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## VISUALIZATION OF THE TRAUMA NARRATIVE IN JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER'S NOVEL *EXTREMELY LOUD AND INCREDIBLY CLOSE*

We never have all that much to say to each other.  
(Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* 104)

### Introduction

*Statement of the general problem and its connection with scientific assignments.* In the narrative of violence, the role of visual images is very significant. Studies in clinical psychology have already defined the difficulties victims face in verbally testifying about violent events, explaining that “the [traumatic] experience cannot be organized on a linguistic level, and this failure to arrange the memory in words and symbols leaves it to be organized on a somatosensory or iconic level” [8, p. 172]. Moreover, some scholars argue that “to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image” [2, p. 4-5]. Cultural critics also agree that the narrative of violence and trauma is best conveyed graphically rather than verbally, asserting that “given the ‘iconic,’ visual nature of traumatic memories, creating pictures may represent the most effective initial approach to these indelible images” [2, p. 7].

In his first novel, Foer already showed how trauma is transmitted through images: the protagonist of *Everything Is Illuminated* is haunted by a photograph of a woman who assumingly helped his grandfather escape the Nazi massacre. In *Extremely Loud*, this idea is singled out into a separate theme: the text of the novel graphically reproduces images that characterize the nine-year-old protagonist’s trauma of losing his father in a terrorist attack. Oskar, the protagonist of the novel, keeps a visual diary called “Stuff That Happened to Me” where he collects documents about his daily experiences and expresses what he cannot put into words. The present research

*Relevance of the research* is based on the importance of the theme of trauma narrative in Jonathan Safran Foer's oeuvre: while the author underlines that historical memory should be transmitted through generations as an integral part of identity, he also aims to show futility of an intermitted verbal story. Visual narrative, thus, gives the writer an opportunity to present horrors of the past with a different medium, which, as the author argues, is representative of a traumatized psyche.

*Analysis of recent research and publications.* Connection between traumatic memories and photography has been analyzed in numerous studies in the field of psychiatry and psychology. While the topic of visual trauma narrative is a relatively new subject of critical literary studies, Foer's first two novels have sparked academic attention in this field. Codde argues, for example, that precisely because words fail to express traumatic experiences, Foer seeks other forms of representation and therefore employs visual language to reproduce the violence that dominates the characters' memory. The scholar argues that this explains the author's extensive use of illustrations in the text – photographs, screenshots, diagrams and similar mediums. Versluys similarly observes that violent and disruptive events cannot be expressed verbally and therefore need to be fitted within other, non-verbal, narratives.

*Purpose of the article* is to study how Foer transforms the narrative of trauma in order to represent its unspeakability. No longer are the words the only matter of importance, the presentation they are given on the page is now just as essential to the overall work. It is argued that by integrating the visual and the verbal into one unified storyline Foer is able to convey much more information to the reader than what is possible through text alone, simply because the reader must consider both the pictorial and narrative qualities of the content.

*Extremely Loud* is, in Foer's own words, a response to the first novel: here, through an intensely personal story, the writer addresses the effects that mass violence has on an individual. If *Everything is Illuminated* discussed attempts to access a traumatic past, *Extremely Loud* shows the limits of representing painful reality. In his second novel, Foer aims to convey the consequences of an impersonal violent attack (whether in

Dresden and Hiroshima during World War II or New York in 2001) on an individual victim. Foer's attempt to extend the depictions of violence over different eras and territories allows him to build what Michael Rothberg calls "multidirectional memory." The scholar suggests that only through "ongoing negotiation, cross referencing, and borrowing" is it possible to create a true narrative of violence, "productive and not privative" [3, p. 3]. Rothberg supports his argument explaining that "the dangers of the uniqueness discourse are that it potentially creates a hierarchy of suffering (which is morally offensive) and removes that suffering from the field of historical agency" [3, p. 9]. Such attitude, which is commonly expressed in the studies the Holocaust memory, can be similarly applied to the topic of the 9/11 collective trauma.

*Object and subject of research* is Jonathan Safran Foer's second novel, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* which is studied through the perspective of trauma theory and its visual representation in fictional text. Notably, 9/11 fiction should be considered in the light of extensive media coverage of the tragedy where factual precision plays a crucial role: the attack has been declared the most documented event in human history. "People encounter trauma by being a bystander, by living near to where a catastrophe happened, or by hearing about a crisis from a friend," writes Ann Kaplan in *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*, "But most people encounter trauma through the media, which is why focusing on so-called mediatized trauma is important" [4, p. 2]. Kaplan points out that the experience of the 9/11 attack was to a great extent dependant on its visual representation:

"The images were part of the traumatic symptom already evident in the media's constant repetition of the Towers being struck. Given trauma's peculiar visuality as a psychic disorder, this event seemed to feed trauma by being so highly visual in its happening. The images haunted one waking and dreaming. American culture was visually haunted by the repeated still unbelievable shots of a huge plane full of people plunging into a seemingly impenetrable tower, and bursting into fabulous orange flames." [4, p. 13]

At the same time, the widespread coverage of the attacks caused what Sonia Baelo-Allue calls the loss of the feeling of reality, virtualization of the events. In “The Depiction of 9/11 in Literature: The Role of Images and Intermedial References” the scholar comments that:

“Many spectators watched the same loop of video footage and images over and over during the days following the attacks and used the TV screen as a protective shield against the reality they perceived. In an attempt to make sense of the unfolding trauma, and due to the ubiquity of similar disasters in U.S. cinema, many people compared the events with a Hollywood disaster movie; the suicide attackers were linked to actors in a global superproduction. Such views underlined the seemingly unreal nature of the events and the way they shattered our sense of reality.” [5, p. 184]

*Scientific novelty.* By expanding the narrative text of the novel to non-verbal elements and visual language, Foer provides his readers with a new approach to represent the events in fiction, a major step forward in what can be done in literature. The effect which these visual elements have on a text allows us to claim that Foer’s works are examples of latest developments in fiction, the so-called post-postmodern writing.

### **Main Content**

Foer’s engagement with the discourse of trauma and the narrative of memory, that started in his first critically acclaimed novel *Everything is Illuminated*, continued in his second book *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, published in 2005. The novel tells the story of Oskar Schell, a nine-year-old boy trying to cope with the death of his father in the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. On what the protagonist calls “the worst day,” Oskar comes home early to find a number of voice messages on the answering machine from his father trapped in one of the burning towers. As soon as the boy finishes listening to the first few messages, his dad calls again for the final time, but Oskar is not able to pick up the phone. Instead, he hides the answering machine from his mother and grandmother and keeps the messages secret, a “secret that was a hole ... that every happy thing fell into” [1, p. 71]. Thus, the boy not only has to deal with the shock of his father’s sudden death, but is also overwhelmed

by guilt from failing to provide support in his final moments. Devastated by the loss, Oskar gives himself bruises and invents the most implausible devices, such as birdseed suits to jump from burning buildings and bracelets that transmit the heartbeat of loved ones.

About one year after the tragedy, Oskar comes into his father's closet and accidentally finds an envelope with a key inside and the word "Black" written on it. Because Oskar imagines that the envelope was intentionally left for him by his father, the boy starts a quest to find a matching lock. The search takes him around all five boroughs into the homes of different New Yorkers with the same surname, Black. However, the clue for the protagonist's quest becomes a false lead and reveals nothing about the father's last days. Even though at the end Oskar manages to solve the riddle of the key, only his increasing awareness of traumas that others go through and sharing the story of his own loss with the people he meets help him reconnect with reality and come to terms with the death of his father.

The story of the terrorist attack on New York is told mostly through Oskar's own voice, which allows the author to show the character's traumatized mind and his struggle to overcome the personal tragedy. There are, however, several major voices in the novel. Chapters narrated by the protagonist alternate with unsent letters written by his paternal grandfather, Thomas Schell, a young sculptor who lost his fiancée Anna and their unborn child during the allied bombing of Dresden in 1945. Thomas miraculously survives the destruction, but his psyche is deeply scarred by the loss. In order to start his life anew, he moves to New York, where, seven years after the bombing, he accidentally meets and soon marries his fiancée's sister, Oskar's grandmother. Haunted by his past trauma, he leads a miserable life, avoiding his wife and spending most of his time at the airport or working at a jewelry-shop—a job he is not interested in. When he finds out that his wife is pregnant, Thomas leaves her and moves back to Dresden. The letters, every one of which is titled "Why I'm Not Where You Are," are addressed to his son, Oskar's father, whom Thomas never met.

The third voice in the novel is that of Thomas's wife, Oskar's paternal grandmother, who keeps a journal entitled "My Feelings" and addresses it to Oskar. Foer switches between narrators following an invariable structure:

Oskar – grandfather – Oskar – grandmother, which allows the author to depict the same events from different perspectives, while simultaneously preserving the central role of the story of the young protagonists.

Oskar's memory of the 9/11 events, the grandfather's letters and the grandmother's journal provide personalized accounts of loss and pain, and allow Foer to compose an extended narrative of historical violence and trauma. Depictions of the Dresden and Hiroshima massacres, as well as graphic reports about the 9/11 attack, leads Philippe Codde to state that the novel's main theme is "some of the remaining historical traumas of the twentieth century that were left untouched in *Everything Is Illuminated*" [2, p. 241]. In *Extremely Loud*, Foer seems to abandon his interest in the topic of the Holocaust. The only episode that directly elaborates on the theme of the Holocaust is the story of the grandfather's Jewish friend, who perished in one of Nazi's camps. The grandfather is obsessed to learn about the man's destiny after they lost contact during the war, which, as he believes, will help him find closure in his own story of World War II.

Visual and imagined images are interconnected in the descriptions of 9/11; the juxtaposition of trauma and fantasy also forms the backbone of Foer's novel and explains the author's use of stylistic devices. Actual descriptions of the attack on the World Trade Center are very scarce in the novel and the narrative of violence is intentionally indirect and distorted. The only account of the burning towers is presented towards the end of the novel in the grandfather's letter to his dead son. The events that took place before the outset of the storyline are evoked by the protagonist's seemingly irrelevant remarks about the skyscrapers and planes:

"Sometimes I think it would be weird if there were a skyscraper that moved up and down while its elevator stayed in place. So if you wanted to go to the ninety-fifth floor, you'd just press the 95 button and the ninety-fifth floor would come to you. Also, that could be extremely useful, because if you're on the ninety-fifth floor and the plane hits below you, the building could take you to the ground, and everyone could be safe" [1, p. 3]

The young boy's refusal to talk about the actual traumatic experiences and, at the same time, his obsession to find an impossible solution for the

past atrocity indicate his psychological trauma. Even though Oskar attends sessions with a psychiatrist, he doesn't seem to make any progress in his psychological healing. The conversations that Dr. Fein has with the boy seem to avoid addressing the actual problem, which also gives Oskar an impression that the correct way to cope with the trauma is by burying feelings deep inside: "No matter how much I feel, I'm not going to let it out." Confesses the boy, "If I have to cry, I'm gonna cry on the inside. If I have to bleed, I'll bruise. If my heart starts going crazy, I'm not gonna tell everyone in the world about it. It doesn't help anything. It just makes everyone's life worse" [1, p. 203].

However, Oscar's inclination to suppress the bitter reality and find comfort in fantasy and imagination does not work, because he continuously encounters reminders of the distressing events, which bring forward bitter memories. This process is characteristic of the functioning of a traumatized psyche, described by Herman in *Trauma and Recovery: the Aftermath of Violence*:

"The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep. Small, seemingly insignificant reminders can also evoke these memories, which often return with all the vividness and emotional force of the original event. Thus, even normally safe environments may come to feel dangerous, for the survivor can never be assured that she will not encounter some reminder of the trauma." [6, p. 60]

Later, the actual events of the destruction of the buildings again make a brief appearance, this time through seemingly benign photographs and episodes that, at first sight, have nothing to do with the attack. When Oskar visits the Empire State Building he cannot help to imagine what it would be like if a plane were to strike the building [1, p. 244-245]. Similarly, the photographs of a falling cat [1, p. 191] and a descending roller-coaster cart [1, p. 148] suggest the connection with the well-known image of a falling man, popularized by the media to become representative of the attack. The inaccessibility of one's traumatic past and difficulty in

representing historical violence in the text is one of the important themes that is featured in all three Foer's novels. In *Everything Is Illuminated*, the writer literally and typographically excluded the exact moment of the Nazi attack on the shtetl by filling most of the page with a series of dots, until the narration continues on the next page. The theme is taken up even more prominently in *Extremely Loud*, where the novel's traumatic core literally becomes beyond verbal representation. Due to the inexpressibility of the tragic past, the author presents some of the characters of the novel as mute or otherwise unable to speak of the violent experiences that defined their lives. After the Dresden bombing, where Oskar's grandfather loses his fiancée and their unborn child while himself barely escapes the massacre, the man gradually loses speech starting with the name of his beloved, Anna. Notably, the second word that he is unable to utter is "and," suggesting that the man's trauma deprives him of the ability to connect and find sequence, and the last word he loses is "I." The grandfather communicates through brief sentences in his notebook and a "yes" and "no" tattooed on the palms of his hands, which, as argued by Kristiaan Versluys, "is only one step away from total annihilation" [1, p. 89]. When he later tries to narrate his story in a letter to his son, he runs out of paper, so has to decrease intervals between the words to use all available space, which turns the pages completely black and indecipherable [1, p. 281-284].

His wife, Oskar's grandmother and Anna's sister, also attempts to describe her painful memories of the bombing and spends every spare minute of her time typing the story of her traumatic youth. However, she fails to notice that a ribbon is missing from her typewriter, so the years that she spends writing her memoir result in thousands of blank pages, also shown in the novel [1, p. 120-123].

The failure of language to communicate violent experiences is, as Jenny Edkins argues in her study of cultural memory *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, also a sign of the destruction of a community:

"The language comes from and belongs to the family and the community. . . . Communication takes place in language and language itself is social and political, not individual. . . . It has become



plain to a survivor that the appearance of fixity and security produced by the social order is just that: an appearance. Of course, the language we speak is part of the social order, and when the order falls apart around our ears, so does the language. What we *can* say no longer makes sense; what we want to say, we can't. There are no words for it. This is the dilemma survivors face" [7, p. 7-8].

Because words fail to represent the tragic past, Foer's characters seek other forms of communication to express the violence in the wake of their trauma and by doing so attempt to reestablish relationships with others. Oskar, who cannot speak about 9/11 and keeps calling it "the worst day," translates his father's final message on the answering machine into a Morse code and turns it into a bead bracelet for his mother. However, even though she intuitively understands the importance of her son's present and immediately puts it on her wrist, she fails to decipher the important message. The grandfather, after he finds out about his son's death in the terrorist attack, calls his wife from across the Atlantic but, unable to speak, breaks the words down into numbers on the phone dial: "For love I pressed "5,6,8,3," for death, "3,3,2,8,4," when the suffering is subtracted from the joy, what remains? What, I wondered, is the sum of my life?" [1, p. 269]. The recipient of the ciphered message is equally unable to interpret it, so the grandmother, unaware of who she is talking to, says that all she can hear is beeps and asks the caller to hang up and try again. "Try again?" contemplates the old man, "I was trying to try again, that's what I was doing!" [1, p. 269].

Philippe Codde in "Philomela Revisited: Traumatic Iconicity In Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*" relates the author's use of alternative forms of communication to the classical myth of Philomela, where the main heroine, raped and muted by her brother-in-law, transmits the testimony by weaving it into a tapestry.

"Foer did not, however, simply create a one-for-one metaphorical rewriting of the Philomela myth; instead, he consciously and wittily composed a variation on a number of the myth's predominant motifs. The most conspicuous motif in Philomela's story is obviously the inexpressibility of a traumatic event that one

desperately tries to transmit via alternative semiotic, non-linguistic, means. In the Philomela story, art therefore makes up for the relentless but indescribable brutality encountered in real life, which is reminiscent of Foer's surprise, expressed in an interview with Gabe Hudson, that critics found fault with his adoption of 9/11 as a literary subject, 'as if creating art out of tragedy weren't an inherently good thing?' [2, p. 247].

In an interview Foer states that "to speak about what happened on September 11 requires a visual language" (*Village Voice*, 22 March 2005). In another interview the writer continued, saying that:

"using images makes sense for this particular book. First, because the way children see the world is that they sort of take these mental snapshots; they hoard all these images that they remember 20 or 40 years later. And also, . . . when we think of [the September 11] events, we remember certain images: planes going into the buildings, people falling, the towers collapsing. That's how we experience it; that's how we remember it. And I want to be true to that experience. . . . I think it's very dangerous to avoid looking at war, at violence. So I really wanted to explicitly look at those things in the book, not only through the writing, which I tried to make as visual and direct as I could, but also through these images." (*BookRage*, April 2005).

The images that are included in the novel derive from various media and include photographs, several sheets with colored signatures of strangers from a stationary shop [1, p. 45-49], a design for a paper plane he used to make together with his father [1, p. 56], a sheet with Oskar's fingerprints his mother made him submit for security reasons [1, p. 65], several photographs of doorknobs and keys, mating turtles [1, p. 57], a tennis player [1, p. 64] etc. Moreover, Oskar also mentions several photographs that do not appear in the novel, namely, "a shark attacking a girl, someone walking on a tightrope between the Twin Towers, that actress getting a blowjob from her normal boyfriend, a soldier getting his head cut off in Iraq, the place on the wall where a famous stolen painting used to hang" [1, p. 42]. The boy keeps his "scrapbook of everything that happened" [1, p. 42] in a tight space between his bed and the wall and takes the book out

when he feels particularly down (what he calls “having heavy boots”) or has difficulty falling asleep.

On the one hand, these images could be considered the author’s illustration for the adjacent verbal narrative because they stand in direct relation to the text of the novel. For example, when Oskar visits Coney Island and takes a roller coaster ride with one of the Blacks, a picture of a roller coaster appears on one of the next pages [1, p. 148]. Similarly, a picture of a falling cat accompanies the passage when the protagonist explains “how cats reach terminal velocity by making themselves into little parachutes” [1, p. 191].

Foer, however, implies that these illustrations are mental images, included into the text to demonstrate the operation of the boy’s mind. This explains, among others, foreshadowing and flashbacks created through the separation of verbal and visual narrative: for example, an aerial photograph of Manhattan with an empty white space marking the territory of Central Park [1, p. 60-61] is explained much later in a chapter that contains a bedtime story titled “The Sixth Borough” told by Oskar’s father [1, p. 217-223]. Likewise, there is no direct explanation for the photograph of a tennis player lying on his back [1, p. 64], except for a reference to a similar picture in a newspaper that Oskar’s father had been reading on the evening before he died. The reader is asked to reestablish connections between the plot and the illustrations and derive the meaning of the images.

The collection of photos included in Oskar’s diary is therefore the only actual depiction of the violence of “the worst day” that appears in the novel. Whether direct visual references to the attack on the World Trade Center (such as the photo of a falling man that is reprinted throughout the book) or allusions to the boy’s terrors that appeared as a result of his trauma (a blurred photograph of an observation deck at the Empire State Building and a photo of the Brooklyn Bridge cabling), they provide an impression of sharing with the protagonist the nightmares of the attack [1, pp. 246 and 89].

Through the episodes of the Dresden and Hiroshima massacres, the two separate narratives of first-hand exposure to historical mass violence, Foer alludes to the reader’s moral judgment of subjective experiences in

such horrifying atrocities. Even though there are no actual historic details about either event (the narrators give no clues of either time or context of the two bloodsheds), the author uses the scenes as a collective image for people's suffering and terror during the times of violent attacks. In this sense, in *Extremely Loud* both descriptions are symbolic representations of the 9/11 narrative and contribute to the realistic and graphic account of the terrorist attack on The World Trade Center.

This is the mechanism behind Foer's panorama of historical violence: the lack of or rather the omission of factual information and the focus on the traumatic experiences of individual victims allows the author to blend the three historic events into one narrative of trauma, always unjust and painful. Naomi Mandel emphasizes that "in the context of violence, fiction must be true to the facts in order to safeguard the reality of violence . . . and protect history from denial" [13, p. 240]. The critic then explains that fiction's fidelity to historical violence should proclaim itself "if not in the facts, then in the manifestations of their psychic impact" [13, p. 242]. Symbolically, this idea is echoed in the image of the rock collection, which Oskar finds at his neighbor's home, a retired journalist Alex Black. Each rock comes from a place notorious for violent events that took place there: the landing operation of the Allied invasion of Normandy on June 19, 1944, the attack on Hwach'on Dam during the Korean War and the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas.

"One fascinating thing was that each rock had a little piece of paper next to it that said where the rock came from, and when it came from, like, "Normandy, 6/19/44," "Hwach'on Dam, 4/09/51," and "Dallas, 11/22/63." That was so fascinating, but one weird thing was that there were lots of bullets on the mantel, too, and they didn't have little pieces of paper next to them. I asked him how he knew which was which. 'A bullet's a bullet's a bullet!'" [1, p. 156].

Paraphrasing Gertrude Stein's famous sentence "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose," Foer asserts his ethical position by universalizing evil, proving that it is pointless and impermissible to divide violence into greater and lesser. Presenting multiple catastrophes allows him to consider 9/11

through a wider narrative frame and, thus, to ask the reader to see the suffering of innocent people for what it is: unacceptable.

### Conclusions

The series of photographs represent “the unspeakable” for Oskar and become the boy’s medium to relive and reenact the past through flashbacks, nightmares, and compulsively repeated images. As Elisabeth Siegel explains in her study of traumatic memory, “they generate an immediacy that brings the characters’ experiences ‘incredibly close’ to readers. . . . The immediacy generated by these images seems to cater to a voyeuristic curiosity and desire for direct witnessing, an aspect not unimportant with regard to the visual representation of 9/11” [10].

Through visual representation of traumatic memory, Foer wants to establish the reader’s strong sense of sympathy for the victim. Kowalewski calls this technique realistic imagining: “an experience for a reader to imaginatively suffer” [11, p. 203] together with the characters of a violent scene. The sense of danger and psychological instability is transmitted through fragmentary information, which, as the scholar explains, causes us to fill in the distressing details that have been omitted by the narrator: “The more the descriptive omissions here pose a resistance to our reading efforts, the harder we work to overcome them, to fill the imagistic gaps and visually translate or “rephrase” the sequence. We are invited by this kind of writing to move away from words and into imagined experience” [11, p. 152].

This argument is relevant within the “notion of the transmissibility” of trauma, discussed by Alan Gibbs in *Contemporary American Trauma Narratives*. The scholar claims that there is a demand for writers “to transmit rather than represent” trauma and, “as readers of trauma texts we desire affect and emotional response” [12, p. 28]. This constitutes the mechanism of the reader’s reception of the representations of violence in Foer’s *Extremely Loud*.

*Potential for further scientific research.* Foer’s attention to non-verbal narrative is most important within the study of post-modern features of his novels. The unconventional presentation of trauma in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is characteristic of the potential that literary text has

in approaching the reader. We believe, that it is important to continue the research of these mediums to address new and innovative ways to create literature.

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### Анотація

#### **М.О. Доган. Візуалізація нарративу травми в романі Джонатана Сафрана Фоера «Страшенно голосно та неймовірно близько»**

Стаття досліджує другий роман Джонатана Сафрана Фоера «Страшенно голосно та неймовірно близько» у контексті теорії нарративу травми. Роман цього сучасного американського письменника єврейського походження змальовує наслідки терористичної атаки дев'ятого вересня 2001 року на Всесвітній центр торгівлі в Нью-Йорку, проте автор навмисно не включає фактичні зображення страшних подій того дня до тексту. Натомість, роман містить численні фотографії та інші візуальні матеріали, що покликані передати вади вербального відображення особистої та колективної травми. В статті стверджується, що через символічну та фактичну недосяжність минулого та невимовність травматичних спогадів, герої Фоера шукають невербальних засобів для вираження свого болю. У той час, як будь-яка спроба виразити травму стикається з психічними та психологічними перешкодами, в романі вони передаються у формі розірваного нарративу, повторів і тиші в тексті. Порушення лінійного плину оповіді і використання візуального письма відображає фрагментованість пам'яті, а також неможливість усно передати трагічні події минулого.

Проте, бажання відновити зв'язок з трагічним минулим і розповісти про важкий досвід є невід'ємною частиною успішного емоційного та психологічного зцілення персонажів. В цьому романі Фоер натякає, що, незважаючи на обмежений доступ до минулого, герої можуть, принаймні, окреслити деякі його епізоди. Завдяки тому, що роман передає вади нарративу, автор дозволяє читачам відчувати механізми функціонування травмованої психіки: вербальний та візуальний текст поєднуються, щоб відобразити події минулого та їх вплив на особистість. Таким чином, усі елементи тексту стають частиною метафоричної головоломки, яка необхідна для відтворення подій травматичної історії. Тільки після того, як усі підказки будуть розшифровані, герої Фоера зможуть віднайти зв'язок з минулим.

**Ключові слова:** Джонатан Сафран Фоер, «Страшенно голосно та неймовірно близько», візуальний нарратив, травма, 9/11

### Аннотация

#### **М.А. Доган. Визуализация нарратива травмы в романе Джонатана Сафрана Фоера «Жутко громко и запредельно близко»**

Статья исследует второй роман Джонатана Сафрана Фоера «Жутко громко и запредельно близко» в контексте теории нарратива травмы. Роман

этого современного американского писателя еврейского происхождения рассказывает про последствия террористической атаки девятого сентября 2001 года на Всемирный центр торговли в Нью-Йорке, но автор сознательно исключает фактические описания страшных событий того дня. Вместо этого, роман содержит многочисленные фотографии и другие визуальные материалы, которые призваны передать недостатки вербального отображения личной и коллективной травмы. Утверждается, что через символическую и фактическую недосыгаемость прошлого и невозможность передачи травматических воспоминаний, герои Фоеера ищут невербальные средства для выражения своей боли. В то время как любая попытка рассказать о травме сталкивается с психическими и психологическими препятствиями, в романе они передаются в форме разорванного нарратива, повторов и тишины в тексте. Нарушение линейного течения повествования и использования визуального письма отражает фрагментированность памяти, а также невозможность устной передачи трагических событий прошлого.

Однако, желание восстановить связь с трагическим прошлым и рассказать о тяжелом опыте являются неотъемлемой частью успешного эмоционального и психологического исцеления персонажей. В этом романе Фоеер намекает, что, несмотря на ограниченный доступ к воспоминаниям о травме, герои могут, по крайней мере, обозначить некоторые её эпизоды. Благодаря тому, что роман отображает недостатки нарратива, автор позволяет читателям ощутить механизмы функционирования травмированной психики: вербальный и визуальный текст объединяются, чтобы отразить события прошлого и их влияние на личность. Таким образом, все элементы текста становятся частью метафорической головоломки, которая необходима для воспроизведения событий истории. Только после того, как все подсказки будут расшифрованы, герои Фоеера смогут восстановить связь с прошлым.

**Ключевые слова:** Джонатан Сафран Фоеер, «Жутко громко и запредельно близко», визуальный нарратив, травма, 9/11

### Summary

#### **M.O. Dogan. Visualization of the Trauma Narrative in Jonathan Safran Foer's Novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close***

The article studies Jonathan Safran Foer's second novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* within the theory of trauma narrative. The novel describes the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York, but the events of the day are never explicitly reported. Instead, numerous photographs



and other visual elements are included in the text to represent the limits of language in portraying trauma r documenting its effects. It is argued that, because of the symbolical and literal inapproachability of the past and the unspeakability of the trauma, Foer's characters seek non-verbal means to access the history and express their pain. While any attempt to represent trauma is challenged by its inaccessibility, in the novel it is transmitted in the form of a disjointed narrative and a failure to verbally describe the tragic events. Disruptions and repetitions, the use of visual writing and silence in the text reflect the functioning of a traumatized mind and illustrate that memory is often non-linear and fragmented.

At the same time, the urge to re-establish the connection with the traumatic past and create a narrative of tragic experiences is crucial for a successful emotional and psychological recovery of the characters. Here, Foer appears to be playing with the idea that despite limitations of accessing the past, it is possible to at least outline some of its parts. In the article it is suggested that the novel works through the limitations of language and allows for a multiplicity of mediums to account for traumatized psyche: spoken testimonies and photography collide in order to represent violent events and their impact. These elements thus become pieces of a puzzle necessary for understanding of the traumatic history, while the author asks his reader to decode the clues to metaphorically illuminate the past.

**Key Words:** Jonathan Safran Foer, Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, visual narrative, trauma, 9/11.

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