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Women and Psychological Trauma of 9/11 in Amy Waldman's *The Submission*

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ABSTRACT

*On September 11, 2001, the world was stunned into silence as four hijacked airplanes crashed into two of America's iconic landmarks, namely the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. For the first time, perhaps since the Vietnam War, the entire United States of America was engulfed in a mutual sense of loss and inconsolable grief. 2996 people, a vast number of them unarmed civilians including all the passengers aboard the four hijacked airplanes, lost their lives in what was perceived by many to be the worst terrorist attack of the twenty-first century. Occurrence of such a colossal tragedy has led to producing a large corpus of textual representation of the event including countless novels such as Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2012). This study focuses on analysing *The Submission* by Amy Waldman using the theory of Psychoanalysis to explore the concept of psychological trauma and the effects of PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder) on female characters affected by the tragedy of 9/11. The analysis, which is mostly based on Wilson and Keane (2004) and Caruth (2001) psychoanalysis theories, seeks to explore Waldman's perception of the process of healing from the devastating tragedy and psychological trauma of the female characters of the story. It is believed that Waldman's novel does not only portray the trauma of the characters but also presents the path of recovery and overcoming the PTSD of those who were emotionally wounded by the tragedy of 9/11.*

*Keywords: American authoress; Amy Waldman; *The Submission*; trauma; posttraumatic stress disorder*

INTRODUCTION

On September 11, 2001, the world was stunned into silence as four hijacked airplanes crashed into two of America's iconic landmarks, namely the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. The fourth plane was intended for the Capitol, but crashed in an empty field instead. For the first time, perhaps since the Vietnam War, the entire United States of America was engulfed in a mutual sense of loss and inconsolable grief. 2996 people, a vast number of them unarmed civilians including all the passengers aboard the four hijacked airplanes, lost their lives in what was perceived by many to be the worst terrorist attack of the twenty-first century. The attacks of 9/11 on the surface destroyed buildings and killed thousands of innocent people. These terrorist attacks "shattered a sense of security and perceptions of invulnerability among residents of the United States" (Silver 2011, p. 247). In other words, terrorists did not only collapse America's highest buildings, but they also "destroyed an icon in the household imagery of the American nation" (Borradori 2003, p. 28). According to Judith Greenberg (2003), the devastating trauma of 9/11 blew apart Americans' psychological unity and tore the individuals into fragments.

Nevertheless, little has been said on behalf of those whose lives were drastically altered for good in the aftermath of the attacks. In a tragedy that claimed almost 3000 lives, it

is very important to consider the issue of trauma faced by those who either survived or lost their loved ones to the carnage. The infamous and catalytic consequences of 9/11 have led to producing a considerable “corpus of textual/cultural representations that allow us to identify a variety of aesthetic and thematic responses” (Mohr & Mayer 2010, p. 2). According to Holloway (2008), early 9/11 novels mainly talk about the traumatic experience of the event and people’s reaction to it in the forms of sublimation and repression. Though there are numerous novels which address 9/11, this study intends to analyse Amy Waldman’s *The Submission* (2012) and explore how the authoress represents and deals with the trauma of 9/11 in her novel through the female characters of the story.

As “literature generates deeper and more stable impacts in the form of lasting impressions” (Khalis 2012, p. 88) the selected literary text also influences readers about their impression of 9/11. This study attempts to analyse *The Submission* from psychoanalysis perspective in order to find Amy Waldman’s representation of the event. Evidently, the main focus of this study is, through the selected novel, to represent an insight into the collective fate of those who did not perish amidst the atrocities committed on 9/11, and more specifically, the individuals who have lost their proverbial pillars of strength in the tragedy.

POST 9/11 LITERARY PRODUCTIONS

This section provides a review of literary productions published in the wake of 9/11. It explores how 9/11 attacks have been portrayed in literature over the years elapsed from the tragedy. Although the destruction of buildings on September 11 is not a literary problem, it has been portrayed or indicated in countless literary texts published after 9/11. Literary texts produced in the wake of 9/11 raises constant question regarding how 9/11 event is represented and interpreted in the Unites states and outside the borders of the country (Keniston & Quinn, 2013). According to Keniston and Quinn (2013), in the early years after the occurrence of 9/11 attacks, several prominent writers including Don DeLillo, Claire Messud, Ian McEwan, Art Spiegelman, Philip Roth, John Updike, Louise Gluck, Frank Bidart and Robert Pinsky articulated a largely political representation of the event. They presented an amalgamation of political, aesthetic and historical depiction of the cataclysmic events of 9/11 in order to achieve a simplified meaning and definition of the tragedy. Keniston and Quinn (2013) further argue that since several years elapsed from the occurrence of 9/11 tragedies, literary productions have changed their motif from representing 9/11 as a rupture from the US history to a medium of encountering trauma of 9/11 and to refuse incommensurability and ultimately to place the events into an historical framework. In terms of genre, early literary responses to 9/11 attacks appeared mostly in forms of “essays, brief personal reminiscences and poetry” (Keniston & Quinn 2013, p 3) with the main theme of capturing the events and responding to them emotionally. However, during the years, novels and long memoires have emerged with more nuanced approach to the tragedy. Early literary production endeavoured to fill the gap between personal losses due to the attacks and a larger political meaning however latter works tried to depict the aftermath of the tragedy. This paper, by selecting a post 9/11 novel published in 2012 attempts to examine how Amy Waldman as an American women writer has portrayed the tragic event after almost a decade elapsed from the tragedy.

Times Books in 2002 published a volume entitled *Portraits of grief* that is a collection of 1910 stories published in New York Times from September 15 until December 31, about the victims who lost their lives on September 11. Howell Raines and Janny Scott (2003) added four hundred portraits to the book and published it under *Portraits: 9/11/01: the collected" portraits of grief" from the New York Times* that narrates the story of individuals’ lives and their intimate tale. It contains the profile of those who died in the tragedy including

the details of their lives, their daily activities, habits and moments of joy. As Scott (2003) mentions in the introduction of the volume, the book has become a repository “of connection and consolation, a poignant reminder of individual humanity swallowed up by the dehumanising vastness of the toll, a focus for the expression of unfocused sorrow” (p. ix). *Portraits: 9/11/01* in a way is a lasting tribute to those innocent souls which helped Americans at the sensitive time of such a colossal national shock to face this massive national loss. The profiles in the book are not obituaries and they intended to have emotional power on the readers to express their sorrows for the victims of the attacks. It can be argued that the book provides a platform to present the scope of loss hence it is a valuable tribute for the victims. As mentioned earlier, the early productions after 9/11 merely presented and responded emotionally to the tragedy. However, we believe that Amy Waldman’s *The Submission* deals with the trauma of 9/11 and PTSD that the characters suffered from over the years after the occurrence of the event.

Codde (2010) investigates trauma in the three post-9/11 novels by Foer, McEwan and McInerney. He employs Versluys’s (2007) categorisation of post-9/11 novels. According to Versluys, post-9/11 novels can be divided into four categories, namely the novel of recuperation, the novel of first-hand witnessing, the great New York novel and the novel of the outsider. Codde considers Jonathan Safran Foer’s second novel *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) as a post-9/11 novel which belongs to the great New York novel category. Ian McEwan’s *Saturday* (2005) represent the category of the novel of the outsider as the events of 9/11 are seen from a distance as the protagonist, Henry Perowne as well as the writer himself live in central London. Jay McInerney’s *The Good Life* (2006) is in the category of the novel of first-hand witnessing as it gives the reader a sense of what happened that day in the center of the event itself. Codde (2010) argues that Foer and McEwan use “intradiegetic narrators and in this way, they really show their readers how the mind of a traumatised person works” (p. 79). They narrate their stories in the context of New York which is the heart of the trauma. However, Codde believes that there is no solution for trauma. In fact, every person deals with trauma in a different way and “there is no perfect solution for working through trauma” (2010, p.80). He believes that because trauma has a complicated nature, the process of healing from it is not logical. Therefore, many of the traumatic narratives such as Foer, McEwan and McInerney’s will end without closure. According to Codde, “if closure is found at the end of a novel, one may doubt if it is really a traumatic narrative” (2010, p. 80). However, the current study will examine trauma of 9/11 and individuals’ struggle with PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder) due to the losses wrought by 9/11. More precisely, by analysing individuals’ anguishes and trauma in the context of Amy Waldman’s fiction, this study will focus on the writer’s solutions to overcome trauma and its acceptance. It attempts to find a resolution to help victims overcome trauma through its narration from a novel perspective and its acceptance.

According to the above literature review, the prominent lack of post 9/11 fictions is their failure to find a solution to the problem and to help victims recover from PTSD wrought by the tragedy. Mainstream post 9/11 fictions merely present a portrayal of the tragedy and its depiction. They do not surpass the portrayal level to offer practical solutions to the crisis. However, the current study considers the symptoms of long term PTSD as a result of individuals’ perception of the trauma. In fact, we believe that, if victim’s perspective toward their vulnerability as a weakness and a fear changes to an unavoidable phenomenon, their recovery process will be easier and they can pave the way for healing from PTSD easier and sooner. As such, it is believed that characters in *The Submission* are in a constant attempt to heal from the trauma of 9/11 and PTSD.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Before delving deeper into the subject, the concept of trauma ought to be addressed first, at the very least, on the surface level. Trauma itself is an umbrella term that can be broadly divided into two, namely physical trauma and psychological trauma. This study undeniably revolves around the psychological facet of trauma as it deals with the troubled psyches of those who have survived yet suffered heavy personal losses in the wake of a catastrophic tragedy. Additionally, psychological trauma can be best described as part and parcel of everyday life due to the universality of tragedy as a general, mutual experience. As such, it is hoped that a psychoanalytical approach to the characters' struggles with PTSD in the trauma narrative of Waldman's novel will help lend relevance to the objectives of this study.

According to Liddell and Scott (2013) in *A Greek-English Lexicon*, "trauma" originates from the Greek word for "wound". In the past, trauma used to be referred to physical injuries; however, nowadays, it widely refers to psychological trauma that concerns an injury of one's psyche and mentality. According to Cathy Caruth, a leading scholar on trauma, the term trauma generally refers to "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 2010, p. 11). In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association introduced the term Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Yehuda (2002) assert that individuals who are exposed to traumatic events that provoke "fear, helplessness, or horror" are at the high risk of "major depression", "panic disorder", "generalised anxiety disorder", and "PTSD" (108). Allen (2008) states that when escape from trauma is impossible the symptom of PTSD will appear. Bisson and Andrew (2009) define PTSD as a psychiatric disorder and ailment that appears after a major traumatic incident. In this context, the most telling traits of PTSD involve such recurring experiences as unpleasant flashbacks and nightmares. These also coincide with a refusal to recall or retell said traumatic experience, as well as aloofness and the tendency to drift apart from others, which can be collectively considered as reluctance or passivity towards one's receptive abilities at large. In addition, victims also suffer from heightened insecurity or "hypervigilance", insomnia caused by acute excitement or "hyperarousal" and a higher frequency in spells of black temper (2009, p. 2).

In her paper *Parting Words: Trauma, Silence and Survival*, Caruth (2001), in her analysis of Freud, states that "what causes trauma, then, is an encounter that is not directly perceived as a threat to the life of the organism but that occurs, rather, as a break in the mind's experience of time" (p. 10), adding that "the psyche's awareness of the threat to life...is not caused by a direct threat or injury, but by fright, the lack of preparedness to take in a stimulus that comes too quickly" (p. 10). Evidently, this can be applied to the individuals who have suffered the aftermath of 9/11 since they were not prepared for such a massive calamity. According to Caruth, another important aspect of psychological trauma is the occurrence of nightmares in an individual. Whilst analysing the works of Freud, Caruth stresses that everyday life, for the traumatised survivor, is an unending cycle of a truth that is oftentimes incomprehensible in times of sensibility mainly because the said survivor, in his/her conscious state, is incapable of acknowledging the truth behind death itself. In this context, nightmares are traumatising not only as an experience per se, but also as after-effects of the very experience that they constitute. To this, Caruth further posits the view that the urge to discover the incomprehensible as well as its cyclic state, not to mention the mysterious longing to continue living, are all part and parcel of the recurring nature of trauma.

According to the 2005 National Clinical Practice Guideline Number 26, entitled *The Management of PTSD in Adults and Children in Primary and Secondary Care* for the

National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health issued by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, “the diagnosis of PTSD is restricted to people who have experienced exceptionally distressing events” (2005, p.5), adding that there are five groups of people listed as vulnerable, of which one matches the criteria of this study, namely “survivors of accidents or disasters” (2005, p. 5). Apart from that, the guideline also mentions that men are likely to experience and receive more traumatic incidents compared to the women, nevertheless, “women experience higher impact events” (7). In fact, encounters with traumatic events are more common among men, although the prevalence of events with stronger repercussions is higher among women. This therefore reveals that the tendency to suffer from PTSD as a direct result of a traumatic experience is subsequently greater among women than men. In her own analysis of trauma not only as an unusual and ironical experience per se, but also as a trending topic of discussion that is increasingly prominent in studies on literature, philosophy, history and politics, Caruth (1991, 2010) acknowledges the prevalence of PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder) in the said discourses. This she has hypothesised based on a recent shift in views among doctors and psychoanalysts regarding physical and mental experiences, especially the many ways in which humans react to different kinds of experiences, some of which currently constitute and are classified as effects of PTSD.

It has been posited by Wilson and Keane (2004) that there are three main stages which form part and parcel of the telling signs that someone is suffering from psychological trauma. The first stage involves memory, information and one’s cognitive abilities, whereas the second stage is centred on one’s ego-defensive mechanism and ability to cope with the aftermath of trauma. Finally, the third stage revolves around the correlation between any recollections of a traumatic experience, be it external or internal, and the workings of the central nervous system, in the initiation or dismissal of one’s premeditated receptiveness to stress through one’s neuropsychological faculties. All three stages are thus capable of affecting each other partly due to the fact that a close link is shared between them. Findings garnered by Wilson and Keane (2004) also suggest that, regardless of the nature of the stimuli behind a traumatic experience (internal/external), the resulting change in behaviour among victims shows little, if any, difference. In this context, victims of psychological trauma generally resort to reclusiveness, and many do so by mentally blocking out all painful memories and deliberately staying away from anything, tangible and intangible alike, that serves as a link to their respective traumatic experiences. That being said, the timeslots in which recollections of a traumatic experience resurface are inconsistent and unpredictable, sometimes occurring only decades after the experience itself. This is due in part to the insignificance of time to the Unconscious. As a result, it is, as aforementioned, common for recollections of a traumatic experience to resurface suddenly and unknowingly, irrespective of how long it has been since the occurrence of said experience. On the other hand, the reminiscing of a traumatic experience is also very likely to take place as a result of another, later life-altering tragedy or misfortune, notably one that resonates within the psyche of the victim through its shared similarities with the victim’s initial source of trauma. Therefore, a postulation can be made in which time is of no consequence to traumatic experiences, because the psychological effects of such experiences tend to manifest themselves anytime in life, especially through the victim’s attitudes, moods and deeds that are committed in full awareness (Wilson & Keane 2004).

Being said, the survivors of traumatic incidents particularly women suffer heavily from psychological trauma and are at high risk of developing PTSD. The symptoms of PTSD are difficult to be measured since post-traumatic stress disorder is constituted of an extensive, yet unique, collection of psychological symptoms. However, American Psychiatric Association DSM categorises the symptoms of PTSD into the three clusters of re-

experiencing the trauma, avoidance and numbing, and increased arousal (Wilson & Keane 2004). According to Wilson and Keane, in the first cluster, the survivor involuntarily remembers the traumatic event. The trauma victim might also suffer from nightmares or flashbacks, or being suddenly reminded of the traumatic event by the external and environmental stimuli. In the second cluster of PTSD symptoms, trauma survivors consciously eliminate agonising reminiscences and avoid places, situations or individuals that are associated with the tragedy. In the third cluster, increased arousal, the trauma victim becomes anxious, easily frightened, hyper alert, and aggravated. It can be claimed that in Amy Waldman's *The Submission*, the 9/11 survivors particularly the main female characters of the story profoundly suffer from psychological trauma since they exhibit various PTSD symptoms, which will be discussed further in the following section.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Waldman's multiple award-winning debut novel is a well-crafted saga of sorts that chronicles the inevitable reaction of a nation struggling to cope with grief and loss when faced with the somewhat unexpected but hard-hitting decision to let or not to let someone who belongs to what is generally perceived to be the enemy design a memorial in honour of those who perished in the nation's darkest hours to date. The main players of the saga come from a myriad of socio-cultural and circumstantial backgrounds, from the widowed self-made attorney Claire Burwell to the illegal immigrant Asma Anwar, also a widow. The women characters of the novel are not the only ones affected by the tragedy of 9/11; others, like Sean and Frank Gallagher as well as William Burwell and to an extent, Mohammad Khan himself, are also visibly shaken by the sudden, tragic twist that is 9/11, of which nobody was prepared to face. However, as aforementioned, this study aims at exploring the traumatised psyches of the women characters whose lives were shattered in the wake of 9/11 through the loss of their loved ones, because at the end of the day, it is their plights and personal struggles that contribute vastly to the anticlimactic denouement of the story. Three characters have been chosen for this specific analysis, namely Claire Burwell, Asma Anwar and Eileen Gallagher.

CLAIRE BURWELL, WIDOW AND JURY MEMBER

Claire Burwell is notable in *The Submission* as the first character to be presented in the story. Having lost her husband in 9/11, she is the sole representative of similarly affected family members on the jury of a blind competition held to select the best design for a memorial dedicated to the victims of the tragedy. As the story goes, Claire is strongly in favour of "The Garden", which she believes to be a symbol of healing. In the novel's first chapter, she is pitted against the antithetical Ariana Montagu, who in turn favours "The Void". The two women's choices for the win very clearly mirror their personalities and thoughts on posttraumatic recovery. In this context, "The Garden", full of life, green and lush, not only mirrors Claire's personality as a woman of substance, but also her longing for healing as part and parcel of coping with her own grief and subsequently moving on in life, in contrast with "The Void", which, as its name suggests, is empty, seemingly lifeless and somewhat insensitive, menacing even.

Claire's struggle with PTSD is unique in a sense that it is subtly addressed throughout the novel by Waldman. In this context, although her longing for healing can be interpreted as a personal plight, it is also important to first and foremost view it on the surface, namely as what she believes to be the best for the very group of people she is representing, as can be seen in the extent of how fiercely she defends "The Garden". However, from a Freudian

psychoanalytical viewpoint, Claire's defence of "The Garden" is not merely a reflection of her longing for healing. As the first chapter progresses on, more is revealed about her, particularly her deceased husband, Cal.

"...Calder Burwell, a man with a temperament so sunny that Claire nicknamed him California, even though it was she, having grown up there, who knew the state's true fickle weather: the frost and drought...Of all her anguished, unanswerable wonderings about Cal's death – where, how, how much pain – the worst, somehow, was the fear that his last moments had buckled his abiding optimism. She wanted him to have died believing that he would live. The Garden was an allegory. Like Cal, it insisted that change was not just possible, but certain."
(Waldman 2012, p. 14)

Through an initial glimpse of Cal, we get to see the parallel nature of his personality and the Garden's exuberance. This is typical of classical psychoanalysis, whereby Claire, traumatised by the loss of her ebullient, optimistic husband, finds solace in the promises of rebirth and renewal exuded by the Garden, which are undeniably positive signs of change and more importantly, redolent of her late husband's personality.

Despite her initial passionate support of "The Garden" which verifies her longing for healing, Claire's psychological trauma and symptoms of PTSD can be traced prominently throughout the course of the story. As being said, an important characteristic of psychological trauma is the occurrence of nightmares in an individual. According to Caruth (2001) it can be stated that everyday life of Claire as a traumatised survivor, is an unending cycle of a truth that is oftentimes incomprehensible in times of consciousness. In this context, her nightmares of Cal are traumatising aftermath of the tragedy which is a part and parcel of the recurring nature of trauma.

"You know, the other night I dreamed about that black pool around the Void, that my husband's hand was reaching up from the water to pull me down into it."
(Waldman 2012, p. 12)

Claire's nightmare of Cal is a part and parcel of re-experiencing the trauma. Although Claire's nightmare is not a direct replay of the tragedy, it involves frightening elements as Cal is pulling Claire down into the water. Her nightmare represents her profound and multi-layered sorrow, which is associated with significant distress, extreme anxiety and daytime impairment due to her struggles with the jury. Claire's sleep disturbance and nightmare are the manifestations of a flooded, re-experiencing state that appears in the absence of her conscious reminiscence of the Cal's tragic death.

In addition, it may also be apt to say that being a mother, her son William's trauma at the loss of his father is inevitably her lot to bear, too. Therefore, it is only natural for her to share her view of the Garden as a symbol of healing with him, since it is the loss of Cal that they both have in common.

"The Garden, she told him, was a special place where his father could be found, even though William wouldn't be able to see him there. This was all too true: shards, less than shards of Cal likely lay in the ground where the memorial would go, although William didn't know that. The idea of the Garden seemed to console him, and ever since, together they had drawn the trees and flowers, the pathways and canals. William always drew in two little figures: himself and his father. In his drawings, the sun always shone."
(Waldman 2012, p. 43)

Indeed, the mutual longing shared by mother and son is integral to their need for "re-enacting" Cal as a means of healing to help make dealing with trauma less arduous. Undeniably, Claire's stern disposition and somewhat cold, haughty exterior throughout the story belie her personal battle with the trauma of losing her husband when neither she nor her children least expected it.

ASMA ANWAR, WIDOW AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT

In comparison with Claire, Asma, an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh, is introduced only in the rising action of the story. Unlike Claire, who is relatively impoverished and lowly when compared with the affluent Cal, Asma is married to Inam, a much older man from a poorer family working as a janitor. However, like Claire, she too is a widow struggling to come to terms with the loss of her husband to the tragedy of 9/11. Furthermore, Inam is very much like Cal in a sense that both men have a pleasant, calming effect on their wives. Perhaps, religion aside, herein lays the reason why, apart from Claire, she is the only character to openly voice her ardent support for the Garden.

Asma's psychological trauma has its fair share of similarities and differences with Claire's. The main posttraumatic aspect the two grieving widows have in common is the memory of their late husbands. This is evident in her reaction when her landlady Mrs. Mahmoud reveals to her that Inam's body can never be found probably because he was cremated.

“Cremation was anathema to Muslims. God had forbidden the use of fire on His Creation, or so Asma had been taught. Then why had God allowed these men to cremate her husband – and claim to have cremated him in God's name, no less? Where would Inam's soul go? Would this leave him outside paradise?”

(Waldman 2012, p. 92)

Asma's constant state of being haunted by the memory of her late husband is a posttraumatic experience in itself, even more so when “three months passed, then six, without a body or even a piece of one”. Having nursed the image of paradise as a garden of subliminally unsurpassed beauty partly as a result of her Islamic upbringing, it is little wonder that Asma supports Khan's memorial, because in her temporal moments of solace, that is where she believes Inam has found his afterlife reward.

“She had no doubt that Inam had been taken into the gardens of paradise. He gave zakat. He always fasted during Ramadan. He prayed, if not five times a day, as often as he could. The morning of his death, lying in bed with her eyes closed, pretending to sleep, too lazy and heavy with child to get up and cook him breakfast, leaving him to the cold dal she had prepared the night before, she had heard the rustling as he prostrated himself. He believed.”

(Waldman 2012, p. 92)

However, it is through her unusually bold yet heart-warming speech at the hearing for Khan's defence of his Garden that Asma has finally managed to overcome her personal trauma of losing Inam because without any memorial, “it would be the final repudiation of his existence – as if he had lived only in her imagination”. Being her stubborn father's daughter, she is adamant that “he had to be named”, “for in that name was a life”, and her speech is, after all, in support of the Garden, a symbol of healing from the collective trauma of loss of a loved one as well as the blissful resting place for the pious.

“My husband was a man of peace because he was a Muslim. That is our tradition. That is what our Prophet, peace be upon him, taught...You have mixed up these bad Muslims, these bad people, and Islam. Millions of people all over the world have done good things because Islam tells them to. There are so many more Muslims who would never think of taking a life. You talk about paradise as a place for bad people. But that is not what we believe. That is not who the garden is for. The gardens of paradise are for men like my husband, who never hurt anyone...I think a garden is right...because that is what America is – all the people Muslim and non-Muslim, who have come and grown together. How can you pretend we and our traditions are not part of this place? Does my husband matter less than all of your relatives?”

(Waldman 2012, p. 296)

Asma's process of healing begins with her standing up for Khan's Garden in honour of her late husband's memory. Although she is unfortunate enough to face deportation and even lose her life as a result of her never-before-seen courage, her outward struggle with the traumatic aftermath of losing her husband and her remarkable journey of self-healing are what make her one of the novel's most resilient characters.

EILEEN GALLAGHER, GRIEVING MOTHER AND ENRAGED FAMILY MEMBER

Unlike Claire and Asma, Eileen Gallagher did not lose a husband; rather, she lost one of her sons, a firefighter named Patrick, who died in action during the attacks. Of the three, she stands out also because of her opposition towards the selection of Khan's Garden as the winner of the blind memorial design competition. Although her appearances in the novel are considerably fewer than those of Claire and Asma, she represents the plight faced by many mothers who have lost their proverbial bundles of joy. Coincidentally, one of the story's main antagonists, Sean Gallagher, is her only living son and the black sheep of the family. Like Claire and Asma, however, Eileen's way of combating her struggle with PTSD is also by means of campaigning for the memory of her deceased loved one.

“A muscle memory of a smile moved the woman's lips. ‘Sometimes I wish Patrick had died in a regular fire. No firefighter dies a private death, not if he dies on the job. But to have all these politics mixed in – I don't like it, all...the noise. Grief should be quiet. A memorial should have the silence of the convent.’” (Waldman 2012, p. 114)

Eileen's sudden and frightening metamorphosis from an embittered grieving victim to an iron-fisted Lady Macbeth-like Machiavellian villainess is evident in the aftermath of Asma's death, when she questions Sean's loyalty in preserving Patrick's memory. She does not hesitate to manipulate Sean into finishing the job and making sure that the construction of Khan's Garden does not commence, albeit by devious means. However, beneath the sinister overtones of her delivery, lies the core of a distraught mother in mourning, who will stop at nothing to ensure that her own cycle of healing from the trauma of losing her beloved son is completed.

“You can't be half in a family. You're in, or you're out. You want to go on living here like some pacifist suddenly too good to fight, but still eating our food, warming your feet, while the rest of us go get bloody in the war. It doesn't work that way, Sean.” (Waldman 2012, p. 339)

To cut a long story short, Eileen's PTSD offers a rare insight into an altogether different spectrum of those traumatised by the atrocities of 9/11, representing the general public, who, fuelled by media-based speculations and deeply-rooted prejudice, are swift to jump to conclusions of their own, in contrast with the more open, mature and unbiased elitist milieu represented by Claire as well as the wrongfully-accused American Muslim community represented by Asma, always struggling to justify themselves as part of the grieving nation.

CONCLUSION

Undeniably, literature exposes us to an abundant compendium of notable works that depict psychological trauma and the obstacles presented along the path to recovery. Meanwhile, 9/11 literature narrating the trauma of this catastrophic event, attempts to facilitate healing

from post-traumatic stress disorder and horrific aftermath of the tragedy on individual's traumatised psyche. Experiencing 9/11, "Americans who had felt invulnerable discovered that their government had been lax in detecting and intercepting terrorists alighting on U.S. shores" (Flynn 2002, 63). After 9/11, Americans have found themselves and their homeland fragile and vulnerable in various areas such as trade, airline and transportation, and national security. To tackle this vulnerability and to overcome trauma of 9/11, numerous writers addressed the issue in their fiction. A good example would be the novel of American authoress Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2012).

When all is said and done, it is undoubtedly true that the women characters in Waldman's debut novel *The Submission*, whose lives were affected by the aftermath of 9/11 through the loss of a loved one in the attacks, form the backbone of the story. Their personal battles with PTSD are instrumental in bringing the story to its unexpected turning points and resolutions, thus making it all the more of an intriguing read. Unlike many other post 9/11 literary productions and particularly novels, in *The Submission*, Waldman does not merely portray the trauma of the characters and their PTSD wrought by the colossal tragedy of 9/11 but also the journey of healing from the trauma. Her characters despite their heavy losses to the carnage are in a constant struggle to find peace and consolation. Waldman's female characters in the story attempt to overcome their trauma and embrace it by accepting the bitter and harsh reality of 9/11 and seeking solace in remembering their loved ones.

In a nutshell, literature does offer readers an insight into the psyches of individuals affected by manmade violence, thereby exposing us to the devastating effects of man's own desire for power, thirst for revenge, communal hatred and material avarice that have blemished the triumphs of human civilisation since the dawn of recorded history. In the case of Amy Waldman's *The Submission*, according to what has been said, we shall conclude that the authoress truly represents 9/11 trauma in her fiction and intends to provide avenues for healing of the said trauma. It is believed that such traumatic incidents as 9/11 "leave marks of unbearable misery" (Ghaderi & Taghizadeh, 2015 p. 140) on the psyche of the survivors, yet Waldman's women characters are in an unceasing struggle with PTSD and desire to overcome it. Additionally, it is hoped that through this study, more emphasis will be placed on those who survived yet suffered lasting losses and lived to tell the harrowing tales of manmade violence, such as 9/11, instead of the usual citing of the scores of casualties.

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