
Elisabeth Siegel

Abstract

The article examines the use of graphic images for mnemonic purposes in Jonathan Safran Foer’s Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (2005). It argues that through the combination of photographs with magical realist and fantastic passages, the novel provides a commentary on the role of visual representations in the construction of a collective memory of 9/11.

Full Text:

HTML

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5283/copas.115

Refbacks

* There are currently no refbacks.

Elisabeth Siegel studied English and American Studies and Business Administration at Chemnitz University of Technology and at the University of Glasgow. She is a junior lecturer at the University of Vienna and is working on a PhD thesis on “Visual Memory in Verbal Narrative.” Apart from word-/image relationships, her research interests include literary representations of space and place, women’s writing, and popular music. The article examines the use of graphic images for mnemonic purposes in Jonathan Safran Foer’s Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (2005). It argues that through the combination of photographs with magical realist and fantastic passages, the novel provides a commentary on the role of visual representations in the construction of a collective memory of 9/11. Jonathan Safran Foer’s second novel, Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, is composed by three narrative voices: Oskar Schell, a precocious but fragile 9-year-old whose father is killed in the September 11 World Trade Centre attack; Oskar’s adoring Grandmother, who lives across the road, and; Oskar’s mute Grandfather, who abandoned his wife when she was pregnant with Oskar’s. Along the way, he constructs a scrapbook he calls “Stuff That Happened to Me.” Images from this book are scattered throughout the novel. Safran Foer considered “the visual world in which [children] are now developing”, (Khan 2005) sourcing the photographs from the Internet, newspapers and photo libraries. (Hudson 2005).