



ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol. 04 No. 01. July-September 2025. Page#.1568-1576

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)



The Politics of Silence: Trauma and Memory in Post-9/11 American Fiction

Dr. Muhammad Adeel Khan

Ph.D Political Science, Lecturer Higher Education Department KP

dradeelkhan2@gmail.com

Musarrat Jabeen

Lecturer at Department of English literature and linguistics, Iqra National University Peshawar

musarrat.jabeen83@gmail.com

Rizwana Iqbal

Lecturer at Department of English literature and linguistics, Iqra National University
Peshawar

rizwanaiqbalaawan@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

*This article explores the narrative role and political implications of silence in post-9/11 fiction, focusing on how contemporary novels use silence as a response to trauma, a critique of national memory, and a form of resistance. Drawing on trauma theory and memory studies, the analysis examines how authors such as Jonathan Safran Foer (*Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*) and Don DeLillo (*Falling Man*) deploy contrasting stylistic strategies Foer through visual fragmentation and typographical experimentation, DeLillo through minimalist prose and emotional restraint to convey the unspeakable nature of grief and psychological dissociation. Such narrative gaps reflect inner confusion of characters as well as subverts conventional modes of narrative. The article also discusses post-9/11 literature as a way of criticizing the prevailing narrative of patriotism that excludes critics and oppresses racial others, especially Muslim Americans. Novels such as *The Emperors Children* by Claire Messud and *Home Land* by Sam Lipsyte contain the conflict between a personal trauma and a national propaganda to show the omissions inherent in the national commemorations. In such writings, silence is a politically mediated element of literary craft: it refuses to close, it troubles group memory, and it gives voice to the voiceless. The article claims that, by the means of form, subtext, and structure the diversity of the attitude towards silence, post-9/11 fiction does not simply reflect the trauma but, re-imagining its possibilities of representation, re-remembers it ethically. Through it, it validates silence as a storytelling requirement and as a form of cultural opposition.*

Keywords: Post-9/11 Fiction, Literary Silence, Trauma Theory, Cultural Memory, Narrative Fragmentation, Jonathan Safran Foer, Don DeLillo, National Mourning, Political Resistance, Marginalized Voices.

Introduction

The events of September 11, 2001, followed by the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, were a cultural, political and psychological paradigmatic shift not only in the American society but in the whole world that rearranged the shapes of fear, security, identity, and memory. The shocking image of the tumbling towers was transmitted to the whole world and

remained as a permanent reminder of weakness and discontinuity in the Western consciousness. Consequently, the events of 9/11 are commonly regarded as a defining moment of the twenty first century and the process of reconfiguring the representation of trauma, grief and national identity in literature and media has inspired scholars to reconsider the ways to represent trauma, grief and national identity in the context of 9/11 (Versluys, 2009). As a reaction, literature started showing the tendency towards the change of the linear narration to the broken, lost narration that resembled the loss of meaning the attacks brought. As it has been observed by literary critics, fiction produced after 9/11 is trying to move through a complicated terrain, between the pressures of memorialization and the moral dilemma of representation (Cvek, 2011). Along with this scenery, silence becomes a repeated theme in the novel not as inexistence of a speech or narration, but as a strong literary tool that can convey the expression of the inexpressible. In this respect, silence in post-9/11 fiction appears as a not only narrative but also a cultural mode of responding to the unspeakable trauma.

This essay will also support an argument that post 9/11 fiction uses silence as a writing tool as well as political statement, especially in its attempts to deal with trauma, memory, and complicity. In such literary texts, silence is not a vacuum of speech but it is an art of speech, what Elaine Scarry (2000) refers to as the unmaking of the world using pain. Writers, such as Don DeLillo, Jonathan Safran Foer and Mohsin Hamid, utilize the concept of silence in broken answers of their characters, blank spaces in speech or ruptured time, and represent what Cathy Caruth (1996) refers to as latency and belatedness of trauma. These silences cannot be closed, suggesting to the readers that they need to face the boundaries of the language and the threat of simplified rhetoric about the heroes and victims. This silence, especially as seen in American fiction, can be quite political, overturning official histories and media spectacles, which aim to define and contain 9/11 as quickly as possible. These works are not providing any definite explanations but leave gaps in the narration, hesitation, and omission so that ambiguity, self-examination and moral reckoning would be present (Gray, 2011). In this way they resist nationalistic recuperations of the attacks and the commodification of trauma within the post-9/11 cultural industry (Baelo-Allu, 2012).

Also, post-9/11 fiction portrayed silence as a place of negotiation of collective memory that determines the way societies can remember, forget, or mythologize traumatic occurrences. Silence is used in literary works such as *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* or *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a means of examining the topics of intergenerational sorrow, displacement, and identity politicization (Duvall & Marzec, 2011). The implication in such works is that the unsaid may be more informative than the direct narration, the silence between words, the omission of voice, and the ellipses. Silence is a way of resistance, particularly against the marginalized voices because their trauma might be impossible to be taken into account in the discourses of remembrance. Silence, thus, employed by post-9/11 literature is not only a reflection of personal disintegration but also an indictment against greater sociopolitical systems that govern the telling as well as the silencing of stories (Cilano, 2009). Here, silence is morally laden, and it marks a promise to testify without stealing the pain of others and to respect the incommensurability of trauma. In this way, post-9/11 silence is not simply a form of aesthetic minimalism; but rather, a dynamic and forceful form of political and ethical action in an age of increased noise, surveillance and spectacle.

Research Questions:

1. How do novels represent the unspeakable nature of trauma?

2. What is the relationship between silence, memory, and national identity?
3. How does fiction challenge or reinforce dominant narratives of 9/11?

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive methodology rooted in trauma theory, memory studies, and political critique to analyze how silence functions as both a narrative strategy and political commentary in post-9/11 fiction. Drawing on trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman, the research examines how trauma disrupts time, identity, and language leading to gaps, repetitions, and silences within narrative structures. These disruptions will be traced through close textual readings of *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo and *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer, both of which present fragmented timelines and internal monologues that reflect delayed processing and repressed memory. Silence, in these texts, emerges not as emptiness but as a coded language of pain, signifying the characters' inability to fully confront or articulate their trauma. The analysis focuses on narrative techniques such as ellipses, withheld dialogue, non-linear temporality, and unspeakable thoughts to uncover how silence operates as a site of traumatic inscription and deferred meaning (Caruth, 1996; Felman & Laub, 1992).

Complementing trauma theory, the study engages with memory studies especially the work of Marianne Hirsch on post memory and Aleida Assmann's distinction between communicative and cultural memory to analyze how silence mediates the transmission of memory across generations. This framework is particularly useful in exploring *The Emperor's Children* by Claire Messud and *Homeland* by Sam Lipsyte, which portray characters negotiating not only personal grief but broader cultural anxieties surrounding class, complicity, and national identity. The texts under analysis are considered in terms of how silences are used to indicate the contentious or repressed memories, particularly the ones that cannot be included in the mainstream narratives of patriotism and heroism. The methodology also questions the role of silence as resistance to the commodification of 9/11 and the militarized discourses that ensued through a political critique. The unwillingness of the novels to give either closure or moral clarity is seen as a kind of protest against the hyper determined narratives of media and political rhetoric. In this way, by means of triangulated analysis that integrates the psychological disturbances of trauma, the social constructivism of memory, and the ideological functioning of politics, this paper shows that post-9/11 fiction is not silent, but a strong form of meaning construction and ethical involvement.

Theoretical Framework: Trauma, Memory, and Silence

The theory of trauma offers a baseline perspective through which the narrative and psychological structures that support post-9/11 fiction may be approached. According to Cathy Caruth (1996) trauma essentially breaks the chronological flow of narrative resulting in late, incomplete, and commonly unspeakable experiences that cannot be represented in any conventional way. Trauma is not merely a mental wound but a crisis of representation: a difficulty of expressing the event as it was experienced, particularly when that event defeats the capacity of the psyche to process it. Dori Laub (1992) continues this break by suggesting that traumatic events may result in a disintegration of witnessing in which the traumatized person is unable to experience the event in the present moment, but can only describe it at a later time, perhaps reluctantly, with gaps or silence. In novels such as *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo, this disjunction of the narrative can be seen in the broken time lines, the repetitive motifs of unfinishedness as well as the endless repetitive cycles of inner monologues. These formal decisions are not aesthetic but are in the psychic form

of trauma itself. The ineffable quality of the traumatic experience leads to the silence, not as the lack, but rather as the sign of something too devastating to be spoken, the haunting that keeps disturbing the present (Luckhurst, 2008).

The study of cultural memory provides an alternate model by studying how societies as a whole remember or repress or rewrite traumatic pasts. The theory of postmemory proposed by Marianne Hirsch (2008) explains the manner in which the generations of the descendants of trauma victims acquire the memory that they did not experience firsthand, but which they feel and tell in a profound way. This is eminent in the use of younger generations in the post-9/11 fiction, as they struggled to come to terms with a tragedy that had already redefined the world long before they could make sense of it. Following the concept of memory as communicative and cultural (Aleida Assmann, 2011), there is a difference between communicative (short-term, interpersonal) and cultural (long-term, institutionalized) memory, based on the role of literature, monuments, and media as the carriers of collective trauma. This interaction is well described in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer, who describes how the child main character goes on a mission to comprehend the death of his father in the World Trade Center, reconstructing broken memories and silences of his family history. This way of thinking about silence implies that silence is a means of memory, a reminder of what societies forget or are still unable to declare about their past. Post 9/11 fiction, therefore, turns out a location of cultural negotiation, and it shows how collective memory is constructed as well as contested following violence.

The politics of silence extends the theoretical context by questioning the power structure that is entrenched on who can speak and those who remain mute. Michel Foucault (1978) is most known to have done that by stating that silence is not a lack of speech but a form of power- a power that is tactically used in discourse to determine what is knowable or sayable. The silence in the post-9/11 cultural landscape was a strong political weapon: on the one hand, mainstream discourses gave voice to American heroes and victims; on the other hand, they rendered Muslim, Arab and immigrant voices both mute and in mourning at the same time. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) criticizes this relationship posing the question whether the subaltern can speak in hegemonic frames of meaning and legitimacy which are predetermined. Silence in this case is two-sided and it can signify forced erasure or calculated resistance. *The Emperor Children* by Claire Messud and *the Homeland* by Sam Lipsyte show how people of color, immigrants, and disappointed intellectuals manage the claustrophobia of patriotic rhetoric. Their silences, which are internalized, imposed, and performative, have been used to critique the exclusions of post-9 /11 nationalism and the contraction of the public space in which dissent is possible. The gaps in the post 9/11 fiction are in this respect not empty spaces, but rather politicized gaps, whether complicit or rebellious.

Trauma, memory, and silence overlap, and the issue of ethics of narrative arises at this point: how can fiction ethically portray trauma without taking it over and misrepresenting it? The politics of visibility is an issue that must be addressed in post-9/11 literature that focuses on the marginalized voices, including Muslim American or South Asian voices. Although there has been criticism in some works that speak about these communities without involving them (Al-Ali, 2018), there are other works that have given such complex representations of communities by emphasizing silence as a means of survival and resistance. The silence in these stories is not so much an effect of trauma but it is a means to gain back power against surveillance, racial profiling and cultural

othering. The official aesthetics of silence, ellipsis, fragmentation, recursive narration reflect the social political realities that restrict speech. This can be particularly seen in those stories that refuse closure or catharsis in any way and thus denying the reader the satisfaction of an ending. By so doing these texts weaken the commodification of trauma and highlight the moral necessity to focus on what is not said. Therefore, post-9/11 fiction, by the way it employs silence, is involved in a bigger struggle over memory, representation, and justice, which is cultural and political in nature.

Narrative Strategies of Silence in Post-9/11 Fiction

The absence of speech in post-9/11 fiction is not merely the passive lack of speech but a complex literary feature which indicates not only the psychological disintegration but also the ethical inhibition. Among the most notable narrative techniques, in which the silence can be represented, is the one of fragmentation and ellipsis, the stories being told in disjointed time lines, incomplete sentences, typographical interruptions. A good example is Jonathan Safran Foer *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, which was written in an extremely radical form. Foer also includes blank pages, heavily redacted text, and a flipbook of a man falling up instead of down, typographic and visual elements that reflect the inability of the main character Oskar to come to terms with the death of his father in the 9/11 attacks. The optical emptiness of these pages is not blank; it resonates an emotional emptiness, a silence too uncomfortable to be called. Likewise, in *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo the main hero Keith gradually turns silent and unreachable, a literary representation of dissociation and disengagement. DeLillo does not give Keith a coherent arc of psychological development but rather breaks his story into loosely-tethered vignettes. This disintegration is an echo of the psychological state of Keith and it corresponds to the ideology developed by Caruth (1996) that trauma is belated and generally inaccessible to language. These ellipses in the text and psychological levels, form a haunting rhythm, where one can say that the reader is encouraged to live in the silence and fill the gap with his or her own emotional input.

In addition to explicit structural rupture, post-9/11 fiction commonly depends on subtext and haunting gaps to tell what cannot be told. The characters do not or are unable to describe their trauma and this marks a more significant statement on the sayings of words. In *The Emperor's Children* by Claire Messud, as an example, the father of Marina, Julius, and her friend Bootie embody two extremes of a cultural silence: one of them does not talk about the crisis, afraid to be perceived as weak or irrelevant, the other one grows disillusioned to the point of exploding in a moral revolt. These characters are enveloped in the cacophony of media, politics and collective indignation, but their inner conflict has not been uttered, which shows how silence can be a form of alienation and self-reflection at the same time. In the post-9/11 fiction, it is not the survivors, but the secondary witnesses, children, friends, or strangers who are far away, that are set to seek the truth by recomposing the memory through the fragmentary traces left behind. The character of Oskar in Foer novel and Lianne in *Falling Man* are examples of this type of witnessing as the task of reconstructing an intelligible narrative out of fragmentary descriptions takes over. Such secondary witnesses have to deal with the unspoken; what the loved ones cannot tell; thus making an attempt to demonstrate the idea of Dori Laub (1992) that trauma is contagious and may spread even to people who were not present in the scene but are close to those who experienced it.

The other deep way in which silence finds its place in the post-9/11 literature is visual and structural silence- the form of the text itself signifies the trauma in the form of erasure, white space and disjunction. In *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, Foer employs a creative arrangement

of pages so that the words become crowded into a nonsensical mass or are not present at all, symbolizing the sheer weight of memory as well as the inability of communication. The aesthetic white spaces serve as spaces of grieving where the absence has the voice when words are not enough. In a similar manner, the prose of DeLillo is sparse and tightly held and his paragraphs frequently fail to conclude in a satisfactory manner as though the thought is being turned off in mid-sentence. Such structural incompleteness corresponds to the protagonist and to the cultural inability in general to understand sudden, mass violence. These formal devices are reminiscent of the theory that trauma cannot be closed narratively; rather the experience is incomplete, with gaps that will haunt the reader long after the text is over (Luckhurst, 2008). Such silences are not accidental but constructive ones, they define the manner in which the narrative is perceived and internalized, forcing the reader to be an active member of the trauma witnessing audience.

Lastly, post-9/11 fiction highlights the conflict between the memorialization of the masses and the sorrow of individuals by contrasting the outburst of loud, mass ritual with the silence of individual losses. Though monuments, national events, and political speeches define a single story of tragedy and resilience, in these novels, characters usually perceive such stories as insufficient or even obtrusive. Grief takes place within the domestic realm of houses, letters and internal monologues, in silent and random ways. In the novella *Homeland* by Sam Lipsyte the sardonic tone of the protagonist conceals a profound existential silence in the nature of being an American post 9/11. Irony and distance in the novel imply that they have oversaturated the discourse of the nation with the performative mourning that now smothers any actual emotion. The same happens with characters in *The Emperor's Children*, who lose in a manner that cannot be observed or acknowledged by people; their loss is intimate, untidy, and unfinished. This opposition can be seen as an expression of the concept of Aleida Assmann (2011) who argues that cultural memory tends to reduce trauma into collective digestible form, by forgetting the complexity of experience. Silence, in that way, is the act of protesting against the trivialization of grief into patriotic spectacle, a place where the characters can gain control over the mourning process and the time of mourning. By means of these narrative tactics, post-9/11 fiction does not resolve itself, but lingers in silence to celebrate the emotional, ethical, and political complexity of trauma and memory.

The Political Implications of Silence

Following the events of September 11, a cultural and political discourse emerged quickly in America, with the predominant themes of heroism, unity, and patriotism. The mourning became national and the trauma of the event was quickly incorporated into a narrative of strength and moral purity. Nevertheless, the post-9/11 fiction tends to disrupt this clean story to show how this representation of tragedy is sanitized and dissenting voices othered. Silence, as a literary device in novels, such as *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo and *The Emperor's Children* by Claire Messud, is a response to a deafening blare of official remembering. The characters in these texts are depicted as people who cannot or do not want to mourn in a way that would suit the nationalistic requirement of mourning in the right way. The silences that frame the emotional distance that Keith shows in *Falling Man*, as an example, denies the performative nature of national mourning, choosing instead ambiguity and personal alienation. Likewise, intellectual disobedience of Bootie in *The Emperor's Children* highlights the unease with facile nationalistic nonsense. Fiction therefore criticizes the way the official histories tend to overwrite individual sorrow with simplified allegories, heroes, flags as cures, and slogans such as *Never Forget* that in fact are meant to make people forget anything that does not conform to the mythos. These novels talk of what is hidden

through silence as much as they speak of what is said, these are guilt, complicity, and political exploitation of loss.

This repression can be found most vividly in the muzzling of racial and religious alterity, more particularly Muslim and Arab Americans, who continued to be invisible in post-9/11 cultural production unless framed as a menace. Racialized politics of trauma can be seen in post-9/11 fiction that either directly or indirectly deals with this silencing. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid, the narrative voice of the protagonist Changez is muted and subordinate, but carries within it the tremulousness of an unseen conflict, as he is speaking but not really, and his words are not those of a free man in the post-9/11 America. He speaks in a reserved tone, afraid of being misunderstood or even criminalized, and this self-censorship is a kind of imposed silence. Other mainstream American novels do not involve Muslim characters or they are marginal and their trauma is not recognized. This omission is not a coincidence but is representative of what Edward Said termed as strategic silencing the means by which a dominant cultural script was perpetuated by counter-narratives that were avoided. The political effects of this kind of erasure are not to be underestimated: they deprive whole groups of people the right to mourn, to express what they have lived through or to assert their place in the same nation in which they are said to be a threat. In this case, silence becomes a place where silenced voices either get eliminated or sound in the margins and their narratives are drowned by louder, whiter nationalistic discourses of identity.

Nonetheless, silence is not necessarily enforced, it can also be a methodically adopted form of resistance. In a political environment full of patriotic catchphrases and media hyperbole, to fail to speak or speak in broken, unclear tones is to make a political statement. The characters in post-9/11 fiction frequently evade predetermining roles of a victim, a hero, or a terrorist by remaining silent or by giving enigmatic accounts that they cannot resolve. As an example, in *Home Land* by Sam Lipsyte the detached, cynical attitude of the narration and the unwillingness to comply with national persuasions is a form of protests. Similarly, in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, the grandfather of Oskar does not speak, preferring to communicate with writing and signs, which is the denial of communicating with the traumatic memory in socially approved manners. Such silences are not mere blank spaces; they are articulate expressions of rancor, gestures of refusing involvement in stories that seem incomplete or abusive. In turn, literature is the place of archiving and making visible these silent resistances. Through the refusal of any neat ending, through the refusal to equate characters with moral lessons, post-9/11 fiction invites the reader to deal with the ugliness of grief and the politics of forgetting. Silence then turns out not only to be a symptom of trauma but also a weapon of subversion—a moral position against the reduction of complicated histories.

Notably, literature is significant in re-claiming these silenced histories and turning silence into a powerhouse. Fiction can give a voice to the omitted voices, because it is possible to build counter-narratives that redeem dignity. It gives a voice to the marginalized characters to take up space, although their words may be limited or not said at all. By using gaps, fragments, and omissions, authors encourage readers to participate in ethical witnessing: to see what is missing and how this is so. Such narrative silences require the reader to pay more attention, not only to the words that are there, but also to those that reverberate in their absence. Such an act of listening in literature can be transformational and destabilizing in its own ways, challenging the assumptions of the reader and expanding the field of empathy. Through this, the political implications of the use of

silence in post 9/11 fiction can be said to go beyond the page. They transgress the borders of national memory, challenge the institutional oblivions and demand a more broad conception of trauma. Instead of providing closure, these narratives bring space of questioning, discomfort and eventually of more fair remembrance. Silence is not, though, the end of the story, but the threshold upon which other histories start to be vocal.

Comparative Analysis

The post-9/11 fiction gives us a wide range of literary devices, which are in touch with silence as the reaction to trauma, each having a different narrative mechanism to capture the grief, the confusion, and the memory. The experimental style of the book is represented in the *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer where visual fragmentation, typographical play, non-linear narrative are applied to create the psychological disorientation of the young main character Oskar. The silence of the novel by Foer is physicalized, it is represented in the form of missing pages, redacted letters, and superimposed photographs and such, externalizing the inner emptiness caused by loss. These factors compel the reader to face the absence head-on and break the conventional narrative flow and are reminiscent of language failure to describe trauma comprehensively. The compulsive search to find meaning in the wake of the death of his father by Oskar is also a metaphor on narrative itself: fragmented, obsessive and unfinished. Silence, conversely, is applied, in the case of *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo, by means of a sparse, minimal style. Instead of visual experiment, DeLillo employs taut prose and emotional reserve to portray the dissociative state of Keith. There is frequent clipping of dialogue and muting of emotional reaction indicating the how trauma deadens affect and makes speech inadequate.

These two diametrically opposed literary styles show two opposing and complementary forms of literature silence. Where sweeping inner turmoil through form-disruption is an externalization on the part of Foer, DeLillo internalizes it, allowing the silence to fill in tone, pacing, and subtext. The aesthetic indicated by Foer implies the necessity to articulate and reconstruct what was broken, whereas DeLillo introduces the notion of silence as an empty space, a prolonged absence that is not easy to interpret. The two approaches put the reader to work to determine what is not there or not being said, but they do so in different affective registers: Foer via urgency and overload, DeLillo via stillness and detachment. Collectively, these novels demonstrate the malleability of silence as a literary construct not as an empty space but as a way of representing through the filter of the form, context and character psychology of trauma at the national level.

Conclusion

To sum up, the fiction evolved after 9/11 discloses silence as not the absence, but rather a diverse and active story-making potential, which shakes the conventional narration and reinvents trauma representation, recollection, and opposition. With the help of a wide range of literary techniques, such writers as Jonathan Safran Foer and Don DeLillo have rearranged the margins of expression by focusing on the unsaid, the disintegrated, and the withdrawn. The visually fragmented and emotionally desperate prose of Foer makes the reader feel the very instability and crudeness of personal loss, whereas the sparse, emotionally sterile prose of DeLillo reflects numbness of a different kind, which tends to follow tragedy. Such narrative choices are not just aesthetic choices, they are profoundly political and ethical actions, the realization of the inadequacy of language in the face of national trauma, as well as a commentary on the societal systems trying to co-opt, commercialize, or silence grief. Silence, in these texts, turns into a form of testimony, telling more

than words can by using gaps, pauses, and ellipses that cannot be closed and are to be thought over.

Finally, the post-9/11 literary field is where silence appears as a symptom and a strategy: a symptom of breakdown in the emotional world, and a strategy of reasserting control over the narrative. In any of its forms as visual experimentation, structural fragmentation, minimalist prose, or otherwise, silence is a subversive act, a critique of mainstream cultural discourse, a place where the marginalized voice can be heard, and it is most powerful not due to what it says, but what it does not. These novels shed light on how fiction can oppose the binary of victim and hero, instead offering vague, intimate descriptions of grief, identity, and memory. The post-9/11 fiction makes the readers listen, not only to the voices that talk, but also to the silence that cannot be heard. Through this, it opens the moral and aesthetic scope of literature claiming that even a silence is a language worth reading.

References

- Al-Ali, N. (2018). Gendering the Arab Spring: Rights and representations in Middle Eastern literature. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 14(2), 237–251.
- Assmann, A. (2011). *Cultural memory and Western civilization: Functions, media, archives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Baelo-Allué, S. (2012). *Contemporary US fiction in the age of globalization: The life and narratives of Don DeLillo*. Routledge.
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Cilano, C. (2009). *National identities in Pakistan: The 1971 war in contemporary Pakistani fiction*. Routledge.
- Cvek, S. (2011). *Towering figures: Reading the 9/11 archive*. Rodopi.
- DeLillo, D. (2007). *Falling man*. Scribner.
- Duvall, J. N., & Marzec, R. P. (2011). Narrative and the ethics of witnessing in 9/11 fiction. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 57(3), 381–400.
- Felman, S., & Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. Routledge.
- Foer, J. S. (2005). *Extremely loud & incredibly close*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: Volume I*. Pantheon.
- Gray, R. (2011). *After the fall: American literature since 9/11*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hamid, M. (2007). *The reluctant fundamentalist*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Hirsch, M. (2008). *The generation of postmemory: Writing and visual culture after the Holocaust*. Columbia University Press.
- Laub, D. (1992). Bearing witness, or the vicissitudes of listening. In S. Felman & D. Laub (Eds.), *Testimony* (pp. 57–74). Routledge.
- Lipsyte, S. (2004). *Home land*. HarperCollins.
- Luckhurst, R. (2008). *The trauma question*. Routledge.
- Messud, C. (2006). *The emperor's children*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Scarry, E. (2000). *The body in pain: The making and unmaking of the world*. Oxford University Press.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). University of Illinois Press.
- Versluys, K. (2009). *Out of the blue: September 11 and the novel*. Columbia University Press.