representation of the catastrophe impossible since no expression or articulation is sufficient to describe the unimaginable catastrophe of 9/11.

The unutterable instant between life and death is evident in the text when Keith witnesses a man falling to death through the window. "He could not stop seeing it, twenty feet away, an instant of something sideways, going past the window, white shirt, hand up, falling before he saw it" (242). The scene where Keith makes efforts to rescue Rumsey help readers comprehend the sequence of events. "Things began to fall, one thing and then another, he tried lifting Rumsey out of the chair. Then something outside, going past the window. Something went past the window, then he saw it." (242) But unfortunately, Rumsey fails to escape. "The whole business of being Rumsey was in shambles now… the man [Rumsey] opened his eyes and died"(243).

The second instance of his perception of the white shirt is when Keith had successfully escaped from the burning building, and he confused the falling body with Rumsey: " for an instant he [Keith] saw it [the shirt] again, going past the window , and this time he thought it was Rumsey.

He confused it with Rumsey, the man falling sideways, arm out and up" (244). It is unreal as the narrator announces Rumsey death. Keith's sensory discrimination had been destroyed by the horrific event. In the aftermath, since he cannot remember the details of the traumatic event, it is clear he has the symptoms of PTSD.

The shirt haunts his mind and reminds him of his survival. Again, towards the book's ending, the image of the shirt is repeated, which suggests that 9/11 melancholia is irremediable for Keith. The unspeakable moment is portrayed as an apprehension; the image of the falling shirt perpetuates itself in Keith's memory. The multiple intersections of temporal settings immerse readers in Keith's existential crisis and the condition of a kind of living death. "Then he saw a shirt come down out of the sky. He walked and saw it fall, arms waving like nothing in this life" (246). From the voice of the heterodiegetic narrator, it is clear that Keith is still immersing himself in the traumatic memory of his 9/11 experiences. DeLillo ingeniously applies the literary device of synecdoche to represent the unknown. The synecdochal and referential portrayal of the shirt symbolizes the real horror of Keith's traumatic memory. Therefore, readers realize that Keith is still unable to transform his traumatic memory into narrative memory and this further demonstrates his melancholia.

5.2 Melancholia as a Traumatic Representation

Literary critics have paid increasing attention to the concept of trauma because trauma is interpreted not only as a symptomatic injury but also as a transformation of conceptualization and representation. The unassimilable makes trauma compulsively repeat historic events. The Holocaust offers the paradigm of trauma. Traumatic experience and sacred emotion are unpresentable because of the inadequacy of language. Language is not unified and coherent, but broken and disruptive. Affected characters are defined by their inability to act. Thus the traumatic state of the protagonists in this 9/11 novel represents the melancholic mind and the narcissistic state omnipresent in post-9/11 America.

Since literature as a form is able to communicate trauma, survivors can re-externalise the events by articulating their traumatic experience. Re-externalisation is of paramount importance to trauma recuperation, which can activate readers' responses by way of dynamic practices. The text

invites the readers to play an active role in recuperative dynamic practices by performing an action in the physical world.

5.2.1 Compulsive Traumatic Re-enactment

Different characters in the novel have different degrees of traumatic psychic response to the 9/11 events. The repression of psychic trauma among the survivors and their family members is complex. Keith, the direct victim, can remember the traumatic events but forgets any details because trauma has the power to destroy his comprehension of what has occurred on that day. Keith can remember the facts of how he goes to Lianne's apartment but not to hospital.

For those who were inside the towers and escaped from the destruction, for example Keith and Florence, it is the intimate shared traumatic experience that links them together, allowing them to act out trauma through shared communication. They both suffered from PTSD, which is a belated response and surfaces in various forms, for example, repeated nightmares, melancholia, hallucinations, flashbacks, and numbness. Florence is a fellow survivor of the 9/11 events. She left her briefcase in the building on the day of the attacks. By coincidence, Keith picked up her briefcase when he was escaping from the building. Later Keith returns the briefcase to Florence, after finding information about her identity in the bag. Keith starts an extramarital relationship with her not for love, but for mutual solace. Their intimacy and adulterous relationship stems from their common experience on the day of the disaster. Florence just wants to speak to "a person who might confirm the grim familiarity of the moment" (91). But the narrator reveals that Florence actually talks "to the room, to herself". "She [Florence] wanted to tell him [Keith] everything. This was clear to him. Maybe she'd forgotten he was there, in the tower, or maybe he was the one she needed to tell for precisely that reason" (55).

Keith confesses that he saw a man carrying a crowbar after Florence reminded him. "No reason ever to remember this if she [Florence] hadn't mentioned it" (57). It is Florence, who shares the same experience of survival with him. She helps Keith recall the details of what happened. Keith realized that "he'd been carried in these crossing memories, brought down out of the tower and into this room" (57). Repetition compulsion is represented through Florence's repeated telling of the traumatic experience. "She was going through it again and he was ready to listen again" (59).

The two interlocutors fail to help each other heal from their emotional wounds because they are unable to communicate effectively and express their feelings authentically to each other. Keith is expecting to end the relationship when he arrives at Florence's apartment. It is easy for Keith to get tired of such a relationship as the description of their seduction scene is stale and dispassionate. Their mutual traumatic experiences have a sense of belatedness.

The belatedness effect, referring to the later awareness and recognition of the past occurrence of tragic events, is of paramount importance in understanding the temporal structure of traumatic memory. What's more, it is commonly acknowledged in the field of traumatic studies that discontinuity and rupture are the primary characteristics of traumatic memory, while the coherence and continuity of the speaking subject conventionally signal the logic of narrative memory.

Since there is a widespread disillusionment in the post-9/11 world, the identity of the individual becomes fluid in the aftermath of the attacks. There is also an inter-cutting of thoughts between the main characters (such as Keith and Lianne) who connected their experience with the 9/11 attack. Repetitions and breaks in linear time are the literary techniques that DeLillo adopts to show the compulsive repetitions characteristic of trauma.

When Keith is taken to the hospital by Lianne for minor surgery, he is in a state of hallucination and is reminded of Rumsey when he undergoes anaesthesia. Rumsey, Keith's friend and poker buddy is introduced to the reader while Keith is under the effect of narcotics. Keith thought he witnessed Rumsey die among the falling bodies he could see through windows when escaping from the burning towers, which is the primary trauma for Keith. Readers can only learn how Keith survived during the novel's final scenes. The repeated activity Keith follows in the rehabilitation program is a restorative measure for him, and also symbolizes his suffering and recalls his feelings of trauma. He repeats a simple exercise several times a day to help the recovery of his wrist, post-surgery. "He found these sessions restorative, four times a day" (42). Even three years after the attack, with his wrist recovered, he is addicted to the rehabilitation program. This indicates that he is still in a state of melancholia and unable to work through his trauma.

When Keith goes back to his apartment near the Twin Towers to get some of his belongings, he accepts the ID check by the officials, the city has become chaotic, and Keith observes "Everything was grey, it was limp and failed ... a city somewhere else, under permanent siege, and a stink in the air that infiltrated the skin" (25). Keith finds "his name was misspelled on a couple of pieces of mail, this was not unusual" (31). Keith feels a compulsion to make the correction on the envelopes. Keith "did it and he kept doing it and maybe he understood at some snake-brain level of perception that he had to do it and would keep doing it down years and into the decades" (31). He is afraid of taking the elevator as Oskar is in Foer's novel, "The truth is that he was wary of the elevator" (27). He even imagines that "every cabdriver in New York was named Muhamad" (26). The meticulous depiction of Keith's response to the 9/11events further proves his symptoms of PTSD.

Other minor characters in the fiction also manifest traumatic symptoms. For instance, Rosellen S. from the writing group suffers "an elemental fear out of deepest childhood" (93). For Florence; the traumatic memory always haunts her mind. "There was an element in Florence that was always close to some emotional distress, a memory of injuring or sustaining loss" (90). She recalls the detailed events of her traumatic experience claustrophobically: "She [Florence] talked about the tower, going over it again, claustrophobically, the smoke, the fold of bodies" (90).

Lianne had supposed that her husband Keith might have died in the horrific attack because of the footage she had seen. So Lianne is horrified in observing Keith's arrival at her home with a bloodied face, marked by debris. Fortunately, Keith was only diagnosed by the doctor as needing minor surgery on a wounded hand, but the potential psychological traumatic effect is undetectable.

Lianne experiences feelings of discomfort and a sense of melancholia when confronting her struggles with her father's suicide and her doubts about religion. The narrator explicates Lianne's compulsive repetition of recalling her father, "For nineteen years, since he fired the shot that killed him, she'd said these words to herself periodically, in memoriam" (218). Furthermore, although Lianne is not a survivor of the terrorist attacks, as Keith and Florence are, her sense of discomfort and disorientation are further demonstrated when she witnesses the performance art of the "Falling Man" twice in the novel. The performance of the Falling Man not only draws witnesses and readers towards death and trauma, but it also subverts people's conventional

viewpoint of artistic representation by exposing them to the postmodern concept of chronotope. The author repetitively presents the artistic performance to strengthen the significance and power of art to infiltrate people's consciousness and re-evaluate historical events, which is also one of the strategies of the novel. The performance triggers Lianne's altered memory and her reflections on her past experience. She laments, "These three years past, since that day in September, all life had become public" (182).

Lianne goes to church for spiritual comfort. She also engages with a group of Alzheimer patients, considering it as a way of getting away from her trauma. The elderly people are asked to write on various subjects to keep them thinking and remembering their past life memories by way of written narrative. "She needed these people. It was possible that the group meant more to her than it did to the members. There was something precious here, something that seeps and bleeds" (61-62). The written narrative reveals its recuperative power in its way to treating dementia for this older group.

5.2.2 Transgenerational Trauma Transfer

Like Foer, DeLillo also describes the destructive effect of 9/11 on children, which plays a significant role in rendering trauma. Transgenerational trauma can pass down to the next generations through complex post-traumatic stress. Lack of parental attention has a silent transforming influence on children's mental state. It is a more devastating effect for the younger generation to suffer from PTSD. The protagonist Oskar in Foer's novel is one of the typical examples who suffer from transgenerational trauma. In DeLillo's fiction, Justin, Lianne and Keith's son were sheltered from the horrific images on television at the moment when his father came back home covered with ash and blood. But Justin has to rely on his peers and friends to relieve his depressed emotions, such as withdrawal, dissociation and refusing to talk except in monosyllables. He stands on the window with his two best friends, looking with binoculars and conjuring their own fictional account of the 9/11 terrorist attack.

Justin's mother Lianne is unable to detect Justin's unusual behaviour of looking into the sky. She even thinks that the kids are studying clouds, but his friend's mother perceives something more and reminds Lianne that the children are morbidly fascinated about some mysterious things. It

becomes evident later that the kids are "looking for more planes. Waiting for it to happen again" (72). The traumatic representation of children's compulsive repetition is especially pathetic, indicating that they know more than adults and they are capable of predicting cataclysm, which is ironic, considering the US government's inability to take precautions against potential terrorism.

Lianne admits her sense of anxiety when she says: "God, there's something so awful about that. Damn kids with their goddamn twisted powers of imagination" (72). There is an accurate description of the powers of children's imagination in their devising of the image of Bill Lawton. "He flies jet planes and speaks thirteen language but not English except to his wives" (74). They even conjure that Lawton "has the power to poison what we eat but only certain foods" (74). It is assumed that the children fantasize the image of the terrorists based on terrorism coverage in the media. Lianne realizes that "This is what we get for putting a protective distance between children and news events" (74). The children are bold enough to talk about the events openly while the adults are avoiding being involved, suggesting that the power of language can externalize the trauma and allow the interlocutors to engage positively with it. The children's' malapropisms and fantasies indicate that language has the power to cope with trauma. Lianne describes Justin's response: "The only thing I got out of Justin. The towers did not collapse" (72). Justin, as a representative of the younger traumatized generation, imaginatively rejects the truth of the 9/11 events. This can be regarded as a psychological acting out.

Moreover, Justin's insistence on talking in monosyllables for a long time is considered an example of repetition compulsion. Justin's upbringing entraps him in melancholia since his parents sunk into a fixed condition of despondency. He adopts a monosyllabic discourse to express himself because of his passivity to the traumatic events. Keith detects

> The kid [Justin] was trying to speak in monosyllables only, for extended stretches. This was something his class was doing, a serious game designed to teach children something about the structure of words and the discipline required to frame clear thoughts. (66)

Lianne argues "that it sounded totalitarian." (66) The word "totalitarianism" connotes that the school is trying to instil the national ideology through the learning process. The purpose of implementing the exercise of using monosyllables is to help students be aware of how language works; it also attempts to pursue conformity and silence in the chaotic society, post 9/11.

> "He has nothing to say. He has passed beyond monosyllables," Keith said. "Remember when he spoke only in monosyllables. That lasted a while."
> "Longer than I expected," she said.
> "He has passed beyond that. He has gone to the next stage of his development."
> "His spiritual development," she said.
> "Total silence."
> "Utter and unbreakable silence." (100–01)

Justin becomes mute as a way of enacting his emotions, which demonstrates the limits and inadequacy of language to express trauma. Justin's strategy of silence indicates his resistance to expressing himself. Later in the novel, Keith remarks, "He was getting better at this; Justin was, barely pausing between words. At first it was an instructive form of play but the practice carried something else now, a solemn obstinacy, nearly ritualistic" (160). Justin's progression is shown in his linguistic reintegration since he resumes communication with others. When the scene shifts to 2003, Justin participates in a political demonstration in the New York street escorted by his mother Lianne, "Justin took a leaflet from a woman in a black headscarf" (171). He began to embrace a radical oppositional voice in public. He does not retreat into political stasis like the adults, but chooses to adopt the other's religion. This act suggests how younger traumatized generations are healing and preparing to accept Muslim people and their beliefs. When Justin starts to repeat the phrase "there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet" (183) from a leaflet, in broken Arabic, it is inferred that he embraces a new language and its cultural identity, and is not resisting Islam. This act also indicates the author's vision of 9/11 society where governments move towards truly understanding multi-culturalism.

5.2.3 Emotional Responses to Traumatic Experience

In *Falling Man*, DeLillo shows how individuals respond to the destabilizing postmodern landscape after the 9/11 events and how memory is affected in the urban environment. Since postmodern fictions reject traditional representation of continuous time and space, DeLillo follows the steps of the conventions of postmodern novels in depicting the characters' concept of time and space in a disruptive manner. He also concentrates on exploring the ethical connotation of this national trauma and encourages a reconsideration of the tragic events. He proposes that

New York City's urban identity is now intricately associated with trauma, the characters in the novel memorializing the attack as a surreal fact. For instance, since New York now becomes an emblem of national trauma, Keith perceives the city as his source of horror and repression, so he is eager to escape from reality and forget the pain. Yet, escape is not straightforward. "Lianne said 'They said, Leave the city? For what? To go where'" (69).

However, from the terrorists' perspective, the Twin Towers in New York City were targeted simply because the catastrophe in New York would raise world attention and severely devastate the American psyche and morale. New York City has repeatedly appeared in DeLillo's works as the glory of US capitalism.

In his earlier novels, DeLillo casts a critical eye on the totalizing power of global capitalism.. The Twin Towers were treated as a symbol of oppressive hegemony and supremacy in his earlier works. Now they are considered the epitome of trauma. When Keith went back to his own apartment to retrieve his necessities, the repeated phrase "I am standing here" (25, 27) is an acknowledgement of Keith's survival after the calamity, and his experience of trauma.

The reiteration of the simple declarative fact of standing at Ground Zero echoes the same reflection of the man next to DeLillo when he visited the debris six days after the attack, according to his essay "In the Ruins of the Future". "Oh my god I'm standing here" [134] When Keith went back to his apartment, he encounters a man who is repeatedly claiming "I'm standing here" (27). The characters in the fiction reflect how survivors can fully understand the essence of living after the experience of holocaust.

According to E. Anne Kaplan, trauma can be categorized into two groups based on the distance from the events and the context. The first group refers to direct trauma victims—the perished or survivors; the other group refers to indirect victims—"relatives indirectly involved in terror. I call this "family or quiet trauma."[135] It is apparent in the novel that Keith and Florence are direct

[134] DeLillo, Don. "In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September." *Harper's*, December, 2001, p38.

[135] Kaplan, E. Ann, *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature,* New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005.p.1.

trauma victims, while Lianne, Justin and Nina belong to the category of family or quiet trauma. Therefore, the traumatic representations of those victims are presented in a different way.

DeLillo chooses to approach the events aesthetically which enables us to re-witness the occurrence of the events and how the characters go on living afterwards. Keith refused to pass over the process of trauma and healing by not integrating the traumatic events into a coherent narrative. He demonstrates repetitive behaviours, at first, to cope with his trauma; for those who directly experienced the cataclysm have difficulty in processing what really happened. To a larger extent, the repeated behaviours function as the repeated effects that trauma imposes on the victims' body and mind. The experience of escaping from the towers is memorialized in his mind, which is an internalisation of actual trauma. Readers come to understand how memories of traumatic reverberation are entangled with the reality of the 9/11 events.

Kristiaan Versluys writes "in *Falling Man*, no such working-through or mourning takes place or is even possible"[136] in *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel*. The structure of the novel juxtaposes the storylines of victim and perpetrator, which move in opposite directions. The circular structure compresses the action of the novel into a few minutes between the moment the plane crashed into the North Tower and the moment Keith stumbles on the street, finding himself miraculously alive.

Most theorists in the area of trauma studies (Caruth; Herman) argue that literature is a way of processing traumatic experiences. In Kacandes's *Talk Fiction*, she claims that the "listener has to be there so the survivor can re-externalise the event" (96). R-externalization is one of the most crucial processes in psychological trauma recovery. It is recognized by Laub (69) that the re-externalisation of the event can be identified as the capacity to transmit the traumatic story coherently.

Moreover, Kacandes perceives readers' active participation as a productive response to the text; because she suggests that the traumatic text can transfer empathic feeling through inviting readers' responses. This is consistent with my perception that 9/11 novels indeed need readers' dynamic engagement. The practice of reading the sentences and texts is regarded as a process, through which readers perform their understanding of the fiction. Because readers can activate their

[136] Versluys, Kristiaan. *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel.* New York: Columbia Press, 2009,p.24.

response in the physical world or actual world, then through the trans-world involvement, the actualization of literary experience can be accomplished through empathy.

The response to text is exemplified by a reader's engagement in the discourse world in terms of inference and performance through cognitive–poetic analysis. The reader's response to the trauma text performs some of the function of psycho-therapy.

Cathy Caruth, one of the prominent scholars who specialize in trauma studies, proposes the following definition of trauma in her work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena." [137] She also concludes there are three prominent characteristics of trauma on the basis of Freud's studies of trauma*:* belatedness, compulsive repetition and unavoidability to escape.

It is evident that readers can find these three traumatic features in Keith. "It wasn't until he got in that truck and shut the door that he understood where he'd been going all along" (6). This demonstrates the inevitable belatedness of his recognition of traumatic experience. From that time on, he is continually recalling the experience in the towers, the death of his friend Rumsey, the falling body with the image of the floating shirt; the ash and dust — all are repetitively haunting his mind. He chooses to narrate the incident to another survivor, Florence, disjointedly and repeatedly, not to his wife, not because "they took erotic pleasure from each other", (137) but simply because "they knew together" (137).

But their conversation and love affair do not achieve the expected relief and solace. Since re-externalisation is of paramount importance to trauma recuperation, Keith chose to abandon psychological treatment and became obsessive about poker games and competition, which symbolizes the degradation of his spirit and his unwillingness to work through trauma. During the poker competition, Keith loses the ability to distinguish time and space, he even thinks it looks like their daily recreational poker playing with his colleagues in the pre-9/11 era. But

[137] Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996,p.11.

suddenly a scene of rescuing Rumsey came into his mind, he even felt guilty for not successfully saving his colleague's life. This episode invites readers to take active engagement with the text, so they are able to fill in all the missing gaps and connect the narrative thread into a linear story. Keith's supplementary narration of the story perhaps was only his own subjective assumption, but not the facts that had really occurred in the text world.

The reason is that he is a person suffering from PTSD, so he will selectively forget some elements and references; what he articulates is his own assumptions about the traumatic experience. This false recollection made by Keith seems logical in the novel. Keith himself is consistently searching for the answer to the essence of living, meantime the narrator tries to give a full representation of Keith's 9/11 traumatic experience. Versluys's interpretation of Keith's condition of melancholia is accurate and astute: "*Falling Man* stands out because it staunchly refuses to be a narrative of redemption. In taking us far outside the comfort zone, it pictures September 11 as an enduring condition for which there is no remedy." [138]Comparing with Oskar in Foer's fiction, Keith in DeLillo's novel sinks into deep melancholia and has a passive response to working-through trauma. Consequently, Keith is unable to recover from the emotional trauma of 9/11.

5.3 Conceptual Blending Analysis of Repeated Images

There are many repeated visual images that connect with the 9/11 events, each of which represents a significant theme. These images can function in the minds of readers as primers for idealized cognitive models or structures, such as the falling body, shirt, painting, music and the towers. Subsequently, readers are capable of intuitively connecting these idealized cognitive models with the narrative details of the historical events. For instance, readers can identify the

[138] Versluys, Kristiaan. *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel.* New York: Columbia Press, 2009,p.47.

white shirt with Keith's friend Rumsey in the last section of the novel, although the image of the falling shirt originally appeared in the opening storyline.

5.3.1 Falling as Degradation

The recurring image of the falling man in the novel leaves readers with an overwhelming impression from the perspective of Lianne and reappears at three different stages in the novel for several pages of focalisation (33; 163-169; 218-222). The name of the performance artist is unknown to readers until the third part of the novel when Lianne reads his obituary in the newspaper — readers realize that section three is titled after the performer named "David Janiak". The falling man refers to the photograph shot by Richard Drew at 9:41 on the morning of September 11, 2001, which was published in *The New York Times* the second day after the 9/11 attack. It is an image of one of the many victims who jumped from the Twin Towers with one knee bent.[139] The photograph was immediately disseminated by mainstream media in hundreds of newspapers around the world. Its publication and dissemination ignited a contentious public debate because the picture was regarded as voyeuristic.

[139] Richard Drew is a famous photographer from Associated Press. His well-known photo The Falling Man, depicting a man falling from the World Trade Center appeared on page 7 of the *New York Times* on September 12, 2001. Drew was also one of the four photo-journalists present at the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy.

Figure 5.1 The photograph, *The Falling Man*, taken by Richard Drew on 11 September 2001[140]

The image of *The Falling Man* is prominent in many pieces of fiction, including DeLillo's and Foer's, who both deploy different strategies to deal with the image of the falling figure. The act of falling exerts profound influence upon readers' visual perception. On the one hand, *Falling Man* primarily uses the figure of a performance artist in the background of the destroyed towers in the DeLillo novel. On the other hand, Foer imaginatively uses the perspective of a nine-year old boy to reverse the falling by way of the boy's fantasy, thus alleviating sorrow. The critic Aaron Mauro asserts that "while the falling man becomes a figure of collective trauma for

[140] Drew, Richard. *The Falling Man*. 12 September, 2001. Photograph. *The New York Times*.

DeLillo and Foer, he is also terribly absent through his very anonymity."[141] The performance art reminds audiences and spectators alike of the cruelty and harsh reality of the cataclysm. It acts as a reminder of the moment of danger and indelible history and reinforces the extreme nature of the 9/11 events. Mauro further admits "The falling figure literally and figuratively falls into abstraction, theory, and the trauma of a disrupted reference." [142]The translation of the falling figure into an artistic performance shocks spectators since they as audience cannot assimilate the performance into history, it is hard for spectators to witness.

The frozen image of a man in freefall symbolized 9/11 trauma. The death of David Janiak in the final section of *Falling Man* in 2004 evokes a waning of post-9/11 representation, which also symbolically parallels with Lianne's recovery. His dying as a Falling Man epitomizes the spectacle of 9/11 and the destiny of human life. Readers share the knowledge that it is difficult to transfer the traumatic image into an organized narrative since it lacks a frame of reference and is frozen in the victims' and witnesses' minds.

Just as Versluys argues that "one of the ways in which the polysemous title reverberates is that *Falling Man* has the ambition of being an updated, early-twenty-first century version of the fall of man." [143] To some extent, the statement of Versluys is true because the term "Falling" in the title of the novel has a diverse range of connotations. Falling becomes the predominant symbolic image that DeLillo establishes to present recurring traumatic memories throughout the novel. The image of falling buildings parallels with the disintegration and degradation of Keith; it also symbolizes modern people's moral degradation and decline in spirit, since Keith cannot articulate his feelings and act normally in the aftermath of the 9/11 events. His self-indulgence in playing poker games makes him lose track of time and gets him away from trauma although flashes of traumatic images always recur in his mind. The unassimilated traumatic events cannot be transformed into a coherent narrative; Keith only acts out this trauma through fragmented episodes of narration. Since Keith thinks the poker game has "structure, guiding principles, sweet and easy interludes of dream logic (211-212)," he turns to poker to find the meaning and structure of life, but unsuccessfully.

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[141] Mauro, Aaron. "The Languishing of the Falling Man: Don DeLillo and Jonathan Safran Foer's Photographic History of 9/11." *Modern Fiction Studies*, Volume 57, Number 3, Fall 2011, p.588.
[142] Ibid.p.589.
[143] Versluys, Kristiaan. *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel.* New York: Columbia Press, 2009,p.21.

The next two episodes deserve to be quoted at length, since the reiterative image of the Falling Man in the novel serves to accentuate the destructiveness of trauma from the witnesses' perspective.

> A man was dangling there, above the street, upside down. He wore a business suit, one leg bent up, arms at his sides. A safety harness was barely visible….She'd heard of him, a performance artist known as Falling Man. He'd appeared several times in the last week, unannounced. (33).
>
> …
>
> These were stickily local circumstances, people in windows, some kids in a school yard. Falling man was known to appear among crowds or at sites where crowds might quickly form. Here was an old derelict rolling a wheel down the street.
>
> The rail had a broad flat top and he stood there, blue suit, white shirt, blue tie, black shoes. He loomed over the side walk, legs spread slightly, arms out form his body and bent at the elbows, asymmetrically, man in fear, looking out of some deep pool of concentration into lost space, dead space. … They all waited. But he did not fall. He stood poised on the rail for a full minute, and then another. The woman's voice was louder now.
>
> She said, "You don't be here."
>
> Kids called out, they shouted inevitably, "Jump," but only two or three and then it stopped and there were voices from the projects, mournful calls in the damp air. (163-164)

The performance art receives a violent response because it forces spectators to view it and it may trigger public panic and anxiety. The performance artist chooses public spaces to perform, like Grand Central Station and the Queensboro Bridge (33,219). The most disturbing appearance is when the falling man jumps from subway tracks near the primary school — DeLillo delineates Lianne's emotional responses to witnessing the performance over ten pages. The disruptive narrative in this episode indicates how intrusive and unsettling the scene is to the viewers including Lianne.

The Falling Man climbs upward and waits for the audience to gather together, then he can fall in front of the audience. Although he is wearing a safety harness, audiences are unable to see it from

their viewpoint. It is the artist's aim to convince the audience to witness a self-destructive performance, an imitation of suicide. Furthermore, he is also attempting to employ performance art to respond to 9/11 in a jarring and harsh way. The perturbing image of the performance act captures passer-bys. Despite the fact that they involuntarily participate in witnessing, they are forced to become participants in the pseudo-suicide act.

Additionally, DeLillo uses free indirect discourse to blend Lianne's perspective and the obituary writer's stance over six pages. Readers are aware of the desolate fate of the performance artists when we read that "free fall is the fall of a body within the atmosphere without a drag-producing devise such as a parachute (221)".

The image of a falling white shirt persistently haunted Keith's mind and becomes a puzzle for readers in the novel's opening section. It is in the closing pages that readers can fully realize its significance and understand Keith's earlier flashback of Rumsey seated in a chair by the window in his office. It is apparent that Rumsey is to die in the attack. However, Keith desperately wants to save Rumsey's life but fails. He was fixated on the image of the falling shirt, which made him cognitively paralysed. Thus he cannot assimilate his experience into a normal and coherent narrative process. In the beginning of the novel, it mentions "A shirt came down out of the high smoke, a shirt lifted and drifting in the scant light and then falling again, down toward the river(4)." But we belatedly discover the fact that it is actually not a white shirt as aforementioned in the opening pages; it is a human body in a white shirt falling down from the tower. The symbolism or synecdoche here offers a way of representing the real trauma. The relationship between white shirt and memory are intertwined throughout the novel. The focus of attention is Keith's way of coping with trauma.

The shirt functions as the symbol of unaccountable objects, and directly connects with Keith's traumatic memory. The distinction between dreaming and waking creates confusion between the text world and discourse world. The uncertain falling objects are the predominant symbolic images that haunt Keith and even us as readers. The juxtaposition of the white shirt and Rumsey in the final chapter explains the significance of falling objects that were mentioned in the earlier chapters. The foregrounding image of the white shirt is intertwined with Keith's traumatic memory of escaping death and his failure to rescue his colleague.

Keith is immersed in mourning and loses the capacity to distinguish between past, present and future, and becoming addicted to the poker games. His confusion and degradation are the dramatization of his response to this particular trauma. Keith's fragmentation and disruption of self reflects his traumatised mind since his speech is uttered on the somatosensory level with the distinctive features of traumatic memory.

5.3.2Art as Catharsis

DeLillo advances the idea of reading literary works as a bibliotherapy through Lianne's mouth. "People read poems. People I know, they read poetry to ease the shock and pain, give them a kind of space, something beautiful in language" (42). Since reading poetry can offer readers "comfort or composure" (42) readers can seek solace in reading; such experience can help them find relief from pressure. Readers' interaction with the content of literary works, (including fiction, poetry and other written texts) can trigger synaesthesia, which is an integration of a linguistic phenomenon with a psychological response. Moreover, the therapeutic effect of bibliotherapy is often combined with writing therapy. Writing is a process of acting out which forces victims to fully express their traumatic experiences in written words to attain assuagement, which is a way for the Alzheimer patients to cope with the disease.

However, Lianne confesses that "I don't read poems, I read newspapers. I put my head in pages and get angry and crazy"(42). DeLillo wittingly put literature and newspapers in opposition to one another because they are two different mediums representing the 9/11 tragedy with fictional and factual traits respectively. Readers can experience totally different emotional responses to literature and newspapers: poetry for alleviation, while newspapers are for infuriation. This further accentuates the idea of art as a cure for trauma.

Literary works can create fictional characters and concentrate on analysing different characters' psychological reactions to an event, while newspapers only attempt to report the event itself and its immediate historical significance. The readers' process of understanding the mindset of characters and their participation in events can encourage readers to have a reflexive view, thereby victims can work through trauma themselves. Art can soothe and provide an understanding of the truth of trauma.

Narrative, as a form of action, is of vital significance in recovery from trauma in the transformation of survivors and their descendants. As Ann Kaplan has pointed out, trauma can be "translated" and understood via art in order to work through the pain it causes while the wound is still open in society.[144] The transformation of traumatic memories into narrative memory on the basis of survivors' existing mental schemes is one of the processes for working through trauma, which involves articulating the experience into coherent and continuous meanings.

What's more, two still-life paintings, *Natura Morta* by Italian Giorgio Morandi presented at various points throughout the novel, function as a representation of the power of art. A detailed description of one of the paintings is provided. "These were groupings of bottles, jugs, biscuit tins, that was all, but there was something in the brushstrokes that held a mystery she could not name, or in the irregular edges of the vases and jars, some reconnoitre inward, human and obscure, away from the very light and colour of the paintings"(12). DeLillo engages with the question of representation by using an analogy to painting. The picture not only represents the everyday household objects like "bottles, jugs, biscuit tins", but also the underlying effects of the characters' interior lives. Therefore, paintings are more than paintings, what is emphasized here is the affective resonance that they have on the viewer.

The two paintings hang on the wall in Nina's apartment side-by-side and play the role of reminding readers of real things outside the textual world. The obscure objects make Martin associate them with the Twin Towers in the post-9/11 context. Martin told Lianne he "keeps seeing the towers in this still life" (51). The paintings can trigger viewers' psychological introspection and provide latent content rather than literal representation. Perception constructs meaning through the agency of painting. It is clear that the sub-text of the painting is related to 9/11 issues.

> Office towers, no. These shapes are not translatable to modern towers, twin towers. It's work that rejects that kind of extension or projection. It takes you inward, down and in. That's what I see there, half buried, something deeper than things or shapes of things. (111)

[144] Kaplan, E. Ann, *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature,* New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005.p.19.

This depiction is narrated from Nina's perspective and is retrospective. She also thinks "something deeper than things". It is noticeable that the phrases in Nina's analysis, "down and in" and "half buried" overlap with the expressions of Keith's experience of escape, portrayed in the beginning chapters, when he miraculously escapes from the South Tower. "It happened everywhere around him, a car half buried in debris, windows smashed and noises coming out" （1-2）.

Eventually, after Nina's death, Lianne honoured her mother's wish of returning the two paintings to Martin. From Lianne's perspective, "the room was tomblike without them" (197). The painting makes the apartment alive, which asserts DeLillo's manifestation of the power of art to revive. Lianne stood in the gallery and looked at the paintings so intently and the narrator affirms the charisma of painting, "She was passing beyond pleasure into some kind of assimilation. She was trying to absorb what she saw, take it home, wrap it around her, sleep in it" (197).

Although DeLillo admits that the representational capacities of literary works are limited, he attempts to move beyond the limitations by using symbolic language and fragmented structure to represent the 9/11 trauma. Thus art can serve as a cure and provides a referential space for readers to interpret events.

5.4 Dichotomised Discourse

Falling Man echoes DeLillo's previous fictions in highlighting the significant role of terrorism as a global phenomenon that affects Americans and the whole global community. DeLillo is fascinated with the Western fetishisms of capitalism, consumerism, technology and alienation, which permeate his novels. His characters are suffocating under their routines, encountering the threat of terrorism and random acts of violence. His manipulation of literary devices, such as multiple narrative voices and perspectives, disruptive chronological order, can actively engage readers in the experience of ambiguity and indeterminacy. Rhetorical strategies and realistic narrative writing can represent the disassociation and fragmentation of characters' traumatic experiences.

5.4.1 Counter-narrative of Terrorism

DeLillo does not straightforwardly denounce the terrorists' cruel acts or simply criticize American hegemony, but the conflicting dialogues between different characters and the artistic representation of the image of the falling man can spark in readers new self-examination about the essence and possible hazards of terrorism and the exact link between the 9/11 events and Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

DeLillo articulates his particular counter-narrative voice from the perspective of a common American family. In the third section of the essay "In the Ruins of the Future", DeLillo says "the narrative ends in the rubble, and it is left to us to create the counter-narrative."[145] The pronoun "us" is ambiguous here; it perhaps means the authors or ordinary readers or citizens. The concept of counter-narrative is defined specifically by extending the implication of the aftermath of 11 September 2001, which is fundamental to framing individuals' consciousness of the world and events. He explains the term counter-narrative several times in this essay as follows. "This is also the counter-narrative, a shadow history of false memories and imagined loss."[146] "The Internet is a counter-narrative, shaped in part by rumor, fantasy, and mystical reverberation." [147] "This is part of the counter-narrative, hands and spirits joining, human beauty in the crush of meshed steel." [148]

Counter-discourse is functioning as a realistic hope of countering conventional narratives of terrorism. It thus becomes a voice articulated against the prevailing patriotic media coverage, such as the moving stories of firefighters and survivors in the ruins, the heroic stories of the perished and the solidarity of the nation in its fight against terrorism. Literature, as a form of artistic response, is engaging with the political events in order to modify discourse in contemporary society.

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[145] DeLillo, Don. "In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September." *Harper's*, December, 2001, p.34.

[146] Ibid.p.35
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.p, 39.

5.4.2 Imaginative Writing of the Image of the Terrorist

There are three separate sections with Hammad's narration in the novel, which depict his transformation into an extremist. Hammad is portrayed not as an evil perpetrator. This is a manifestation of DeLillo's counter-narrative. The description and reference of the sub-narrative thread of terrorist plots seems logical because DeLillo endeavours to make sense of the motivation of the terrorists' attack and people's reaction to these perpetrators' acts. DeLillo attempts to make sense of what happened that day in words but found that representational language is incapable of articulating the inexplicable trauma, so he would rather turn to poetic images of death and collapse to foreground the tragic nature of the event.

> Language is inseparable form the world that provokes it … In its desertion of every basis for comparison; the event asserts its singularity. There is something empty in the sky. The writer tries to give memory, tenderness, and meaning to all that "howling space." [149]

The "howling space" not only refers to the collapse of the towers at the superficial literal level, but also indicates the semiotic disruption of where language is insufficient to represent what happens. It relies on the author to work through this disparity by creating a fictional story with representations that are traumatic and challenging; readers will then explore new, unknown literary territory, entering into a new type of discourse. An example is when fictional writers try to articulate the terrorists' voice in order to cross the boundary between us and them.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the television networks responded to the event by repeatedly broadcasting footage of plane-hijacking and buildings collapsing. The visual reports and other media coverage became the dominant resources in shaping our memory of 9/11. Against this background, few novelists attempted to construct the imaginative and fictional terrorist characters in 9/11 novels. The fictional recourse to the perspective of the perpetrators can help readers understand their motives, thereby diversifying the literary approach in order to cope with collective trauma in the post-9/11 world. It is a negotiation act for fictional writers to stand in the position of terrorists, which can help provide balance in the political discourse surrounding the 9/11 events.

[149] Ibid.

The image of terrorists enters in the novel in a meta-fictional style. Lianne first "saw the face in the newspaper, the man from Flight 11. Only one of the nineteen seemed to have a face at this point" (19). Moreover, in Lianne's writing community, when she assigns the topic of 9/11 to the group, "no one wrote about the terrorist" (63).

DeLillo portrays how Hammad gradually comes to devote his life to the holy task under the influence of religion and ideology. The interior monologue of Hammad manifests his struggle and reasons for undertaking the holy war, but he is also a fleshed-out character, who repressed his sexual desire and rejected a normal life. "It was time to end all contact with his mother and father. He wrote them a letter and told them he would be travelling for a time" (173). Hammad is also assailed by hesitation and self-doubt:

> But does a man have to kill himself in order to count for something, be someone, find the way? Hammad thought about this. He recalled what Amir had said … The end of our life is predetermined. We are carried toward that day from the minute we are born. There is no sacred law against what we are going to do. This is not suicide in any meaning or interpretation of the word. (174-175)

It is apparent that the brief delineation of the perpetrator seems to show the author's inability to give a detailed account of terrorist motivation. The flawed logic and bewilderment of the terrorist character lose the potential to convince readers of their political mission. Hammad has a narrow world view and fails to accommodate himself to American culture with a coherent identity because he is unable to accept cultural hybridity, but rather lingers over his singular identity. It seems that the author relentlessly repudiates the fallacy of the terrorist beliefs and ideology because they are hypocritical and illogical. The inadequacy of the character makes readers be aware of the shallow features of the perpetrator.

The exploration of the terrorists' minds indicates that novelists counteract the conventional narrative and shape their counter-narrative voice by rejecting the dichotomous discourse of Self and Other. "They felt things together, he and his brothers. They felt the magnetic effect of the plot. Plot drew them together more tightly than ever" (174). The conviction of the terrorists is expressed from the heart, just like their sense of comradeship and mission. The lexical choice of "plot" offers a range of possible interpretations since the idea of plot provides the terrorists with

heroic perception and masculine identity; it is the sacred and magnificent mission that binds them together. Their participation is the process of self-realization of manhood and of finally achieving their ultimate goal.

Even in the hijacking scene, Hammad tries to alleviate his nerves and sooth doubts by repeating the doctrine, because he thinks it is the only way that he can fully assimilate the ideology of extremism and terrorism:

> Forget the world. Be unmindful of the thing called the world.
> All of life's lost time is over now.
> This is <u>your</u> long wish, to die with <u>your</u> brothers.
>
> His breath came in short bursts. His eyes were burning. (238)
> …
> Every sin of <u>your</u> life is forgiven in the seconds to come.
> There is nothing between <u>you</u> and eternal life in the seconds to come.
> <u>You</u> are wishing for death and now it is here in the seconds to come.
>
> He began to vibrate. He wasn't sure whether it was the motion of the plane or only himself.
> He rocked in his seat. (239, underlined for deictic shift analysis)

The personal deictic centre shifts from "you" to "he" abruptly at the very moment when the hijacker is committing the crime. It is normal that the terrorist has his every muscle tensed. Evidently, the deictic "you" means the terrorist Hammad is talking to himself by instilling the doctrine he was taught before. This functions to delineate the mental process of the hijacker. The shift in perspective to Hammad's interior psychology makes the portrayal of terrorism more authentic and convincing. When the deictic shifts to "he", it draws back to the narrator's point of view to depict the hijack event again. There is no direct sketch of Hammad's death, because the narrator alters the perspective to the survivor. The perpetrator and victim merge here; it is the culmination point in the plot.

David Herman defines "contextual anchoring" as "the process whereby a narrative, in a more or less explicit and reflexive way, asks its interpreters to search for analogies between the

representations contained within … two classes of mental models." [150] The first model refers to the way "interpreters build models as part of the process of representing the space-time profile, participant roles, and overall configuration of storyworlds."[151] The second model refers to the way "interpreters rely on analogous, model-based representations of the world(s) in which they are trying to make sense of a given narrative."[152] Herman further examines the processes of contextual anchoring in second-person narration, which is considered as a particular case of personal deixis in discussing the relations between fictional reference and address in the context. Readers can find the employment of a generalized you is not rare in DeLillo's novel, it occurs frequently in direct speech in the conversation between characters. But Herman analyses the usage of the narrative "you" as double deixis, because "it is a mode of pronoun usage that draws attention to and so de-automatises processes of contextual anchoring."[153] Herman classifies five functional types of textual you, namely, generalized you (like textual you in proverbs), fictional reference (the second person narration/protagonists/recipient), fictionalized (= horizontal) address (address to the character within stories), apostrophic (= vertical) address (address to readers outside of stories), doubly deictic you (hybridized type that combines features of the first four types, simultaneously referring to the character within the story and readers outside the story).

The narrative "you" in this paragraph functions as self-address in the fictional world, because the hijacker is seeking a reasonable way of justifying his act. It is a prominent stylistic feature to accentuate the self-address quality by using the deictic you. Moreover, it also functions as a way of asserting value judgements.

Intended readers can draw a conclusion that *Falling Man* conveys a message for the perpetrators that their attempt to impose their ideology on America is doomed to fail. Americans still move on with their lives although 9/11 caused pain and panic. There is no indication of the protagonists' recovery, but Keith is trying to cope with the trauma, for example through playing poker.

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[150] Herman, David. *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.p.331.
[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.,p.342.

5.5 A Text World Theory of 9/11 Narration

Falling Man, at the discourse-world level, characterizes two discourse participants: the author Don DeLillo and a particular reader. As most readers will not have had first-hand experience of the 9/11 events, their "real" knowledge of the nature of the events is vague. However, people across the world can access the events from various media forms, such as by watching the broadcast news of the towers falling on TV and reading newspaper coverage of the attacks. It is apparent that the evidence of distress regarding the events exerts profound influence upon a reader's psychological and emotional status. Therefore, readers will activate the background knowledge they acquired from various sources when reading 9/11 literature. Specifically, readers will apply their real-world knowledge of 9/11 in their reaction to fiction. Readers' knowledge of the discourse world and their emotional involvement with the 9/11 events are of vital importance in analysing their literary experience. Further, their response and the way they deal with trauma psychologically is critical for elaborating the existing cognitive models. Readers who are able to fill the role of narratee with the cues provided by the text probably can feel immersed in the narrative and feel directly addressed by the narrator. According to Schuster MA, Stein BD, Jaycox LH, Collins RL, Marshall GN and Elliott MN,

> the 9/11 event was all-pervasive for the majority of Americans, which caused many stress symptoms regardless of the personal connections to the attack. 9/11 can not only be regarded a traumatic event on a global level, but also leads to unprecedented psychological wounds for common American people and people around the world."[154]

Text world theory is designated as a context-based approach, not only attending to the text itself, but also to the context of reception. Consequently, 9/11 literature is highly appropriate for analysis from a cognitive perspective. Text world theory seeks to solidify the major concepts of people's discourse processing and is particularly suitable to interpret the rapport between writers and readers. According to Gavins and Werth [155], there are numerous possible ways discourse

[154] Schuster MA, Stein BD, Jaycox LH, Collins RL, Marshall GN, Elliott MN, et al. "A national survey of stress reactions after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks." *New England Journal of Medicine*.2001;345:pp. 1507–1512.

[155] Gavins. Joanna. *Text World Theory: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

Werth, Paul. *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*. Longman, 1999.

participants in the discourse world can engage with the text's context, and readers will utilize their knowledge of and emotion surrounding a particular event to support their literary reading experience.

5.5.1 Text World Construction

The title of the opening section is "Bill Lawton," the reference of which is unclear till later we realise the name refers to the real terrorist; Bin Laden and is the result of the children's mispronunciation. There is much that takes time to clarify.

> It was not a street anymore but a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night. He was walking north through rubble and mud and there were people running past holding towels to their faces or jackets over their hands. They had handkerchiefs pressed to their mouths. They had shoes in their hands, a woman with a shoe in each hand, running past him. They ran and fell, some of them, confused and ungainly, with debris coming down around them, and there were people taking shelter under cars. (3)

The opening paragraph employs third-person narration with past continuous tense in simple and concise sentences. The choice of tense indicates ongoing activities in the past and underlines the eyewitness effect. We as readers come to identify the debris site after the collapse of the towers since the generating text world shares remarkable similarities with the real world known through television reports. Readers cannot help entering into the state of imaginative world creation and become aware that the verbal dimension of the book is of equal importance to the visual coverage on TV. Thus readers can make use of their imagination to fill the gaps in the story. Hence, the novel can be compared to a live coverage reproducing survivors' experiences of escape.

The text of the opening paragraph contains many concrete objects such as rubble and mud as well as handkerchiefs and shoes. All these objects contribute to generating the vivid scenery of the debris and the sense of a chaotic psychical world. The description of the actions that the survivors took is also similar to the behaviour seen on TV. Although the hypothetical world is full of

falling ash, it is only a different imagined 9/11 world. The conceptualized images of the debris are ephemeral as the hypothetical text world exists because readers will follow the narrator's step and enter into another discourse world.

In the ensuing cognitive-poetic analysis, existing cognitive models will be elaborated to better understand the reading experience that such 9/11 texts create. **Error! Reference source not found.** delineates the text-world structure of the opening paragraph.

These lines read like the escape of a protagonist in a disaster film, using the third-person point of view in a free indirect mode. Surprisingly, we cannot identify the name of the exact person who is just escaping from death in the towers because the third-person pronouns "he" and "they" are ambiguous. Gradually the name of the character referred to by the pronoun "he" in the second segment of the first section becomes clear — "he" refers to the protagonist "Keith", while his full name "Keith Neudecker" appears in the final chapter in page 239. Additionally, DeLillo employs past continuous tense (e.g. was walking, was running) to create an intense and disconcerting, if familiar, feeling, comparable to "déjà vu",

The application of simple and compound sentence patterns here give the syntax an emergent feeling and readers recognize that people are having a narrow escape from death in the 9/11 attacks. DeLillo's extensive use of the deictic pronoun "he" instils a signal to readers that the focalising character is the protagonist of the novel, Keith. There is no narrative voice of "he" but it is all about the action he took in attempting to escape from death and leave the spot promptly. The opening text generates a high number of text worlds centring upon the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Figure 5.2 Text world structure of the opening paragraph

Text-World 1

Time: Past Tense

W
S

Location: debris of the Twin Towers

Enactors: He (Keith) and People (other survivors)

W
S

Object: falling ash

W
S

Text-World 2

Time: Past Progressive Tense

Location: towards north

Enactors: He (Keith)

Objects: rubble and mud

Text-World 3

Time: Past progressive tense

Location: debris of the towers

Enactors: People (other survivors)

Objects: Jackets, Handkerchiefs, shoes

Text-World 4

Time: Past progressive tense

Location: under cars

Enactors: People (other survivors)

Objects: debris

The direct delineation of people escaping from death serves to create a text world that is different from the real world but shares many similarities. Readers all know it was on the morning of September 11, 2001 that the attacks happened. But in the text it is written with exaggeration as "It was not a street anymore but a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night.(1)" "Near night" and "morning" show a striking contrast because it highlights the devastating force of the calamity.

As becomes clear in a later narrative, Keith is a lawyer working in a real estate company in the Twin Towers. He was working with his colleagues as usual on the morning of September 11, 2001, at the higher floors in the World Trade Centre. As readers, these narrative details are not actually available to us clearly in the text, but when we finish reading the entire story, it is easier for us to understand why DeLillo connected the novel's opening lines with the conclusion in a circular narrative.

5.5.2 Representation of Characters' Consciousness

DeLillo is eager to express his allegation from Nina's perspective that the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers could have been predicted; as a result, the tragedy of 9/11 could have been avoided. "Eight years ago they planted a bomb in one of the towers. Nobody said what's next. This was next. The time to be afraid is when there's no reason to be afraid. Too late now" (10). In 1993, eight years ago, terrorists planted a bomb in one of the Twin Towers. According to this view, when the plane attacks happened in 2001, US paid the price for negligence and unpreparedness for the events. There are some uncanny similarities between DeLillo's previous novels and the 9/11 events, because DeLillo had already prophetically recognized that the twin towers had been set as a terrorist target a few years before it actually happened to be one. The cover of *Underworld* was a photograph of the Twin Towers shrouding by fog and a dark bird, which is like the scene of the towers surrounded by the smoke when they were hit by the planes.

There are two separate discussions of the significance of the terrorist attacks in the novel. The first conversation takes place in the earlier chapters in Nina' apartment just after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is the first time in the novel that the characters, Martin, Nina, and Lianne have a straightforward discussion on the 9/11 attacks. The second discussion is presented in the final

chapter, which is a continuation of the same discussion that occurred earlier. The conversation itself acts as an analysis to sort out what is happening in the novel and link the storylines.

For instance, take the following extract from the fourth chapter of the first part. It provides the characters' reasoning and explanation for the terrorist attacks. Although Nina and Martin have been lovers for twenty years and love each other much of the time, they take totally different viewpoints on the terrorist act. Lianne feels anger when "hearing these two people, joined in spirit, take strongly opposing positions.(47)"

> "Dead Wars, holy wars. God could appear in the sky tomorrow." [Nina]
> "Whose God would it be?" Martin said.
> "God used to be an urban Jew. He's back in the dessert now." [Nina]
> It's sheer panic. They attack out of panic.
> "This much, yes, it may be true. Because they think the world is a disease. This world, this society, ours. A disease that's spreading," he said. [Martin]
> There are no goals they can hope to achieve. They are not liberating a people or casting out a dictator. Kill the innocent, only that. [Nina]
> "They strike a blow to this country's dominance. They achieve this, to show how a great power can be vulnerable. A power that interferes, that occupies." He spoke softly, looking into the carpet. [Martin]
> "One side has the capital, the labor, the technology, the armies, the agencies, the cities, the laws, the police and the prisons. The other side has a few men willing to die." [Martin]
> "God is great," she said. [Nina]
> "Forget God. These are matters of history. This is politics and economies. All the things that shape lives, millions of people, dispossessed, their lives, their consciousness. [Martin]

(46-47, the conversion is sequenced for textual analysis)

On the one hand, Nina is closer to being the representative of the conventional point of view to accuse the terrorists of looking "to find a system of belief that justifies these feelings and these killings" (112). On the other hand, Nina's lover Martin, an art dealer, regards the driving force of

the terrorist act as not the clash of religions, but a result of "foreign intervention, money, empire, oil and the narcissistic heart of the West" (113). The real name of Martin is Ernst Hechinger, one-time member of a secret terrorist organization called Kommune One. The fact that her lover Martin was a terrorist in the past makes Nina feel anger since she thought "it shames me" (148). Nina splits with Martin and loses her passion for life, and ultimately dies from disease. The reason for Nina's tragic death lies in her shock recognition of Martin's identity as a terrorist in this particular 9/11 context, but not in their ideological disputes. Superficially speaking, it is the 9/11 events that terminate their twenty-year-relationship. In fact, extending from the ideological dimension, it is a metaphorical demonstration of the American situation because the nation lost so much of its self-esteem after the humiliating 9/11 attacks.

Additionally, inferences can be taken from the illocutionary force of the dialogue. Further debate between Nina and Martin can be found later in the seventh chapter, which provides a wider context for readers to understand the characters' stance. The text uses free indirect speech shifting from Nina's perspective to Martin's. The unclear reference of the pronouns means a coherent text-world representation of the scenario needs to be re-constructed. The divergent opinions on God are consistent with their ideological positions on war. Interestingly, DeLillo only gives the cues of "Martin said" or "he spoke" from the masculine perspective; and there is no exact identification of Nina's discourse.

The above offers a description of the way in which different perspectives are mapped out in the construction of the text-world of *Falling Man*. The inferences we have as readers are as follows:

1. Nina *responded* to the 9/11 events *with anger*.

Martin hit back with a *level-headed* assessment of the situation.

Nina *doubted* Martin's motive and became very *vehement and agitated*.

There is something unusual about Martin's body language.

Martin did not *look straight* into Nina's eyes because he had *a guilty conscience*.

The evidence of the intuition concerning characters' thoughts or emotions (which are italicized in the list) is inferred from their behaviour. Dialogue is consistently used throughout the novel to offer information about characters' perspectives on terrorism and responses to trauma. It is necessary for readers to project into Nina and Martin's psychological states and then construct the relevant text-worlds.

On the whole, *Falling Man* deals with how traumatized characters struggle with the memory of the 9/11 experience through literary representations because the unassimilated and traumatic experience is ineffable and haunting within the characters' minds and narratives. Accordingly, DeLillo chose the trauma novel genre to represent the way victims' experience the process of working-through events by utilizing variant stylistic choices. The author deliberately employs the literary techniques of repetition, fragmented narrative and intertextuality to delineate the recurring narrative. In addition, the mourning effects of trauma are accentuated by temporal and spatial shifts and multi-voice narrative perspectives, textual gaps, and shifting pronouns.

The following excerpt is quoted for showing the function of shift focalisation in demonstrating the characters' consciousness and mind processes:

> He watched with her one time only…They would all be dead, passengers and crew, and thousands in the tower dead, and she felt it in her body, a deep pause, and thought there he is, unbelievably, in one of those towers, and now his hand on hers, in pale light, as though to console her for his dying.
>
> He said, "It still looks like an accident, the first one. Even from this distance, way outside the thing, how many days later, I am standing here thinking it's an accident."
>
> "Because it has to be."
>
> "It has to be," he said.
>
> "The way the cameras sort of show surprise."
>
> "But only the first one."
>
> "Only the first," she said.
>
> "The second plane, by the time the second plane appears," he said, "we're all a little older and wiser." (134-135)

This also recalls the scene in which Lianne was watching the replay of the moment of the plane colliding with the North Tower on television. "A deep pause" indicates that time is suspended. Keith, as one of the survivors, barely distinguishes his life from the dead. The shift focalisation

from Florence to Keith in recalling the experience in the towers provides an apparent point of access to DeLillo's way of externalising trauma through linguistic expression. There is a shift from free indirect speech to free direct speech. The disparity can be interpreted by applying text world theory. Through examining the text world structure, readers can understand that near-death experience can be imagined.

"They would all be dead". The author uses the word "would" as a modal auxiliary verb to project a possible situation. The events make Keith unable to think in a clear and coherent way, he can only recall disjointed references to events in his memory. DeLillo applies similar anachrony to present the divergence between death and life in this passage. The configuration is in line with the novel's subversion of existential logic, which can communicate Keith's emotion through the narration. The remarkable dissimilarity in the cognitive effect causes readers to encode the nature of traumatic memory. The tense shift from the past tense ("was going") to present tense ("now he finds") in the narrative suggests that the time marker can display the insecurity and instability of his representation of the current situation. The complex memory of the past produces a disjuncture of the present and disappointment for the future.

In the final episode of *Falling Man*, narrative memory is told by the third-person narrator — a shift in the focalisation from Hammad to Keith. It seems that Keith fails to transform his traumatic memory of the 9/11 events into narrative memory, since he is unable to assimilate his traumatic past into a coherent and organized narrative. The final sentence "he walked and saw it fall, arms waving like nothing in this life" (246), reflects an indeterminacy and mood of suspense, which symbolize that there is not an end to Keith's state of melancholia. It is uncertain whether Keith has the capability to incorporate traumatic memories with his present memories. As readers, it is the first time we sort out the events that took place in the towers. It is a full circle for readers to return to the beginning of the fiction.

The cataclysmic event brings non-recuperative loss to the characters in the fiction; the circular narrative connecting the final episodes with the beginning contributes to reiterate the statement that this melancholy world is in a loop from which there is no exit.

Chapter 6 Resolving Post-traumatic Identity Crisis in O'Neill's *Netherland*

6.1 Trauma and Identity Crisis in the Post-9/11 Context

Netherland by Joseph O'Neill has received much praise after it was released in 2008 and it is one of the most acclaimed post-9/11 novels to register in the American national psyche. James Wood labels the fiction an "exquisitely written novel" and "as one of the most remarkable post-colonial novels I have ever read". He argues that the fiction has been "consistently misread as a 9/11 novel, which stints what is most remarkable about it: that it is a postcolonial re-writing of *The Great Gatsby*"[156]. Similarly, Zadie Smith asserts that "*Netherland* is only superficially about September 11", and the anxiety presented in the fiction "isn't terrorism, it's Realism" and the fact that "the world has changed and we do not stand in the same relation to it as we did when Balzac was writing."[157]

From my perspective, the categorisation of *Netherland* as a postcolonial novel cannot disqualify it from being considered a post-9/11 novel. It is stated in the novel itself that it concerns 9/11 and its aftermath, so it can be qualified as an authentic post-9/11 fiction. Wood affirms the aim of *Netherland* is to rewrite *The Great Gatsby*, which can help us understand the incorporation of postcolonial features into the post-9/11 context. Moreover, it is apparent that terrorism has become a reality in the aftermath of the 9/11 catastrophe, the fiction serving as an example of a lonely individual who is searching for meaning and purpose in his post-9/11 life like thousands of other Americans. The national trauma of terrorism parallels the implicit trauma of colonialism and racism—both traumas are intertwined in their historical context in this fiction.

Dwight Garner even regards the book as "the wittiest, angriest, most exacting and most desolate work of fiction we've yet had about life in New York and London after the World Trade Centre

[156] Wood, James, "Ten Favourite Books of 2008", *The New Yorker*. First published on 15 December, 2008. [http://www.newyorker.com/the-new-yorker-blog/james-wood-ten-favorite-books-of-2008,accessed 20 March,2016]
[157] Smith, Zadie. "Two Paths for the Novel", *The New York Review of Books.* First published on 20 November, 2008.[http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2008/11/20/two-paths-for-the-novel/, accessed 22 March,2016]

fell." [158] Richard Gray contends that language is inadequate to address the trauma of the 9/11 events in the essay "Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis". Further, Gray reiterates his argument about the failure of American 9/11 fictions to cope with the topic in his monograph *After the Fall*, but he acclaims *Netherland*'s cultural repercussion of the post-9/11 era through the presence of violence and terror in domestic individual life, as well as on a larger scale at the national and international levels.

O'Neill admits the intertextuality of Gatsby in *Netherland*, but argues it as a farewell to Gatsby in an interview with *The Sunday Times*:

> When I think about the relationship of *Netherland* to Gatsby—a book I love—I would say it's a farewell to Gatsby. Because the premise of Gatsby is that America is this exclusive, privileged land of opportunity. And that is not the case anymore. In the globalised economy, the great narrative of the American dream has been dissipated.[159]

It is understandable that it is the different historical contexts that make the two novels treat the meaning of national identity differently. Parallel episodes in both fictions can be traced to their characters' occupations in the finance profession. Nick, in *The Great Gatsby*, is in the bond business, while Hans in *Netherland* is an analyst in oil futures. Chuck employs illegitimate methods to accumulate wealth, which is similar to the ways of Gatsby's bootlegger. The two fictions are a retelling of a story of friendship against different national and violent backdrops in New York City: World War I for Fitzgerald, 9/11 for O'Neill.

6.1.1 Self-reflexive 9/11 Narrative

Netherland is the first genuinely self-conscious 9/11 narrative, as it "demonstrates an awareness, in several ways, of some of the perceived limitations of 9/11 fiction."[160] The title of the novel was originally *The Brooklyn Dream Game*; later O'Neill altered it to *Netherland.* The current title is polysemous. Apparently, the Netherlands is the motherland of Hans. "Nether" refers to under

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[158] Garner, Dwright,"The Ashes", *The New York Times*. First published on 18 May, 2008.[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/18/books/review/Garner-t.html?_r=0,accessed 21 March, 2016]
[159] Ed Caesar, "Joseph O'Neill has the inside edge in his new novel *Netherland*", *The Sunday Times*. First published on 1 June, 2008.[http://www.edcaesar.co.uk/article.php?page=5&article_id=18,accessed 21 March,2016]
[160] Keeble, Arin. *The 9/11 Novel: Trauma, Politics and Identity*, North Carolina: McFarland, 2014, p.139.

and beneath; "land" refers to the territory and space, which signifies that the focal point of the fiction is set amongst an underclass class, in this instance marginalised ethnic minorities. Another layer in the title can be explicated as the unprecedented dark period Hans experienced in the aftermath of 9/11. The title also coincides with Don DeLillo's novel *Underworld* published in 1997. Keeble analyses the central concern of the novel as follows:

> Han's condition is something that the novel actively interrogates, and this is an interrogation of the 'netherland', or world, that Hans is lost in. What is this netherland? It is largely existential, involving his personal losses and epistemological crisis, replete with a succession of flashbacks to childhood and internal monologues. [161]

It is commonly acknowledged that *Netherland* depicts peoples' living conditions in the post-9/11 era in a straightforward manner. It approaches the topic through a narrative of impending divorce like many other 9/11 fictions, such as Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, Jay McInerney's *The Good Life* and Ken Kalfus's *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*.

The fiction traces the life stories of two dissimilar migrants and their intertwined friendship in the post-9/11 historical context, ending with their different destinies. The plot in *Netherland* progresses along two paths. The first tells the story of the narrator and the protagonist, Hans's dissolving marriage and the mental processes of how he works through the dark period in New York and ultimately reconnects with his family in London. The 9/11 events implicitly affect his marriage and gradually make it crack apart because individuals have difficulty in properly and effectively managing their emotional problems and locating their rightful place in the disorienting post-9/11 era. This narrative concerning a disintegrated marriage relationship in the aftermath of 9/11 is a representation of 9/11 domesticity. It eschews political engagement, but implicitly enunciates the author's criticism of US foreign policy and the Bush administration through the mouthpiece of the fictional characters.

The protagonists in most 9/11 fictions share the common background of the elite and privileged classes in New York. For instance, the couple in *Falling Man*: Keith and Lianne are a lawyer and a freelance editor respectively; the protagonists in *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* are two Manhattan lawyers, and the central characters in *Windows on the World* are an affluent real estate

[161] Ibid., p.156.

broker and a famous author. *Netherland* is no exception. Hans is a futures analyst working in the wealthy and elite finance profession, and he had a successful career for many years prior to 9/11, while Rachel is a barrister working in Times Square.

The characters in most 9/11 fictions fall into an identity crisis and have difficulty in coping with the anxiety and uncertainty of the post-9/11 era, taking *The Good Life* and *Falling Man* as examples. *Netherland* is also listed in this group since the central motif of the novel is displacement and searching for belonging post-9/11. Hans, as a Dutch descendant, commences his exploration of subterranean life in New York through an association with the Trinidadian Chuck and fellow players in the cricket club. Hans is living in multicultural New York, but only when he immerses himself into the immigrant world after he encounters Chuck and joins the cricket club after 9/11 does he find the genuine heart of the metropolis. Life in pre-9/11 and post-9/11 conditions is completely different in multicultural New York since the majority of New Yorkers feel lost and cannot find direction.

Richard Gray used the concept of "deterritorialization" in interpreting the literary representation of 9/11, writing that the novelists have "the obligation to insert themselves into the space between conflicting interests and practices and then dramatize the contradictions that conflict engenders." [162] Gray also praises the fiction for its strength to "present post-9/11 America as a transcultural space in which different cultures reflect and refract, confront and bleed into one another." [163]The term "transcultural space" points to the thematic focus of the fiction; it is accentuated by the author that the technological and psychical sense of space conflicts with the concept of belonging and attachment to community or homeland in a spiritual sense.

The disparity in class and profession makes Hans enter into an unfamiliar alternative world. This narrative element is indispensable in expanding the novel's scope by not only focusing on the elite or bourgeois class, but also permitting the people from a "nether land" to articulate their voices. Hans works in the elite Wall Street. When he encounters the playmates in the cricket club, who are marginalized characters from a substratum of society—Caribbean and West Indian immigrants—he becomes immersed in their world himself by playing cricket with them. Despite

[162] Gray, Richard, *After the fall: American literature since 9/11* [1st ed.]., Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011,p.107.

[163] Ibid.,p.55.

the fact that there is great disparity in class and profession, cricket provides an opportunity for him to understand their living conditions when he enters into this unfamiliar alternative world. In this respect, *Netherland* is different from other dominant 9/11 fictions. And it is the intriguing feature of ethnic inclusiveness that makes the fiction offer a wider cultural response to 9/11 and provide a more balanced exploration of the motif of identity crisis. Therefore, it can be assumed that it is the reason why most critics would like to categorise *Netherland* as a novel with postcolonial affinities, but not a post-9/11 novel. Ivan Callus acclaims the contribution of *Netherland* in post-9/11 literature is because it covers a wide range:

> *Netherland* is able to force reflection onto complex and contrary patterns of affiliation, alienation, otherness, migrancy, acceptance and also of sporting fraternity that have established themselves across diverse (post) colonialist spaces, histories, languages, races, and classes that now try to blend in that most (non) American of cities, New York.[164]

Hans says that "my own teammates variously originated from Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka" (11)[165]. People from different religious backgrounds, classes, races bond together to play cricket. It is at the decisive moment of playing the game that all players are granted equal rights, no matter their skin colour, or whether they are native or immigrant. Chuck's accentuation of the civility of cricket implies the author's affirmation of multiculturalism and tolerance in the new epoch. Hans further acknowledges that "I was the only white man I saw on the cricket fields of New York" (11). It is a fact that cricket was played by male immigrants from substratum classes—Hans stands in the position of the other in the club. This is an ironic portrayal of the status quo of cricket in current American society since the minorities are usually considered the other in the US. It is an unusual situation to regard white people as the other. The status of cricket further sustains the evidence for Chuck's ambitious plan to popularize the game in America in order to advance civility. At the beginning of the plot Chuck's monologue has analysed the status of cricket, which has implications for the entire novel. Chuck fails to realize his dream of making cricket popular in US; the destiny of the game is the same as Chuck's.

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[164] Callus, Ivan. "Enigmas of Arrival: Re-imagining (Non-) urban Space in Contemporary American Narrative", *Litteraria Pragensia*, 2010, Vol. 20 Issue 40, p.120.
[165] The citation of the novel *Netherland* refers to its publication by Fourth Estate in 2008.

Thus, Chuck's monologue advances the idea that unity is of vital importance to diversity and pluralism in the contemporary globalised world. In *Netherland,* the embracing of multiple voices from the margins of society can frame a multidirectional perspective in expounding 9/11 trauma. This act of embracing also indicates the author's vision of 9/11 society where governments move towards truly understanding multi-culturalism.

6.1.2 Manifestation of Post-traumatic Memory

In rendering trauma, *Netherland* investigates the everlasting impact of the attacks on ordinary people's personal lives and its cultural representation of 9/11 more broadly. This novel individualizes the experience of fear in post-9/11 conditions, which is also a reflection of collective trauma. Hans works in the investment bank, specializing in analysing futures in the oil industry. He is separated from his wife and three-year-old son. He moved to New York around 1998 from London. Hans constantly struggles to locate his identity in the post-9/11 community, in sharp contrast with his politicized and liberal wife Rachel, as well as the extroverted Chuck.

The novel commences in the spring of 2006 when Hans receives an unanticipated transatlantic telephone call from a *New York Times* reporter. She asks Hans some questions about Chuck because "Chuck's 'remains' have been found in the Gowanus Canal. There were handcuffs around his wrist and evidently he was the victim of a murder"(4). The journalist asks Hans, "So—is there anything you can tell me about his milieu? 'His milieu?' I say, startled into correcting her mooing pronunciation." (4) The social backdrop of Chuck's identity is unclear in the opening chapters, so it is a gap that the author has intentionally set to fill in later. Hans, a well-educated equity analyst, corrects the reporter's pronunciation of the word "milieu", which lends it semantic significance. This exchange raises the issue of the disparity between the three characters in terms of social status and educational background, thus framing the thematic issue of class discrimination.

The novel traces back to the days just after 9/11. Hans and Rachel's immediate pathological response to 9/11 demonstrates that they are suffering from some PTSD symptoms. They are living with the anxiety and uncertainty of the fear of imminent cataclysm. Hans feels an unprecedented dislocation because of his mother's recent death, his dissolving marriage and

feelings of wretchedness. Hans moves to the Chelsea Hotel after receiving instruction from authorities in mid-September, 2011 that their apartment is unstable and dangerous, because it is near the World Trade Centre. Hans describes their state in the hotel as "staying in a kind of paralysis (22)"; it is not only a physical paralysis but also a spiritual paralysis. The dialogue indicates that Hans's behaviours are a manifestation of trauma. Hans has great difficulty in falling asleep and experiences nightmares in which a "bomb exploded every time, waking me up" (24).

> Sometimes I confused the cries of the sirens with my son's night-time cries. I would leap out of bed and go to his bedroom and helplessly kiss him, even though my rough face sometimes woke him and I'd have to stay with him and rub his tiny rigid back until he fell asleep once more. Afterwards I slipped out onto the balcony and stood there like a sentry. (23)

This paragraph shows Hans's paternal love for his son, as well as symptoms of post-traumatic stress, like insomnia, panic, nightmares, despair, and anxiety. He also asserts his feelings of exhaustion and frustration openly, "I felt, above all, tired. Tiredness: if there was a constant symptom of the disease in our lives at this time, it was tiredness" (27).

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Hans is entrapped in depression. He seeks advice from his English father-in-law through a transatlantic call on how to respond to the cataclysm, since the latter had experienced World War II. He received no advice and was in a helpless state. Lassitude had taken hold of Hans after the 9/11events. He even reflects "Life itself had become disembodied. My family, the spine of my days, had crumbled. I was lost in invertebrate time" (28).

Moreover, Rachel, an eloquent barrister, suffers from sensory aphasia in the aftermath. "She had fears of her own, in particular the feeling in her bones that Times Square, where the offices of her law firm were situated, would be the site of the next attack" (24). She also thinks "the Times Square subway station was a special ordeal for her". Hans can "taste her anxiety" and feels that all the nearby signal posts conveyed a sense of ruin in the aftermath of 9/11. Hans further asserts "No doubt I was in an unhealthy state of mind." A wave of superstitious fear spread among New Yorkers:

> She told me first about the huge antiwar rally that had taken place in London two days before and how Jake had carried a NOT IN MY NAME placard. .. she had definitely decided not to return to the United States, at least not before the end of the Bush administration … It was a question, rather, of not exposing Jake to an upbringing in an 'ideologically diseased' country, as she put it, a 'mentally ill, sick, unreal 'country whose masses and leaders suffered from extraordinary and self-righteous delusions about the United Sates, the world, and indeed, thanks to the influence of the fanatical evangelical Christian movement, the universe, delusions that had the effect of exempting the United States from the very rules of civilized and lawful and rational behaviour it so mercilessly sought to enforce on others. (125-126)

Rachel even claims "Bush wants to attack Iraq as part of a right-wing plan to destroy international law and order as we know it and replace it with the global rule of American force" (127). But Hans responds "I don't want to get into an argument about this. You're pinning views on me that I don't have." This reply obviously corresponds with his confession that he was "a political-ethical idiot. I could not tell where I stood" (132). It is apparent that Hans is unable to express his political thoughts; it leaves him in a state of disorientation and disillusionment. On the contrary, Rachel takes a more aggressive stance to denounce the Bush administration and the US government's response to 9/11.

Hans and Rachel also have some common reactions to the traumatic events of 9/11. They both have difficulty in speaking and expressing themselves; in other words, they suffered from aphasia in the post-9/11 period.

> We had lost the ability to speak to each other. New York had removed any doubt about this. She'd never sensed herself so alone, so comfortless, so far from home, as during these last weeks. 'And that's bad, Hans. That's bad.'
>
> I could have countered with words of my own.
>
> 'You've abandoned me, Hans,' she said, sniffing. 'I don't know why, but you've left me to fend for myself. And I can't fend for myself. I just can't.' She stated that she now questioned everything, including, as she put it, the narrative of our marriage.

> I said sharply, "Narrative?"
>
> 'The whole story,' she said. The story of her and me, for better or for worse, till death did us part. The story of our union to the exclusion of all others – the story.'(35-36)

Rachel precisely points out the pivotal problem in their marriage is not the anxious feeling in post-9/11 New York. She remarks, "Hans, this isn't a question of geography. You can't geographise this" (34). Hans construes that the essence of their dissolving marriage is because "I felt shame – I see this clearly now – and the instinctive recognition in myself of an awful enfeebling fatalism, … I felt shame because it was me, not terror, she was fleeing" (37). Therefore, the disintegration of his marriage and 9/11 are a double trauma that makes Hans feel entrapped in his problematic family situation and disoriented in society. This depreciates the preceding announcement when Hans declared "time had healed my wounds" (301). His reconnection with his family makes him locate himself properly and to work through 9/11 trauma.

Another quotation can help us understand Hans's inconsolable emotion since his mother died. Walking becomes one of his ways to work through the trauma of losing his mother. His aimless wandering in New York City is soothing and metaphorically functions as "mild somnambulism" to heal his grief:

> After my mother's death I began taking long walks to Chinatown and Seward park ... pushing baby Jake in his stroller ... walk and walk until I reached a state of fancifulness, of indeterminately hopeful receptiveness, which seemed to me an end in itself and as good as it got. These walks were, I guess, a mild form of somnambulism–the product of a coalminer's exhaustion and automatism. The fantasy did not consist of imagining her physically at my side but of imagining her at a long distance, as before, and me still remotely swaddled in her consideration; and in this I was abetted by the streets of New York City, which abet desire even in its strangest patterns. (122-123)

Through the memories of his Dutch childhood, we learn that his mother's love and family background exert a profound influence on nurturing Hans to be passive and tolerant, as well as conservative. However, his wife Rachel, as a barrister, is politicized and offers an incisive look at the Bush administration because she is petrified by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Her leaving turns Hans's life towards meaninglessness and disorientation, just like the people he meets at the Chelsea Hotel. His intimacy with Chuck, a charismatic Trinidadian, formulates a dialectic

depiction between different ways of negotiating trauma and politics. Rachel is the embodiment of liberalism and anti-American sentiment, whilst Chuck, a successful entrepreneur, starts from scratch with an enterprising spirit, and is a kind of model of the American dream.

The binary opposition of the two characters makes the fiction attain equilibrium in depicting the relationship between trauma and politics. Rachel's comment on the 9/11 event is quite trenchant, while Chuck's narrative provides a fresh point of view from a marginalized perspective.

In the construction of multiple identities in the transnational and globalized world, Hans has been placed in the privileged and elite group because of his whiteness, compared with Chuck's Trinidadian origin. The majority of the players Hans encounters in the cricket club are migrant labourers from developing countries. The obvious difference in class and social status makes Hans reformulate his sense of national identity in the post-9/11 epoch by playing cricket.

His cosmopolitan migrant experience in England and New York, allows him to succeed in his career as an analyst in the banking sector. But in daily life in America, he also confronts many problems that have arisen because of his foreign identity. One scenario in this case is when Hans approaches the Department of Motor Vehicles to apply for his driver's licence;p he encounters the identity problem, because the names printed on his social security card and green card are discrepant.

> My name, which by a miracle of typography was fully spelled out on my social security card, is Johannus Franciscus Hendrikus van den Broek. My credit card, for obvious reasons, identified me merely as Johannus F.H. van den Broek—exactly as my Green Card did. (86)

He tackles this problem with the supervisor, but the hostile interaction has negative consequences, that is he has to take the driving test again. This scene reminds us of Hans's foreigner status in the US although he is a white European immigrant. This issue has aroused his resentment towards America. "I was seized for the first time by a nauseating sense of America, my gleaming adopted country, under the secret actuation of unjust, indifferent powers" (88).

Hans and Rachel reunite two years after 9/11, and Hans remarks that "Rachel saw our reunion as a continuation. I felt differently: that she and I had gone our separate ways and subsequently had fallen for third parties to whom, fortuitously, we were still married" (229). Both of them have

extramarital relationships , (for Rachel, it is the chef, and for Hans, it is Chuck, not his sexual partner Danielle), and these involvements subvert their marriage.

When he first arrives at Walker Park in Staten Island, he is aware of his uniqueness in the club, because he finds that he is the sole white man , because most of his teammates are coming from "Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka" (10). During his rediscovery of cricket, Hans eventually reflects that the essence of the sport is cricket's assimilation on American ground. Accordingly, the author further suggests the importance of the immersion of ethnic monitories into the dominant American culture, thus people from subcultures find a way to seek cultural and political identity, in the aftermath of 9/11.

What's more, his mother's spectatorship is of crucial importance to Hans and shapes his most favourite memory. He admits that "without [his] mother watching, cricket was never quite the same again" (44). "The pleasure of cricket (and the bliss of batting), like sexual pleasure, is not monolithic, and to identify oneself as a cricket lover is simply to name a space of potential difference." [166] The soothing function of playing cricket is a metaphorical healing journey to help Hans attain self-preservation and ultimately work through a post-traumatic identity transformation.

6.1.3 Accessing the Trauma of Alterity

Unlike the white characters, Chuck, a minority immigrant, responds positively to the trauma of 9/11. Chuck volunteered his services and was put to work 'rehoming' pets. "It was a wonderful experience" (100). Chuck later confesses, "I think for many of us it was one of the happiest times of our life" (101). This sentence is loaded with a clever satire of the post-9/11 American condition. It is almost a form of protest against injustice. It is ironic to claim that the most gloomy moment for white America in collective grief is the happiest time for minorities.

Chuck's volunteer job of 'rehoming' the pets is a metonymy for Americans trying to re-find their home again, in the spiritual sense. Therefore, O'Neill makes Chuck's response an act of self-aware reflection, which offers a glimmer of hope. The sense of companionship and togetherness

[166]Duvall, John N. "Cricket Field of Dreams: Queer Racial Identifications in Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*", *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 55:4, p.345.

as well as mutual help are imperative for vulnerable people, especially the minorities, because those people suffered from the feeling of isolation in the aftermath.

Additionally, the trauma of identity crisis and melancholia is already entangled in Chuck's life story. Chuck once mentioned "when British missionaries arrived there [Trobriand Island], the native tribes were constantly fighting and killing each other – had been for thousands for years"(279). According to historical records, the former British colonizers strictly controlled the population of Indian immigrants to make the black people the minority group. Since Chuck is a Trinidadian with Indian heritage, his reminiscences about the motherland and childhood teem with traumatic events.

The following paragraph is a speech made by Chuck in the locker room of the Staten Island club. Here, the narrator is drawing attention to the inferior status of cricket as a game in the United States when compared with baseball. Meantime, it implies the author's critical view on racism in America because the vast majority of cricket players are black immigrants from developing countries.

> We started late because the baseball players have the first right to play on this field. It doesn't matter that we have played here, at Walker Park, every year for over a hundred years. It doesn't matter that this ground was built as a cricket ground … It doesn't matter that cricket is the biggest, fastest-growing bat-and-ball game in the world. None of it matters. In this country, we're nowhere. We're a joke. Cricket? How funny. So we play as a matter of indulgence. (17-18)

Chuck even interrogates Hans: "You want a taste of how it feels to be a black man in this country?" (18). Chuck constantly tells his life story and plans to write an autobiography called *Chuck Ramkissoon: Yank*. It is ironic for Chuck to call himself Yank, although Hans admits that "his [Chuck's] legend was transparently derived from the local one of rags to riches" (175). The image of bald eagles is attractive to Chuck because it denotes American identity and freedom. "Congress concluded that the bald eagle would make an appropriate symbol of national power and authority" (97). Chuck further clarifies "the noble bald eagle represents the spirit of freedom, living as it does in the boundless void of the sky" (98).

He once experienced a really threatening situation. He was chased by black people in the forest and forced to jump from a waterfall into twenty-foot deep water. Another traumatic and unpleasant episode in Chuck's childhood is when his mother was devastated by his brother's death. His mother participated in a Baptist ceremony of sacrificing chickens for his brother's death because of her inconsolable condition, but this act infuriated his father because he thought his mother "was falling for this black people's voodoo.(321)" Indo-Trinidadians have traditionally retained their distinctive culture in the multi-racial country. Chuck is from a minority both in Trinidad and America. He is always suffering from the trauma of identity crisis in his lifetime. Cricket is not a mainstream sport in the United States, Chuck, as a minority, shares the similarity with the position of Cricket in American society. Therefore, we are eventually conscious of Chuck's dream of civilizing America through cricket.

Rachel once accused Hans of "exoticising Chuck Ramkissoon, of giving him a pass, of failing to grant him a respectful measure of distrust, of perpetrating a white man's infantalising elevation of a black man" (219). But Hans defends himself vehemently, "That's just wrong. He was a good friend. We had a lot in common. I took him very seriously"(219) . This dialogue reflects that Rachel, as an upper class British woman, has prejudiced Hans' friendship with black Chuck. However, we should not doubt Hans' sincerity in keeping the intimate connection with Chuck. Like Hans, Chuck works in the financial sector; the pseudo-professional politeness here cannot hide the competitive nature of the environment. He cherishes his intimacy with Chuck by comparing it with his previous football teammate in HBS, Hubert. Hans admits "But with Hubert, all thoughts soon come to a stop– not only for lack of information but also for lack of weight. Not so with Chuck. He is, in memory, weighty. But what is the meaning of this weight?" (174).

Chuck Ramkissoon is charismatic for Hans because Chuck's inborn optimism represents a model for Hans of how to rehabilitate himself in the aftermath of the attacks. Although Chuck is ostensibly optimistic, he feels inferior in his subconscious mind. When he introduces himself to Hans, he would like to confirm that he comes from the US. Chuck also asserts in his speech that "we must claim our rightful place in this wonderful country"(18), which implies that cricket as a sport should find its proper position in the country just like the cricket players. The minorities are eager to seek for justice and a better life. Chuck has the ambitious dream to build a world class cricket stadium on an abandoned spot in New York; it is not only a chance for him to make a

fortune, but also an opportunity to pursue equality and fraternity in the ethnic diversification of the US. This is simply a true verification of his motto “think fantastic”(104). Cricket symbolizes alterity in New York. To contest this, Chuck reminds readers the status of cricket in America is “NOT AN IMMIGRANT SPORT” (133) in an article, it is an ironic remark by highlighting the words in capital letters, giving them a visual salience.

It is significant that O’Neill arranges Chuck’s unpleasant memories near the end of the novel as a temporal deictic centre. It was two years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks that the Iraq war fuelled a sense of American exceptionalism which dragged up his painful memory of melancholia and identity loss. Therefore, it is clear that Chuck’s trauma originates from his ethnic minority background and America’s attitude towards subcultures, while the traumas of Hans’s family stem from the suffering from traumatic 9/11events and their lingering effects. Overall, *Netherland* depicts different forms of trauma in the aftermath of 9/11, some trauma can be healed while with others, sufferers are doomed not to recover.

6.2Mental Spaces Analysis of Retrospective Memory

This section discusses the mental representations readers construct when processing the literary text of *Netherland*; it draws on the field of cognitive poetics. It mainly investigates the relationships between the various possible worlds in Hans’s reminiscences, evaluating the cognitive remapping of cities using the framework of mental space theory as an approach to gain further insight into O’Neill’s text. The cognitive representation of the different worlds of the text not only focuses on analysing readers’ capability to understand the way events proceed in the text world, but also concentrates their ability to meditate on other events that are imagined and fantasised.

6.2.1 Hans as an Autodiegetic Narrator

The story features some themes that 9/11 fiction is associated with: dealing with the identity crisis arising through post-traumatic memory, it is written in a non-linear sequence and a retrospective style. Readers need to keep track of the sequence of the events in the text world, and also distinguish some other events that happen in the characters’ minds but are un-narrated.

Therefore, readers can comprehend the fictional worlds according to their background knowledge because fictional worlds may resemble actual worlds in some aspects, but in substance, they are different.

The 9/11terrorist attacks make the protagonists feel trapped in an identity crisis in traumatised post-9/11 New York. The story of Hans can be read as an autobiography of O'Neill to some extent. O'Neill, an English-educated writer of Irish and Turkish heritage, who grew up in the Netherlands, is now a US citizen. O'Neill acknowledges the similarities between himself and the protagonist Hans in an interview:

> My description of Hans's sense of New York accords to a large degree with my own sense of it. It was a time of fantastic confusion and anxiety that, amazingly, was replaced by confusion and anxiety about what the United States was doing. So there were two phases, and I think the book deals with both those phases. And in a way the second phase, the phase of the Bush Administration's reaction to 9/11, and the benightedness into which the country was plunged as a result of Bush's actions, is, I suspect, what really colors this book. [167]

O'Neill's biography shares some similarities with the protagonist Hans in the fiction. O'Neill is also a long-term member of the Staten Island Cricket Club. The fiction reads like the author's memoir. Hans's path in life keeps on the same track as O'Neill's.

According to Stockwell, there are four types of mental space, namely, time spaces, space spaces, domain spaces and hypothetical spaces. It is evident in the novel that these temporal and spatial settings are very specific, such as references to the spring of 2006, "this was in May 2000," (111) July 1999, "the day I met Chuck was three years later." (11) The temporal indexes in the fiction pivot around the event of Hans' meeting with Chuck. Accordingly, their friendship and encountering becomes the main storyline. Readers follow the relationship between time spaces and space spaces to track the plot development in the fiction.

[167] Katie Bacon , "The Great Irish-Dutch-American Novel", *The Atlantic* , First published in May 2008, [http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/05/the-great-irish-dutch-american-novel/306788/, assessed on 06 November 2015)

The narrative space in the fiction can be categorised into objective space in physical reality and mental space from an imagined perspective. It is easy to grasp the idea of objective space in the novel, as it sets the backdrop in physical space, for instance, the locative spaces like post-9/11 New York, the Chelsea Hotel and the cricket playing ground. Most post-9/11fictions tell the trauma in a non-linear narrative structure, almost without exception. O'Neill is among the novelists who are prone to employ this more challenging non-linear narrative forms, such as flashbacks and flash-forwards to keep readers on the track of the full story.

Fauconnier and Turner define mental spaces as "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action. They are interconnected, and can be modified as thought and discourse unfold." [168] It is evident that the conceptual packets exist intangibly and build on the provided lexical information, encyclopaedic knowledge and context, but are not completely equivalent to standard expression. Moreover, the mental spaces constructed by readers are not independent, they are interactively connected. Sometimes the trans-spatial operators can link elements in different spaces. Readers should bring their own initiative into play and construct their mental process in understanding the discourse world through linking together the acquired knowledge of the sequence of events. Therefore, the comprehension process of the discourse text is a process of mental space construction, for instance, the scenario of Hans' retrospective memory of playing cricket in his childhood in Holland echoes some of the moments when he plays the game in New York.

Hans is the narrator of the story and tells his personal experiences of disillusionment in the aftermath of 9/11 but also recollects his upbringing and fantastic memories of childhood, including his reflection on the meaning of life and the location of his true identity in the post-9/11 world. His early childhood experiences are incomparable with his experience in New York, where he feels disorientated and lacking a sense of belonging. Therefore, the narrator in *Netherland* can be divided into an experiential self and a narrative self. The fiction is told in the past-tense, first-person retrospective narrative and alternates between two points of view: Hans as the narrator to recollect past experiences and events, and as the protagonist who experiences the aftermath of the events.

[168] Fauconnier, Giles and Mark Turner. *The Way We Think*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.p.113.

The narrator Hans is the protagonist in his own story. According to Gérard Genette, this kind of narrative can be defined as "autodiegetic". There are many apparent evaluative viewpoints of this world, and the narrative sometimes adopts an uncertain, personal tone, such as "no doubt I was in an unhealthy state of mind"(25), "I see this clearly"(37) and "on my own"(39). Hans frequently uses such subjective phrases to express his status and to affirm his own truth and reality. But Hans's wife Rachel doubts his authenticity, "You're like a child. You don't look beneath the surface" (160). This refers to Hans's position in analysing the 9/11 events and his attitude towards their marriage. These two events are the original cause of Hans's melancholia.

It is important to understand the term "experientiality" before the explication of the distinction between I-narrator and I-character. Monika Fludernik published her most influential book *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* in 1996, which can be regarded as a watershed publication in the realm of narratology after structuralism. It is one of the foundational monographs in the area of cognitive narratology. She proposed the term "experientiality", which "refers to the ways in which narrative taps into readers' familiarity with experience through the activation of 'natural' cognitive parameters."[169] Fludernik intended to lay a ground work for cognitive narratology by framing a theoretical base after a concise summary of the conversational or 'natural' narrative through taking in the ideas of schemata as well as prototype theory in cognitive science. In her book she outlines cognitive parameters attaching to narrative including the ideas of experientiality, reportability, and point. She distinguished the five cognitive frames in this book by using capital letters: ACTION, TELLING, EXPERIENCING, VIEWING, REFLECTING, which can be regarded to be some of the most predominant concepts in the narratological theory.

Human beings' real-life experience can be an inexhaustible resource for creating narrative in literary works. The EXPERIENCING frame can directly focalise the consciousness of figures through a third-person point of view, such as in stream of consciousness novels, taking Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* as an instance. Experientiality refers to the dynamic interaction between tellability and point of view. Furthermore, it coincides with the reflector-mode narrative where the story is presented through the consciousness of a reflector or a character.

[169] Fludernik, Monika. *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*. London: Routledge. 1996.p.243.

In *Netherland*, the experiencing self is foregrounded in the retrospective evaluation of Hans's illusion and disorientation. Readers can automatically perceive the differences by comparing pre-9/11 Hans with post-9/11 Hans through the two points of views of I-narrator and I-character. Since I-narrator and I-character can be displayed to attain similar or different attitudes in the fiction, O'Neill exploits the fluctuation for instructive and illuminative purposes. It is apparent that the I-narrator and I-character plays different functions in accentuating the 9/11 trauma.

6.2.2 Mental Space Configuration

According to mental space theory, the focus here is on the space of reminiscence, the narrative space is the base, and the starting point in constructing any new space. The narrator is the point of view. Point of view refers to the space from which any new space is set up and accessed. This basic model becomes more complicated when explicating long excerpts of texts.

Here is the scene of Hans's meeting with Chuck for the first time, which can be interpreted by Fauconnier's mental space theory.

Excerpt 1

> 'Let me introduce myself properly,' Chuck said. 'Chuck Ramkissoon.' We shook hands. 'Van den Broek,' he said, trying out the name. 'South African?'
>
> 'I'm from Holland,' I said, apologising.
>
> 'Holland? Sure, why not.' He was disappointed; naturally. He would have preferred that I'd come from the land of Barry Richards, and Allan Donald and Graeme Pollock.
>
> I said, 'And you are from …?'
>
> 'Here', Chuck affirmed. 'The United States.'
>
> His girlfriend elbowed him.
>
> 'What do you want me to say?' Chuck said.

> ‘Trinidad,’ the woman said, looking proudly at Chuck. ‘He’s from Trinidad.’ (19-20, emphasis added to draw attention to the mental construction function).

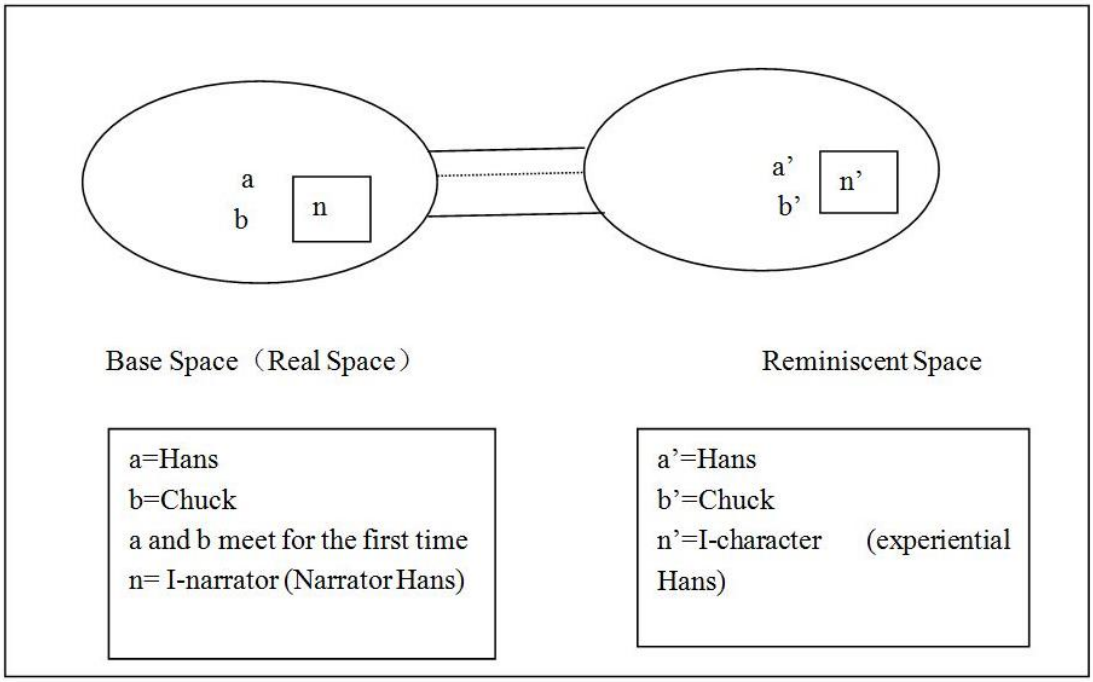
Excerpt 2

> I found a taxi and took it straight home. I was tired. As for Chuck, even though he interested me, he was older than me by almost twenty years, and my prejudice confined him, this oddball umpiring orator, to my exotic cricketing circle, which made no interception with the circumstances of my everyday life. (22， emphasis added to draw attention to the mental construction function)

The first excerpt identifies experiential space: Hans’s explanation of his subjective assumptions about Chuck’s attitude towards his motherland. The evident temporal deictic centre can be traced back to the previous page. “Chuck and I met for the first time in August 2002” (5). He presupposed that Chuck was disappointed with his Dutch identity, because he is a Trinidadian American, and would prefer Hans to have been of South African background, because the three names mentioned here are all famous cricketers from South Africa. Hans identifies Chuck’s disappointment with the past tense “was” when Chuck heard his identity, but later he shifts to employ the subjunctive mood “would have preferred”, which functions as the space builder to connect the two mental spaces. This is Hans’s personal subjective inference when he meets the stranger. As a matter of fact, they later become good friends.

The second excerpt demonstrates Hans’s prediction about the situation, after their first meeting at the cricket ground. At that moment, he thought he would not make any close connection to cricket and Chuck in his daily life. Contrary to Hans’s prediction, his later post-9/11 life is closely connected with cricket and Chuck, after his wife moves to London. Figure 6.1 provides a diagrammatic account of the interpretation of Excerpt 1.

Figure 6.1 Diagrammatic representation of the mental space configuration in Excerpt 1 in *Netherland*



In this scenario, the narrator (n) is Hans as the protagonist, while Chuck is the co-protagonist. They are equivalent to the two elements (a and b) in the first meeting. The underlined words are functions for mental construction, which is the reminiscent space that is projected by experiential Hans (n'). While the two elements (a' and b') forge a close friendship after they meet. The role played by common knowledge and social conventions working together satisfies the reader's cognitive requirement to make the conclusion that the dialogue reflects Hans's spontaneous response as a European white émigré to Chuck as a Trinidadian black immigrant. This reflects race-based social inequality. Moreover, Chuck's proud assertion of his American identity reveals that racial and ethical disparities are another thematic layer of the novel.

6.3 Deictic Shift Analysis of First-person Narrative

Hans narrates his own life experience from the viewpoint of the present, sometimes recalling 9/11experience and his childhood stories. It shows that the novel is narrated in a non-linear

structure as well as it having a fragmented, discontinuous temporal setting. The story is not unified as a recollection or memories of Hans's past experience. There is no direct depiction of the 9/11 events, but the repercussions of the events shapes the storyline. Hans's wife leaves New York for London as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, because she is overwhelmed with an omnipresent sense of anxiety and suffers from paranoia, leaving Hans alone in the Chelsea Hotel in New York. The theme of the novel can be interpreted as being about characters who are suffering from a rootless and homeless crisis in pursuing a new self-identity in the aftermath of 9/11. It is the pervasive sense of anxiety in the aftermath of 9/11 that make Hans lose his family and identity. Therefore he seeks solace in playing cricket and comes to know again the importance of learning. He also eventually re-establishes the connection to his wife again to attain self-growth. He is given a new identity to understand life (family, marriage, and cricket) after he associates himself with the other strata of the social and cultural spectrum, which is different from his position in the privileged white group.

O'Neill employs the multiple layering of recollection to display Hans's memory of his childhood and his friendship with Chuck. The narrator's retrospective and melancholic voice shapes Hans's perspective living in the aftermath of the attacks, for example, the way Hans admits his "unhealthy state of mind (25)." The shifting and discontinuous non-chronological narrative further subverts readers' expectations, but aligns with the conventions of 9/11 trauma narrative. It seems a common technique for post-9/11 novelists to employ explicit violent references, such as the Dresden firebombing and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in World War II in Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* and Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, the terrorist activities of the IRA in Masha Hamilton's *31 Hours* and the Red Army Faction in DeLillo's *Falling Man*.

The frequent deictic shift in an autodiegetic novel like *Netherland* is the "push" from Hans-as-a-narrator to Hans-as-a-character, and then "pop" back or return to the central position of the narrator. For instance, Hans shifts the story's deictic centre "down" to a time earlier in his life on the basis of a temporal dimension, such as his wonderful childhood life of playing cricket with his mother watching. According to Stockwell, when the story goes deeper, it refers to "push"; whereas when the story goes further, it refers to "pop". The analytical observations of the shift in the deictic centre in the fiction can help readers construct meaning in their mental spaces. For

instance, “As he (Chuck) talked, my thoughts went from the ice on the Hudson, which struck me as a kind of filth, to the pure canal ice of The Hague” (98). It is clear that readers can recognize the spatial deictic centre is shifting from the Hudson, New York to The Hague, which serves as a flashback narrative.

Many readers may neglect the shifts between the I-narrator and I-character on the deictic level, because the two figures share the same personal deixis in the fiction, which is perceived as blended according to Fauconnier and Turner. The whole story is told by the same agent, but it will be heard and read as being told and also being experienced as well. To borrow Fluernick’s terminology of “natural narratology”, most readers naturally believe Hans is a real storyteller who is telling his own tale – “a teller and a witness, all in one.”[170] The natural reading of such texts is demanding. Perceptive readers can understand the deictic gap between the I-narrator and the I-character is utilised by O’Neill for ironic effects.

Near the end of the fiction, the narrator Hans candidly reveals the differences between the I-narrator and I-character when the family goes travelling to India. “The truth, since we were on the topic, my imaginary interlocutory wife and I, was that the Hans van de Broek drinking gin in the Western Chats was not the same man as the New York Hans van de Broek” (301). It is because “Time had healed my wounds” (301). There has been a temporal deictic centre on the previous page. “On the first day of 2005, I set off with the boy (his son) to the mountains” (296).

On the same page, the narrator Hans makes the temporal deictic shift to October 2001, just after the 9/11 attack. The time space is set before the temporal centre when Hans meets Chuck. They thus meet after Rachel returns to London in December 2001. The temporal deictic shift can also be regarded as a shift of different possible worlds in the fiction, through the medium of mental space. By the temporal index placing Hans in Holland, the possible world of his childhood is narrated, while when the setting is London, it automatically refers to Hans’s recovery from 9/11 trauma by uniting with his family members after his period of depression in New York. Meantime, the spatial deictic centre is also shifting from the cricket ground to the Hotel Chelsea. O’Neill dexterously shifts the narrative space shift thus disentangling the I-narrator and I-character. In this way, we can surmise that there may be a perceptual difference between the I-

[170] Ibid.,p.34.

narrator and the I-character. The feeling is confirmed with "unbearable", the past tense "were" indicating the I-narrator's position in openly evaluating his past experience of post-9/11 anxiety:

> Those circumstances were, I should say, unbearable. Almost a year had passed since my wife's announcement that she was leaving New York and returning to London with Jake. This took place on an October night as we lay next to each other in bed on the ninth floor of the Hotel Chelsea. We'd been holed up in there since mid-September, staying on in a kind of paralysis even after we'd received permission from the authorities to return to our loft in Tribeca. (22)

This excerpt describes the couple's immediate reaction to the 9/11 events. The adjective "unbearable" reflects Hans's subjective emotion towards the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The past tense in this paragraph suggests Hans is looking back to their traumatic experience. The base space is that he returned to London from New York in late 2003. In the opening chapter, the novel sets the temporal space in London, 2006. "Then, one evening in the spring of this year, 2006, Rachel and I are at home, in Highbury" (3).

The book's opening clearly states that the memory of Chuck is built in Han's memory as a transitory episode in his lifetime:

> At any rate, for the first two years or so of my return to England, I did my best to look away from New York—where, after all, I'd been unhappy for the first time in my life. I didn't go back there in person, I didn't wonder very often about what had become of a man named Chuck Ramkissoon, who'd been a friend during my final East Coast summer and had since, in the way of the things, become a transitory figure. (3)

We can see that the character is playing a double role both as narrator and character, here. The interplay of deictic centres in the fiction should be followed with great attention. The shifts from Hans-as-a-narrator to Hans-as-a-character can also be pinpointed by Stockwell's temporal and perceptual categorisation. [171]

There are clear and unambiguous indications of time spaces in the novel. Tense usage can also be seen as one of the evident indicators of deictic temporal shifts. For example, the present tense can

[171] Stockwell, Peter. "Miltonic Texture and the Feeling of Reading." In *Cognitive Stylistics: Language and Cognition in Text Analysis*. Semino, Elena and Culpeper, Jonathan(ed.) Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing,2002,p.78.

be interpreted by the past-tense narrative to recall past experiences of the I-narrator. While the perceptual deictic shift is not as apparent as the temporal deictic shift, there are still some subtle clues to fill the gap between pre-9/11 Hans and post-9/11 Hans. Hans's self-growth and self-preservation show him actively working towards a cosmopolitan attitude. The other storyline narrating Hans's intimacy with Chuck reads like a memoir of Hans's experience of the aftermath of 9/11 . Hans describes their acquaintance as "Chuck Ramkissoon … [had] become a transitory figure" (3). It is because immigration poses many social and cultural challenges in the contemporary globalized world. Since people move more frequently than before, it is easy for transnational people to lose their sense of identity in foreign countries. Since Hans is a transnational person in the modern world, he finds it hard to locate himself in contemporary society.

Moreover, it is worthwhile to quote Chuck's view on cricket's position in America, which also signifies the status quo of minority groups who are playing the game of cricket:

> 'Cricket is instructive, Hans. It has a moral angle. I really believe this. Everybody who plays the game benefits from it. So I say, why not Americans?' He was almost grim with conviction. In a confidential tone, he said, 'Americans cannot really see the world. <u>They</u> think t<u>hey</u> can, but <u>they</u> can't. I don't need to tell you that. Look at the problems <u>we</u>'re having. It's a mess, and it's going to get worse. I say, <u>we</u> want to have something in common with Hindus and Muslims? Chuck Ramkissoon is going to make it happen. With the New York Cricket Club, <u>we</u> could start a whole new chapter in US history. ' (280) (emphasis added to highlight the deictic shift effect)

The deictic pronouns "they" and "we" are shifting in this paragraph, which indicates Chuck's contradiction in locating himself in America when he uses cricket to explain his dilemma. Although he is a naturalised citizen in the US, he cannot avoid feeling his alterity because of his Trinidadian descent. His sense of identity is fluid, he uses "we" to imply that he feels at home in New York, as a citizen of the metropolis, while simultaneously, he uses "they" to make his position of otherness salient. Chuck insists on his dream of making the US a better country by including multi-ethnic immigrants.

6.4 Conceptual Metaphor Analysis of Cricket and the Chelsea Hotel

This section investigates the particular metaphors of the game of cricket and Chelsea Hotel. Both of them are endowed with the recuperative power to help Hans to attain self-growth and self-preservation and ultimately make Hans reconnect with his family in the 9/11 context.

6.4.1 Cricket as a Healing Power of Redemption

The second story-line in the novel concentrates on Hans seeking solace from playing cricket after he makes the acquaintance of Chuck and immerses himself in the vibrant substratum class in New York during the absence of his wife. Cricket serves as the redemptive power to heal Hans' wounds. O'Neill implicitly tells the American history of the sport of cricket in *Netherland.* Cricket began with a promising future in the mid-nineteenth century because of the rapid decline of baseball. But since cricket is a game of the former British Empire, Americans refused to associate themselves with the ideological traditions of the game. Then it perished in the US. The resurgence of cricket as a sport came when it was imported by immigrants from the Caribbean and South Asia in the second half of the twentieth century. The original identity of cricket is altered from the Anglo-Saxon legacy to a new racial connection. Cricket was transformed to become a game of the colonized and was able to occupy a position in contemporary America.

The development of cricket in the US was tied to objective factors such as climate and physical environment, as well as subjective ones such as America's suspicion of this foreign game. Moreover, another factor is the comparatively expensive and time-consuming effort to prepare the necessary sports equipment for cricket. Therefore, it was hard for cricket to be positioned as a sport that would become a national game in the US. Chuck criticises cricket's current status and lack of acceptance in the US: "You want a taste of how it feels to be a black man in this country? Put on the white clothes of the cricketer. Put on white to feel black" (16).

"*Netherland*'s use of cricket is a metaphor of civil conduct, purity and unity, and ultimately, an evocation of a classical vision of melting-pot American-ness, also reveals a more general literary

reflexivity." [172] There is a consensus amongst critics that cricket plays a meta-fictional or self-reflexive role in *Netherland*.

The preoccupation with the sport of cricket is thematically highlighted as a metaphorical framework to cope with the existential uncertainty and identity crisis in the aftermath of 9/11. "The metonym of cricket offers in *Netherland*: a field that includes a dream of "justice", certainly, but also the reality of loss and longing, antagonism and affiliation, opposition and amity." [173]

Jeffrey Hill initially asserts that the redemptive function of cricket is that "Among these people cricket provides an identity and a moral compass. Much use is made in the novel of an idea with a long tradition in English cricket rhetoric—that cricket is a moral code as well as a game."[174] Chuck contends the importance of cricket as a cultural and moral force; people "are at their most civilized when they're playing cricket. What's the first thing that happens when India and Pakistan make peace? They play a cricket match" (211). Jeffrey Hill claims that "Cricket is also a paradox, almost to the extent of subverting its own moral code." [175]

The random memory of Hans's childhood and past connections with cricket occupy a large part of the narration. Readers gain emotional interaction with both the narrator Hans and the experiential Hans through the discussion of cricket. The restoration of order and equilibrium in the cricket game signifies the imperative to restore social order from the chaos after the 9/11 events. Sport as a connection can link all the races together and promote the concept of fraternity and egalitarianism.

As a sporting contest, the rules of cricket are strict. It is in the analogy between the sport and literature that O'Neill illuminates his view of order. Order is of paramount importance in the chaotic post 9/11 world. Cricket plays a pivotal function in Hans's childhood when he recalls his mother's spectatorship of the game. Hans confesses "With my mother no longer watching, cricket

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[172] Keeble, Arin. *The 9/11 Novel: Trauma, Politics and Identity*, North Carolina: McFarland, 2014, p.151.

[173] Gray, Richard, *After the fall : American literature since 9/11* [1st ed.]., Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011,p.73.

[174] Hill, Jeffrey. "The American Dream of Chuck Ramkissoon: Cricket in Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland", Journal of Sport History,* Volume37, Number 2, Summer 2010,p.227.

[175] Ibid.,p.229.

was never quite the same again" (57), which manifests his strong attachment to his mother. Cricket is imbued with meanings by way of his mother's spectatorship. Hans played in the "HBS-Crayenhout" club, which is a prominent sports club with a two-hundred-year history in The Hague. Hans describes his childhood playing as his most wonderful experience concerning cricket. Later, when he started his professional career in London he participated in the South Bank Cricket Club, but broke away from the club for some reason. Although his mother is not watching, Hans's cricket experience in Britain was "agreeable, English and enchanting" (57). Once Rachel approached the cricket ground to watch Hans, Hans "could sense her (Rachel's) boredom from a hundred yards" (57).

Hans flies to England every alternate weekend to visit his wife and son, and plays cricket in New York. He believes that New York fields are not well tended and not suitable for cricket. But his acclimatisation to American fields symbolises his naturalisation to an American identity. The reappearance of cricket as a motif plays the function of a therapeutic means to heal trauma because of its soothing and bonding function. Geographical mapping of the city is manifested through the cricket fields in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. His reminiscences of the past in Europe and accounts of current life in America form a sharp contrast and reflect his nostalgia for his wonderful childhood and maternal love.

Chuck Ramkissoon, has been naturalised in America and owned many companies including some illegitimate business operations. He started from scratch as a new immigrant and accomplished success in the commercial field. His motto "think fantastic" (104) always reminds him that he has the ambitious and visionary American dream of building a cricket stadium and transforming this game into a global game in the US.

Similarly, the naturalization of the sport equates with the recognition of an individual's national identity. When Hans plays his first game in the Staten Island team, he realises that the batting habits are different from his childhood, and he reluctantly adopts the new batting style. He asserts: "They (West Indian migrant players) could, and did, modify their batting without spiritual upheaval. I could not. More accurately, I would not change … self-transformation has its limits" (46).

His entrapment in an old batting style symbolically indicates his difficulty in adapting himself in the aftermath of the 9/11 events. His refusal to undergo modification signifies his failure in restoring his sense of consistent self. As indicated in the fiction,

> I'd hit the ball in the air like an American cricketer; and I'd done so without injury to my sense of myself. On the contrary, I felt great. And Chuck had seen it happen and, as much as he could have, had prompted it. … there is a roar as the cricket stars trot down the pavilion steps onto this impossible grass field in America, and everything is suddenly clear, and I am at last naturalised. (233)

O'Neill reviewed Trinidadian C. L. R. James's autobiography *Beyond a Boundary* (1963) in 2007, which is regarded as a classic monograph on analysing cricket's impact on literature as well as its colonial impact.[176] O'Neill insistently portrays the aesthetic feature of cricket and the art of the sport, which echoes C. L. R. James's declaration of cricket as an art in *Beyond a Boundary* in Chapter 16, "What Is Art?" The fresh perspective of involving cricket in discussing cultural conflicts can evoke the issue of identity. The tension and allusion in the fiction is a true portrayal of the American melting pot.

Cricket as a game serves as a therapeutic tool for Hans; it is a re-learning process because he needs to adapt to playing cricket with an American style, adopting the style of baseball players who hit the ball in the air, when he is instructed by Chuck to "Go deep". The novel breaks with established cricket conventions and imagines new styles of playing cricket.

Hans's obsession with cricket, not only as a recreational sport, but also as an attitude to life, is strongly associated with his childhood and his good memories of the past. Cricket is so crucial for him in the post-9/11 period that he can even abandon his work meeting to play games on weekends. The sole promise he has is to play cricket in the corner of the city with other immigrants from various subcultures. Cricket plays an aesthetic function in reminding Hans of the happiest parts of his past as an adolescent in Holland. The significance of cricket at different stages of his life symbolizes his living condition and mental state. Hans is pinning his hope on

[176] O'Neill ,Joseph, "Bowling Alone," Review of Beyond a Boundary by C.L.R. James, *The Atlantic Monthly* . First published on11 September 2007.[http://www.powells.com/review/2007_09_11.html ,assessed on 22 March,2016]

playing cricket in order to forget pain. His pursuit of new self-identity is strongly connected with the imagined universality of this sport.

Cricket is a way of life rather than a mere game in establishing self-identity in post-9/11's wounded New York. The acclimatization of cricket to America is a metonymy for Hans, because he needs to re-establish his self-identity because his private life is severely traumatized by the terrorist attacks. The indelible reality is that Chuck's hybridity in the city makes his utopian American dream doomed to fail and makes the civility of cricket end in violence and death.

6.4.2 The Chelsea Hotel as an Epitome of New York

O'Neill dexterously sets the backdrop of the Chelsea Hotel as the space Hans lived in after 9/11. It occupies an emblematic position in New York literary history. The Chelsea Hotel itself is designated as a landmark in New York City, as it stood as the tallest building until 1900. Before it opened as a hotel in 1905, it was a municipal theatre. Since then, the hotel became an artistic sanctuary for numerous prominent literary giants such as Mark Twain, O. Henry, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, Allen Ginsberg, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre and Thomas Wolfe as well as a long list of infamous literary figures. Ed Hamilton published a monograph telling the history of the Chelsea Hotel in 1997, entitled *Legends of the Chelsea Hotel Living with the Artists and Outlaws of New York's Rebel Mecca*.

The prominent American playwright Arthur Miller once wrote "The Chelsea Affect" to depict his ambivalent emotional experience there in 1960. "The Chelsea in the Sixties seemed to combine two atmospheres: a scary optimistic chaos which predicted the hip future, and at the same time the feel of a massive, old-fashioned, sheltering family. That at least was the myth one nursed in one's mind, but like all myths it did not altogether stand inspection."[177] He explicates the paradoxes of his nostalgic emotion: "With all my misgivings about The Chelsea, I can never enter it without a certain quickening of my heartbeat. There is an indescribably homelike atmosphere, which at the same time lacks certain credibility. It is some kind of fictional place, I

[177] Miller, Arthur. "The Chelsea Affect", *Granta: The Magazine of New Writing*. First published in1960s. [https://granta.com/the-chelsea-affect/, accessed 24, March, 2016]

used to think."[178] In *Netherland*, O'Neill captures Miller's nostalgic sense through placing the protagonist Hans in the decaying lobby and crummy rooms of the hotel to shape a comparison between its illustrious history and melancholy present.

A great variety of people have encounters here who can never engender a sense of home but only one of indifference and hollowness, even meaninglessness. Hans depicts the hotel: "there was a correspondence between the looming and shadowy hotel folk and the phantasmagoric and newly indistinct world beyond the Chelsea's heavy glass doors, as if the one promised to explain the other" (41). Traumatized New Yorkers reside in "the polyglot, bohemian refuge of the Chelsea Hotel."[179]It is a temporary residential space for rootless people. Hans's wife Rachel becomes intolerant of this situation, so she returns to London eschewing 9/11 anxiety. Hans encounters many people with eccentric personalities in the hotel; it seems that it is a "rendezvous" for those people who suffered from post-traumatic symptoms.

Therefore, it can be argued that the Chelsea Hotel is the epitome of post-9/11 phantasmagoric New York, providing another conceptual blending picture in this episode. The represntation of the hotel and New York City together can engender a generic mental space because they draw together the themes of homelessness and belongingness. Hans meets people from culturally diverse backgrounds, such as a Croatian woman of "famous nightlife personality", the black gentleman, the "legendary maker of prints", an "unexplained Finn", (42) a Turkish man who wore a pair of wings from a costume shop, and who is called "the Angel", as well as a man who celebrates a dog's birthday in the hotel lobby.

The mobility and fluidity of the hotel intensify individuals' sense of solitude, discontinuity and wretchedness, which pervades the hotel lobby because incessant movement makes traumatised people fail to communicate with each other in this transitory space. *Netherland* also depicts the kaleidoscope of strangers in the Chelsea Hotel manifesting their paranoia in the traumatised city, such as "the octogenarian person of undetermined gender (42)", "a man dressed as an angel (42)" and" Mehment Taspinar" , a Turkish, from Istanbul" (44).

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[178] Ibid.
[179] Gray, Richard, *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11* [1st ed.]. Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011,p.67.

6.5 Cognitive Re-mapping of Urban Cities

Cognitive remapping of the urban areas for Hans is a process of his self-renewal. We follow the narrator-protagonist's reminiscences from London to New York and thence to The Hague; Hans's tracing back to home (a psychological trip) is very crucial for understanding the meaning of different spaces. O'Neill penetrates into the unique nature of cities, because each of them is emblematic of Hans's position.

6.5.1 Post-9/11 Traumatised New York

Recurrent patterns of people and cities such as The Hague, London and New York enunciate Hans' life trajectory in a coherent way. The three cities in the fiction also connote symbolic meanings. The capitals of Holland and England exhibit the features of old colonial empires, while New York City is the metropolitan city in the new empire. Particularly, London refers to the old colonizer; it is symbolized as a more experienced city than New York. But, unfortunately, it was also attacked by the terrorists in 7/7 bombing in 2005.

When Hans is discussing the 9/11 events with Rachel's friends in London, they regard Hans as a Netherlander, so they assume the 9/11 event is not such a big deal for him. But Hans affirms "I think it was a big deal (240)". It is not only because he was there, but also the intrinsic charisma of New York as a city under attack. Hans says:

> I'm precluded by nationality from commenting on any place other than Holland—one of those parochialisms. I am pissed off to rediscover, that remind me that as a foreign person I'm essentially of some mildly buffoonish interest English and deprived, certainly, of the nativity New York encourages even its almost fleeting visitor to imagine for himself. And it's true: my secret, almost shameful feeling is that I am out of New York—that New York interposed itself, once and for all, between me and all other places of origin. (239)

We follow Hans' drifting recall of his transoceanic memories in Holland, London and then New York. These revisited memories always make Hans live in the imaginary world and that he even indulges in a reverie that his mother is still alive. He always recalls the background of his serene childhood and upbringing. He acknowledges that "There [Holland] obtained a national

transparency promoted by a citizenry that was to all appearances united in a deep, even pleased, commitment to foreseeable and moderate outcomes in life" (117).

When Hans delineates his situation in New York, he is mired in disorientation. "In my New York confusion I sometimes asked myself if matters might have been different if someone older, or at least someone more attentive than I to the way things are put together…" (118). In fact, there is a different scenario. "There was no question of malaise when I agreed to migrate from London, in 1998" (119). It is apparent that the 9/11 events are the critical and epochal moments that alter Hans's life towards unhappiness and paranoia. Similarly, Hans acts like other protagonists in post-9/11 fictions, such as Oskar in Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* and Keith in DeLillo's *Falling Man*, who are all seeking for some restoration of a sense of self that is difficult to specify, and a new meaning in life. Some of them successfully work through 9/11 trauma and attain sublimation, some of them still remain in a state of melancholia.

Rachel believes London was safer than New York, and it is possible that another New York catastrophe is imminent. Therefore, Rachel leaves New York and returns to London under the pretence of the 9/11 events because of the omnipresent anxiety and paranoia. Hans is left alone in a traumatised and phantasmagoric New York. There are some episodes delineating the vigourless side of New York. "My most constant dining companions, though, were the blind people who lived in a special residence up the street ('Visionary Community')… I came to think of my neighbourhood as the quarter of the blind" (140). The word "blind" is the true portrayal of the condition of the traumatized New Yorkers living in the altered city, they even did not realize their blindness or understand the causes and effects of the violent attacks.

The terrorist attacks transmute the city into a monster space. "New York itself—that ideal source of the metropolitan diversion that serves as a response to the largest futilities—took on a fearsome, monstrous nature" (29). The destruction of the Twin Towers metaphorically signifies that New York City and even the country are entrapped in paralysis and paranoia. Therefore, a radical re-examination of self-identity is urgently needed in the wounded metropolis. In Hans's case, it is resolved through playing cricket, which serves as a therapeutic and metaphorical means to heal wounds.

Since New York is a hybrid, heterogeneous space, the novel not only concentrates on interpreting the situation of the white emigré from Holland, Hans's trauma and identity crisis in the post 9-/11 context, but also comprises some other voices of minor characters. They are uprooted in the subworld, such as Chuck's Jewish partner Abelsky, and another Russian, the angel in the Hotel, and the players in the club from post-colonial countries, a multi-ethnic panorama of a multicultural society. Hans acts as Chuck's chauffeur during the cricket trip, where it is revealed that Chuck not only makes deals by selling Kosher meals to sushi restaurants, but also is involved in some distasteful business transactions. It is suggested that Chuck is murdered by a business partner because of these dubious dealings. But the novel never explicitly reveals any relevant information to unlock the mystery of Chuck's death.

Through Hans's recollections, we see that countless New Yorkers are living with invisible pain but still need to live on and adjust, while remaining stuck in a continuously anxious mood. When Chuck is acting as Hans's driving mentor, they drive around the boroughs in New York. Hans makes a re-exploration of New York City through his cricket-linked journey, through places such as Staten Island, Queens, and Brooklyn. He develops a new understanding of the city when he visits some of the places in Manhattan he never heard of before 9/11. The emotional effect of the journey evokes his past recollections of cricket. In post-9/11 life, Hans's remapping of New York City is closely connected with the cricket field; the extraterritorial places provide more space for Hans to refresh himself.

6.5.2 Disorientation and Google Earth

O'Neill is an expert in meticulously observing the quotidian details of how we live in the modern world with a prevailing internet culture. The episode where Hans uses Google Earth to trace his son in London is one of the most affecting scenes in the novel. "Flying on Google's satellite function, lingering over his child's dormer window and blue inflated swimming pool, searching the "depthless" pixels for anything, from thousands of miles away, he can cling to (162)". The recurrent episode of Hans's navigating Google Earth to trace his family in London and revisit New York and the cricket field is ironic, since Hans cannot locate himself in the real world, but attempts to gain orientation in the virtual world.

> There was no movement in my marriage, either; but, flying on Google's satellite function, night after night I *surreptitiously* travelled to England. Starting with a *hybrid* map of the United States, I moved the navigation box across the North Atlantic and began my fall from the stratosphere: successively, into a brown and beige and greenish Europe bounded by Wuppertal, Groningen, Leeds, Caen (the Netherlands *is gallant* form this altitude, its streamer of northern isles giving the impression a land steaming seaward … My son's dormer was visible, and the blue inflated poll and the red BMW; but there was no way to see more, or deeper. I was stuck. (162-163) (emphasis added to spatial deictic expressions.)

This paragraph exhibits how conceptual blending theory can be employed to explicate the cognitive remapping process in the interaction between Google Maps and Hans's reminiscence of his urban experience in the real world. O'Neill's use of Google's satellite function to navigate emphasizes Han's transoceanic identity.

> I go to Google Maps. It is pre-set to a satellite image of Europe. I rocket westward, over the dark blue ocean, to America. There is Long Island. In plummeting I overshoot and for the first time in years find myself in Manhattan. It is, necessarily, a bright, clear day. The trees are in leaf. There are cars immobilized all over the streets. Nothing seems to be going on.
>
> I veer away into Brooklyn, over houses, parks, graveyards, and halt at olive-green coastal water. I track the shore.... and there is Floyd Bennett Field's geometric sprawl of runways. I fall again, as low as I can. There's Chuck's field. It is brown—the grass has burned—but it is still there. There's no trace of a batting square. The equipment shed is gone. I'm just seeing a field. (334) (emphasis added to spatial deictic expressions)

O'Neill punctuates the spatial sense in the cyber journey; the virtual journey is also an imagined act to transport himself across the globe. The act of clicking a mouse is an inauthentic journey, which is totally different from the authentic sense of locating self-identity in the disoriented world.

Figure 6.2 Virtual Locations in Google World Map

However, following the spatial deictic expression in the text, we can differentiate between Hans's imagination and the real world. Furthermore, mental processes of cognitive remapping blend the figurative language with 3D animation maps. The conceptual blending involves differences between location and Hans's ability to orient himself in both the physical and spiritual world.

The verb forms O'Neill uses here such as "rocket", "plummet", "overshoot", "veer", "fall" accentuate the melancholia of the transoceanic internet journey. The description of static objects like "trees", "immobilized cars", "houses", "parks", "graveyard", "coastal water" conveys a rhetorical quality of desolation. The author employs space builders like the adjective "hybrid" and "gallant" to describe America and the Netherlands respectively.

Chuck's dream cricket ground Bald Eagle Field shares a similar destiny to Chuck himself; it becomes a "dead" field. Readers are able actively to engage in blending the images of Chuck's dream cricket field with his own destiny. The immobilized cars imply the catastrophic image in the abandoned and paralysed city. The digital image in the computer constantly disturbs Hans's emotions.

Furthermore, it also signifies that modern people are suffering from alienation because of the omnipresence of technologies in the contemporary globalized world. The rapid progress in

technology and social development necessarily alter the previous sense of national belonging, thereby cultivating a new sense of identity in a transnational context in accordance with spatialisation and virtual journey. Hans is enmeshed in difficulties pondering his self-identity in the group and community. Correspondingly, Hans's repeated acts of utilising advanced technology to locate and orient himself highlight his loneliness and melancholia in a spiritual sense after the attacks. The connectedness and togetherness offered in playing cricket had been tangible and factual means to solve this anxiety problem.

When Hans uses Google Maps to locate the cricket field that Chuck proposed to build, he develops self-awareness by revisiting these places in the internet world, but still feels disoriented in relation to the real city. "Where would he move to, and for what? There is no sign of nations, no sense of the work of man. The USA as such is nowhere to be seen" (335).

This scene reminds us of Hans's utilization of Google Earth to look at his wife's home in London. The dynamic movement in the real world and the static objects represented in the immobile satellite images form a sharp contrast between the virtual act and the real location. Hans ultimately undergoes "a swerve in orientation" and "decide[s] to move back to London" (290) in order to re-find his direction and the meaning of his life. He claims that "in terms of objective calamities, of course, The Adversity of Hans van den Broek, as such a tale might be called, amounts to not very much." (290)

The final episode depicts Hans' reconnection with his family. He recalls his mother's smile and reflects on his way of life.

> Which is how I come to face my family with the same smile.
>
> 'Look!' Jake is saying pointing wildly 'See, Daddy?'
>
> I see, I tell him, looking from him to Rachel and again to him. Then I turn to look for what it is we're supposed to be seeing. (339-340)

It can be concluded from Hans's reflections that a positive way to see the world leads to personal renewal. Family love can create a positive attitude and promote the self-renewal process. Eventually, Hans recovers from the stress of 9/11 traumatic events.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Investigating Post-9/11 Fictions through the Cognitive Narrative Approach

My interest in investigating the topic of 9/11 fictions as traumatic narratives developed while watching films of the events in 2011 on the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001. History seemed nothing more than a tableau of terror and misfortunes. The destruction of the Twin Towers marks a monumental moment in American history and September 11, 2001 has created a divide that influenced ordinary peoples' view of the world. The bombardment of the media, as we have seen, decisively labelled the attacks as traumatic events according to many universally recognized notions, such as victimhood and innocence. As a student of literary criticism, the innate duality of the events made me eager to explore how novelists negotiate the characters' individual experience of a cataclysm through fictional representation and how the narratives are written to frame the events simultaneously as individual and collective trauma with all their profound implications.

When approaching the literary works, we might find that the literature is the best medium to articulate the cumulative assemblage of consenting and dissenting voices. In most post-9/11 novels, individual trauma is generally regarded as an impaired cognitive response to large-scale depressing events, usually manifesting in the form of nightmares, hallucination, neurosis, flashback, and types of mental disintegration.

In the three selected post-9/11 novels, Johnathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, and Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*, it is apparent that the three novelists apply similar literary techniques to investigate the repetition compulsion, melancholia and the process of recovery from trauma in their own literary context. Traumatic memory is often told in a discontinuous way, since the characters' mental states are severely damaged by the cataclysm, it is difficult for them to express the traumatic experience in a linear structure. 9/11 fictions can be regarded as a continuation of postmodern fictions in presenting such literary techniques.

The three fictions are all arranged in a non-chronological order and non-progressive plot, which is the typical way to express characters' inexpressible and disjointed traumatic memories. Trauma is unutterable, so conventional discursive practice cannot be sufficient in rendering trauma. Rupture in narrative time makes the plot develop in leaps and bounds, which further makes readers' reading experience disruptive just like the irruption of intrusive memories. Therefore, the disintegrated temporality and spatiality suit the stylistic expression of traumatic memories. It is a demanding reading experience, since readers are invited to engage more actively in the process of meaning construction. The reproduction of traumatic memory in artistic representation is intriguing. The rendering of the 9/11 events in this way presents a distinctive paradigm in the literary field, which counters conventional authorial and political discourse. DeLillo defines it as counter-narrative. The fictional characters function as the exemplar of real peoples' traumatic experience in the contemporary setting of destructive events. Most of the characters are grappling furiously with identity issues in the aftermath of 9/11 because they feel a sense of loss regarding their position in society and confusion about their social role. The fictional characters share similarities in trying their best to manage their future life in the aftermath, but they are unconsciously confined to the heavy burden of the past. The negotiation process of reconstructing their self-identity in such a transitional period is the chief concern in the 9/11 trauma fictions. Authors display their appreciation of the value of therapeutic narrative by emphasising that healing is an ongoing process but not a result. Consistent with the prevailing models in trauma studies, the characters in these novels undertake different journeys of self-preservation through various approaches, they work through the pain and fear by different reconstructive and therapeutic narratives, in which some are more successful than others. The characters are confined to a transitional stage, interrupted by their traumatic experience; they live in the in-between state of before and after. The characters' living conditions are totally different by comparing the pre-9/11 period with post-9/11 era.

The recurrent image of the Falling Man conveys the message more than the famous photo itself. Many people stuck in the towers are in despair and have no choice but to jump. This is allegorised in performance art. The visibility of the attacks mainly comes from the relentless reports of the event and proliferation of videos and images because it is true for most people that they have no direct connection with the people who perished in the towers. The photograph and the performance art themselves become the event and thus, remind people of the violence.

How the attacks were perceived from the replay of the image of the falling man and other artistic representations are the core issues that 9/11 fictions would like to explore. Consequently, 9/11 fictions reproduce the image in different versions but persist with its unreal quality. For instance, In Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, the reverse order of the jumping man from downwards to upwards subverts conventional temporality. In DeLillo's *Falling Man*, the illustration of the performance art itself asks spectators to rethink the meaning of such deaths and challenges readers to rethink the implications of 9/11. O'Neill's *Netherland* frames another visual paradigm of the image of disorientation through shifting visual memories across territory and across cultures. There is no direct depiction of the destruction but the focus is more on the emotional impact of the attacks.

Since the characters' resolutions to manage the PTSD symptoms are different, some novelists allow the characters to functionally assess their identity and attain self-growth. The process of recovery is subtle. Beyond the parameters of this thesis, there are some similarities in the fictional characters discussed here; they initially feel emotionally shattered in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Some of them eventually make a full recovery, such as Oskar in Foer's novel and Hans in O'Neill's novel. Some are perpetually in melancholia, such as Keith in DeLillo's fiction.

It is generally acknowledged that cognitive literary criticism attempts to integrate literary studies with new sciences of the mind and brain by developing models for understanding subjectivity and consciousness through engagement with other disciplines, such as psychology, linguistics, neuroscience and philosophy. Cognitive poetics are not aiming to create a hybrid of disciplines from the humanities and sciences, but attempting to create a practical, coherent paradigm for analysing recurring questions in literature and language from the cognitive perspective.

This thesis aims to provide a cognitive poetic analysis of the distinctive features of traumatic narratives in three selected post-9/11 fictions through employing the existing version of the theories of conceptual blending, conceptual metaphor, text world, possible world and deictic shift. These innovative cognitive approaches can be applied to 9/11 trauma narrative as analytical responses, and also in terms of converging the concepts of psychological trauma studies with cognitive poetics, which can further convey the diversity of these expanding new fields.

The thesis is timely since it represents the first full-length analysis of these fictions using cognitive theories. However, it also intends to elucidate how the cognitive poetic approach can supplement existing conventional theories of literary criticism. In chapter 3, I provided a review of the branches of the theory of cognitive poetics and the important key notions in text world theory, possible world theory and mental space, deictic shift theory, conceptual metaphor and blending theory as well as cognitive narratology.

Chapter 4 explored cognitive activity in the schematic matching of the photographs and textual interpretation in Foer's novel from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory, how readers conceptualise the texts and fill the gap between the visual elements and textual clues. The chapter also focused on the textual analysis of the embedded narrative and the operation of the mental representation of textual clues in narrative sub-worlds. The cognitive approach offers a detailed way to create coherence in understanding discontinuous trauma narrative.

Chapter 5 offers a conceptual blending theory analysis of the image of the Falling Man, and how the synthetic blending of concepts in the reader's mind is the fundamental ground for sense-making in trauma narrative. Moreover, it also addresses the idea of mind-reading, the exploration of the characters' consciousness, especially requiring readers to put themselves into the terrorists' shoes to understand their viewpoint.

Chapter 6 investigates the capacity of these 9/11fictions to integrate postcolonial elements into the 9/11 trauma narrative through reminiscence, and thereby to reveal the significance of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. It has explored two dominant metaphors recurring in the fiction—cricket as a healing power of redemption and Chelsea Hotel as an epitome of New York, which propel readers to understand the protagonist's self-growth process.

The 9/11 traumatic narratives are characterized by self-reflective and redemptive features, which may help the characters work through their trauma. All the 9/11 novelists attach great importance to the narratives themselves, because they see narratives as embodied with healing power. Particularly, the therapeutic power of narrative, in the three fictions, is presented through dialogic discourse, and epistolary writing which help victims reconstruct their traumatic memory in a coherent way.

7.2 Further Implications

The thesis has offered an interpretation of how cognitive theories deal with traumatic memory and associated states, and explores the trauma narrative in three selected 9/11 fictions. It has attempted to analyse the post-9/11 fictions from the perspective of cognitive poetics in general. Some further implications are illustrated below.

On the one hand, although I concentrate on the post-9/11 fictions and on the particular theme of traumatic narratives, there is clear scope for this type of poetics to be applied to a wider range of texts. Poetics can be integrated into larger narrative structures, not only restricted to trauma narrative. As I mentioned in the introduction part, the thesis predominantly deals with readers' mental processes in understanding the themes and meanings in the text world with the backdrop of the events.

On the other hand, in my discussion of the critical opinions of the fictions, I have paid attention to some types of discourse worlds that can be used to discuss the specific textual detail to investigate the process of meaning. There is also much potential for cognitive study. Eventually, it is anticipated that the theories of poetics will evolve as literary critics seek to expand, revise the model and explore new texts in innovative ways. Therefore, it is hoped that the thesis can shape a part of the cross-disciplinary movement in cognitive poetics and seek to further extend the ideas of cognitive poetics and trauma studies. It is proposed that the cognitive approach can interact with other fields to offer a more extensive potentiality and with benefits across disciplines.

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