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Brian Turner's Ghosts of War

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ABSTRACT

Tämä pro gradu –tutkielma käsittelee sodan haamuja, traumaattista kummittelua ja sodan kokemuksista paranemista Brian Turnerin Irakin sotaa kuvailevissa runoissa ja omaelämäkerrassa. Aineistona käytettiin Turnerin runokokoelmia *Here, Bullet* ja *Phantom Noise* sekä omaelämäkertaa *My Life as a Foreign Country*. Tutkimukseen valittiin kuusi runoa kokoelmasta *Here, Bullet*, kahdeksan runoa kokoelmasta *Phantom Noise*, sekä kohtia omaelämäkerrasta. Lisäksi aihetta syvennettiin muiden runojen ja omaelämäkerran osien myötä. Teoriapohjana käytettiin traumakirjallisuuden teorioita sekä sotarunouteen ja sotiin liittyvää tutkimusta.

Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että Brian Turnerin teksteissä haamuja oli useita erilaisia. Runoissa ja omaelämäkerrassa esiintyi haamuina niin amerikkalaisia sotilaita kuin irakilaisia, abstraktina haamuna kauneus, sekä materiaalisena haamuna ajoneuvo. Kertoja esiintyy itse haamuna useissa eri teksteissä. Teksteissä esiintyy myös ylisukupolvista sodan kummittelua. Kokoelman *Here, Bullet* runot kertovat sodan aikaisista haamuista, ja kokoelman *Phantom Noise* runot sodan jälkeisestä kummittelusta.

Haamut ympäröivät Turneria niin Irakissa kuin kotiin palattuaankin, niin öisin kuin päivisin, kotona kuin kaupassa asioidessa. Turner ei näe itseään sankarina, mutta ei myöskään demonisoi vihollista. Turnerin oma perhehistoria näyttelee suurta osaa Turnerin sotatarinassa. Turner elää toistaen sodan traumoja ja niistä selviäminen on vuosien prosessi. Paranemisen prosessia auttoivat myötätuntoiset läheiset, erityisesti Turnerin vaimo, ja esimerkiksi luonto. Kirjoittaminen on myös voinut toimia apuna. Turnerin tekstit auttavat lukijaa ymmärtämään paremmin millaista on elää sodan muistojen kanssa.

KEYWORDS: ghosts, war, war poetry, trauma, trauma literature

1 INTRODUCTION

> *How does anyone leave a war behind them, no matter what war it is, and somehow walk into the rest of his life?*
> *Brian Turner (2014: 114)*

War is paradoxical, tragic and constant part of human existence. War deals with the question of life and death. How to understand something so essential? One way of doing this is to look at what war does to people and how they cope with it. This kind of an approach relates to trauma narratives, which have been researched and discussed at length, for example ones from the First World War. This thesis will, however, study a trauma narrative related to a more contemporary war, the Iraq War (2003-2011). Brian Turner is an American soldier-poet who had direct personal experience of the Iraq War and observed it close. The aim of this thesis is to study the ghosts of war in his poetry and his autobiography, how traumatic haunting is presented, and how healing from the war experiences is depicted in his texts.

Psychic trauma is commonly defined as a reaction to an overpowering event (Rodi-Risberg 2010: 1). Sigmund Freud defined traumatic neurosis as "a consequence of an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli" (quoted in Nadal & Calvo 2014: 1) in 1920. Cathy Caruth, one of the key figures of contemporary trauma theory, has defined trauma as the structure of the experience: "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of one who experiences it" (Caruth 1995: 4).

As Anne Whitehead (2004: 6) notes, for trauma scholar Cathy Caruth, another time's invasion to other time can be seen as a form of haunting. "To be traumatised is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (Caruth 1995: 4-5). "The ghost represents an appropriate embodiment of the disjunction of temporality, the surfacing of the past in the present", writes Whitehead (2004: 6). Whitehead (2004: 7) concludes that in contemporary fiction, the ghost story explores the nature of trauma as psychological

possession. The traumas of history are manifested in the ghosts, and they represent a form of collective or cultural haunting.

Brian Turner, whose poetry is the subject of this thesis, is one of the most well-known published poets of the Iraq War, and his second poetry collection *Phantom Noise* was shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot prize in 2010. He was born in 1967 in California. He received his MFA from the University of Oregon. He served in the US Army for seven years, with a year's tour in Iraq as an infantry team leader. Before that, he was for example deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina. His poetry collection *Here, Bullet* was first published in the US by Alice James Books in 2005, and *Phantom Noise* in 2010 by Alice James Books in the US and by Bloodaxe Books in the UK. *Here, Bullet* is a first-hand account of the Iraq War, and *Phantom Noise* deals with the aftermath of the war. Turner's autobiography *My Life as a Foreign Country* was published in 2014 by Jonathan Cape. Turner was married to poet Ilyse Kusnetz from 2010 to her death in 2016.

I chose Brian Turner's poetry and autobiography for my thesis, because I had read them and loved them. I also had learned to respect Turner as a human being. Most of all, I found his texts to be interesting and humane, and thought that studying them more might prove to be interesting, too. He helps reader to understand what war is and what it does to people, and that makes his poetry important.

As primary sources for this thesis I will use Brian Turner's autobiography *My Life as a Foreign Country* (2014), and selected poetry from *Here, Bullet* (2011) and *Phantom Noise* (2013). *My Life as a Foreign Country* consists of 136 "chapters", a prologue, and an epilogue of varying lengths. The book has no page numbers, so references to this book are made by chapter numbers.

I have picked 6 poems from the book *Here, Bullet* and 8 poems from the book *Phantom Noise* that either mentions ghosts directly or are otherwise haunted by ghosts. I have also selected some parts from the autobiography. From *Here, Bullet* these poems are

Hwy1, Ashbah, Observation Post #798, Mihrab, Cole's Guitar, and *9-line medevac* and from *Phantom Noise* the selected poems are *VA Hospital Confessional, At Lowe's Home Improvement Center, Perimeter Watch, Illumination Rounds, On the Flight to Alamosa, Colorado, On the Surgeon's Table, Homemade Napalm,* and *.22 Caliber.* In addition to these I have used other poems and the autobiography to deepen the understanding and analysis of the material.

This thesis is divided into five parts. The first one is the introduction. The second part of the thesis deals with the question of trauma. In the first part where trauma and literature are discussed, I have used several sources from different trauma scholars like Cathy Caruth (1995), Anne Whitehead (2004), Laurie Vickroy (2002), and Roger Luckhurst (2014). I have also used Marinella Rodi-Risberg's dissertation (2010) as a source, as it very clearly points out developments in the field. Then I will move into trauma in practice: how healing from traumas can take place and how using words can aid in the healing process. In this, the most helpful was psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk's book, which was translated into Finnish in 2017. He is well known for his research on post-traumatic stress, and he is an expert on the psychological aspect of trauma, and how the use of language relates to the healing of trauma.

Finally I will discuss traumas related to war, and how they have been recognized. In this part I have used a variety of sources from historians like Joanna Bourke (2000) and Ville Kivimäki (2013) to army psychiatrist Kai Valkama (2018). One important source has been Dave Grossman's book *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* which was published in 1995. Grossman has specialized on the study of the psychology of killing and the effects of it in soldiers. He has a background in the US Army.

In the third chapter I explain matters relating to war in general and to the Iraq War, specifically. In the first part I illuminate what the words war, warfare, strategy, tactics, battle, and soldier mean in the military context. I will do this by examining two texts published by The Department of Leadership at the National Defence University in

Finland. Paulus Maasalo's texts (2002) examine the words through dictionaries, and Aki-Mauri Huhtinen's texts (2005) examine more the content of the words from the military perspective. I also use historian Ian Speller and defence studies scholar Christopher Tuck text (2015) when defining war and warfare. In the next part I discuss briefly studying war with the help of Christine Sylvester's text (2013).

In the third part of this third chapter I look at the history of war poetry in the 20th century, especially relating to the First World War and the Vietnam War, as they provide good background for understanding war poetry and the changes in it during the 20th century. This gives the context for the study of war poetry in the Iraq War, and it helps in recognizing common factors in war poetry, whatever the time and location, and also identify some differences in it.

Then I will discuss the Iraq War and how it has been represented in fiction. I explore the Iraq War with the help of texts from Christine Sylvester (2013), media and communications professor Lilie Chouliaraki (2007), and professor Paul Cornish (2008), whose text I will use to discuss the type of warfare used in the Iraq War. For the fictions part I will mainly use Roger Luckhurst's (2014) article on polytemporality and fictions of the Iraq War as a source, as it covers the main points. I will also shortly discuss an interesting Finnish perspective on the Iraq War.

The fourth part of the thesis contains the analysis of the primary material, Brian Turner's autobiography *My Life as a Foreign Country* (2014), and selected poetry from *Here, Bullet* (2011) and *Phantom Noise* (2013). I started by typing everything I found interesting in the autobiography. Then I divided the poems to several categories. These other categories included for example light and shadow, dreams, and women in the poems. I, however, selected the ghosts as the subject I was going to focus. Ghosts are central in depictions of trauma, and trauma is often described as a haunting. I selected the poems that either mention ghosts directly or are otherwise haunted by ghosts. Then I selected the parts of the autobiography that could serve as an explanation part and deepen the understanding for ghosts, traumatic haunting, and healing.

The fifth and final part of the thesis is conclusion, where the questions of ghosts of war, traumatic haunting, and healing in the texts written by Brian Turner are answered, and some further research ideas are discussed.

2 GIVING VOICE TO TRAUMA

Wars are traumatic events. However, traumas do not touch upon the soldiers only. In this chapter I will first discuss trauma from the perspective of literature studies. Then I will move into trauma in practice: how healing from traumas can take place and how using words can aid in the healing process. Finally, I will discuss traumas related to war, and how they have been recognized.

2.1 Trauma and literature

As Marinella Rodi-Risberg (2010: 1) describes, psychic trauma is commonly defined as a reaction to an overpowering event. Sigmund Freud defined traumatic neurosis as "a consequence of an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli" (quoted in Nadal & Calvo 2014: 1) in 1920. Cathy Caruth, one of the key figures of contemporary trauma theory, has defined trauma as the structure of the experience: "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of one who experiences it" (Caruth 1995: 4). As Rodi-Risberg (2010: 1) explains, Caruth draws on Sigmund Freud's *Nachträglichkeit*, which refers to the non-chronological quality of remembering: forgotten memory returning and being reworked or reinterpreted. Caruth (1995: 9) emphasizes belatedness, the insight Freud had when discussing trauma. This is where the impact of a traumatic event lies. The traumatic event is not registered the time it occurs, but experienced as trauma only belatedly when it re-surfaces. Rodi-Risberg (2010: 1) writes that "rather than remembered as something that happened in the past, then, trauma becomes a part of survivor's identity, and is compulsively performed in the present".

As Rodi-Risberg (2010: 4-5) explains, investigating trauma began in the study of hysteria. Freud coined the term *Nachträglichkeit*: "We invariably find that a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma by *deferred action*" (quoted in Rodi-Risberg

2010: 4, italics in original). This has also been referred to as belatedness by Caruth and other trauma scholars. Freud and his colleague Joseph Breuer also proposed a new term "traumatic hysteria", when they noted that "traumatic neuroses" and "common hysteria" originated in trauma and its memories. Freud was interested in the war neuroses after the First World War, and he compared the reactions to accident neurosis (Caruth 1995: 5).

An important landmark for contemporary trauma studies was the year 1980, when American Psychiatric Association acknowledged PTSD in their official Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (Caruth 1995: 3). This was a result of campaigning of the veterans of the Vietnam war. As Rodi-Risberg (2010: 8) writes, then trauma was understood mainly through the research of suffering of combat veterans, meaning adult males.

Rodi-Risberg (2010: 10-11) further notes that from the 1990s onwards, there has been a rising number of publications regarding trauma and its representations in different fields of study, and both fiction and non-fictional narratives. There has been increasing interest in trauma studies and also a need to rethink the concept of reception. Early 1990s marked the birth of contemporary trauma theory, also referred as literary trauma theory, by literary scholars like Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman. "Today trauma theory is an established critical category of literary studies", Rodi-Risberg (2010: 11) writes. It is also possible to talk about the literary genre of "trauma fiction", because so many contemporary authors have knowledge about modern trauma theory (Rodi-Risberg 2010, Whitehead 2004, Vickroy 2002). According to Anne Whitehead (2004: 4), there is a mutual influence between trauma theory and fiction.

According to Rodi-Risberg (2010: 11-12), trauma resist narrativization and challenges traditional notions and norms of representations due to its belated structure. How, then, can trauma be represented? Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Dori Laub all agree that at the core of trauma "lies the survivor's inability or failure to witness from within the experience itself" (see Rodi-Risberg 2010:12). Rodi-Risberg (2010: 12) explains: "Referentiality is indirect and belated(ness) in trauma".

Rodi-Risberg (2010: 12) writes that the questions of referentiality must be essentially literary. Freud often explained this theories with literature. “Today theorists (re)turn to literature in trying to formulate the effects and consequences of trauma as well as to understand the phenomenon culturally”, Rodi-Risberg (2010: 12) notes. Literature is the place for belated enactment and witnessing the trauma. According to Rodi-Risberg (2010: 12), Caruth indicated that trauma can only be understood through literary or symbolical language. Caruth imagines a wound “that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (quoted in Rodi-Risberg 2010: 12). According to Caruth (1995: 7, italics in original), there seems to be something that “seems oddly to inhabit all traumatic experience: the inability fully to witness the event as it occurs, or the ability to witness the *event* fully only at the cost of witnessing oneself”.

When discussing the belated nature of trauma and it´s relation to textual representation, the question arises about what is “real”. Ana Douglas and Thomas Vogler note that trauma “seemingly reconciles the opposition between the poststructuralist emphasis on the text, with the real understood as an effect of representation, and ‘the real’ understood as an event marked by trauma” (quoted in Rodi-Risberg 2010: 13). “The real” was pushed to the background when poststructuralism in 1970s humanities, but it returned to the mainstream discourse when the subject of trauma was introduced to it (Rodi-Risberg 2010: 13-14). Rodi-Risberg (2010: 15) states that “the real is experienced merely through representation”. Trauma moves beyond the text towards the “real” world: the study of trauma is inseparable from the “real” rather than opposed to it (Rodi-Risberg 2010: 15). Rodi-Risberg (2010: 15) notes that narratives of trauma deal with socio-political, cultural, pedagogical, historical and ethical issues. Trauma fiction deals with the causes and the consequences, and Rodi-Risberg (2010: 15) states that they do it more personalized and complete way than other fields may do. Laurie Vickroy (2002: 222) has argued that they “bring a kind of sociocultural critical analysis that helps readers formulate how public policy and ideology are lived in private lives”.

Rodi-Risberg (2010: 16) also discusses another word that is interesting regarding trauma and its literary representations: truth. What can trauma fiction offer when compared to for example historical documents or scientific explanations of trauma? Those are demanded truth and neutrality. Trauma fictions strength lies in its position between the real and the words. Historian and trauma theorist Dominick La Capra writes that narratives in fiction can give "a plausible 'feel' for experience and emotion which may be difficult to arrive at through restrictive documentary methods" (quoted in Rodi-Risberg 2010: 16). Rodi-Risberg (2010: 16) notes that "fictional narratives of trauma may convey both aesthetic and cultural meanings and be both emotionally valid and psychologically true". Rodi-Risberg (2010:16) also reminds that historical documents and autobiographies are partly fictionalized because they are reviewing past in the present. Past is never exactly reproduced, but reconstructed. Realism may appear to be more believable approach, but many theorists are for non-realistic approach when it comes to representing trauma.

Who then can write about trauma? Rodi-Risberg (2010: 17) gives an example of Kali Tal, who believes that only those who have experienced trauma as survivors can and should write about trauma; they are the ones who can use symbolic language and signs, as she believes certain words have different meaning in survivor discourse. Not all theorists agree with this, though.

As Rodi-Risberg notes (2010: 18), according to trauma scholar Laurie Vickroy, fictional trauma narratives can communicate traumatic experience as authentically as survivor testimonies. Trauma is not only a theme but writers "also incorporate the rhythms, processes, and uncertainties of trauma within the consciousness and structures of these works" (Vickroy 2002: xiv). Rodi-Risberg (2010: 18) states that for Vickroy, "these writers employ fictional techniques such as figurative language to represent trauma and its concerns with dissociation, shattered identities, and fragmented memories, thus making traumatic experience more accessible and real to readers."

Trauma scholar Anne Whitehead (2004: 84) agrees with the non-realistic approach and argues that trauma fiction "relies on the intensification of conventional narrative modes and methods" and literary techniques and devices like repetition and intertextuality. As Rodi-Risberg (2010: 18) notes, "trauma forces writers who represent traumatic knowledge to signal that this is something which can only be conveyed through a degree of distortion". According to Whitehead (2004: 3), trauma is often represented by mimicking it: temporality, chronology collapse, repetition and indirection are typical for trauma narratives.

According to Rodi-Risberg (2010: 20), "both the figure of the body and landscape are theorized as sites where the symbolic and the real meet", when trying a new way of reading about trauma. It is possible that the literality and the figurative can reflect the temporal and spatial aspects of trauma, Rodi-Risberg (2010: 21) writes. As Rodi-Risberg (2010: 223) notes, "trauma invokes, as it shatters, the body/mind binary". Trauma alienates one from the body. Paradoxically the mind and the body become inseparable, too, as both the mind and the body experience the belated, recurring symptoms of the trauma. According to Brenda Daly, there are PTSD symptoms such as hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response and sleeping difficulties that "resist categorization as either mental or physical" (quoted in Rodi-Risberg 2010: 223).

Freud believed that there is also a physical side to trauma. As Rodi-Risberg (2010: 224) notes, Freud used a metaphor of a "foreign body" (*Fremdkörper*) to describe the isolated traumatic memories. He also theorized about the physiological nature of memory. For Freud, there is a system that functions as a defensive barrier towards outside stimuli, filtering it. If the mind has not been able to prepare in advance, in trauma, stimulation breaks through it. According to Rodi-Risberg (2010: 225), Freud argues that the compulsion to repeat "is a function that retrospectively seeks to master the stimuli by producing the fright or the anxiety that was absent in the first place". Rodi-Risberg (2010: 225) notes, that Caruth, too, uses "bodily images to describe the mind's reactions to trauma, but unlike Freud's theories, hers lack a physiological basis". Caruth has received criticism on her lack of discussion of the mind and the body

relation and her failure to recognize the inseparability of the voice and the body in traumatic discourse.

Rodi-Risberg (2010: 226) notes that in contemporary trauma studies the relation between the mind and the body has regained focus. In the scientific discourse one who is interested in the subject is Bessel van der Kolk (1995, 2017), whose views are discussed more in the next subchapter. Like Rodi-Risberg (2010: 226) states, the "traumatic memory itself is seen as mainly corporeal: the nonverbal memory of traumatic experience produces a mark of the event on the brain as a neural pathway". The experience exists both in and on the body. Traumatic stress effects both physiology and personality. According to Rodi-Risberg (2010: 226), Roberta Culbertson calls the emotional and physical knowledge of the traumatic experience "body memories".

Literature professor Roger Luckhurst (2014: 60) adds that an important recent extension to trauma theory is *"multidirectional memory"* that Michael Rothberg has argued for. Rothberg (quoted in Luckhurst 2014: 60) states that multidirectional memory acknowledges "how remembrance both cuts across and binds together diverse spatial, temporal, and cultural sites". For Luckhurst, this multi-temporality of traumatic memory means that one war will always be seen through another. (Luckhurst 2014: 60)

How to heal from trauma? As Rodi-Risberg (2010: 254) notes, in psychoanalysis the patient is supposed to tell the story of his/her trauma, and this "talking cure" is said to heal. Freud and his colleague Breuer called it the "cathartic method". In it, the memory is made conscious and person can be set free from it by talking. This means that the traumatic memory can be verbalized instead of just acted out. According to Rodi-Risberg (2010: 255), Freud indicated that what catharsis does "is establish a state of equilibrium by discharging the excessive excitation caused by trauma". To Freud, this talking cure demanded a new mode of sympathetic listening. Today's trauma experts agree with Freud: "for some form of closure to take place, trauma needs to be told and recognized in a social context of empathic understanding" (Rodi-Risberg 2010: 255).

Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart (1995: 176) talk about transforming traumatic memory into narrative memory. That means a chronological and coherent story. Van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995: 176) write that "traumatic memories are the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language." Rodi-Risberg (2010: 256) notes that "literary works may not merely enact traumatic experience but also possibly a coming to terms with the past through narration". She reminds that there are perils, too. There is inherent tension of remembering and forgetting in trauma. Survivors can fear that letting go of the painful memories would mean both forgetting and the negation of the historical facts and a part of their identity. It is also possible to understand too much. Anne Whitehead (2004: 160) has written:

> Narrative needs to understand enough, so that it can convey a forgotten and excluded history, but it should simultaneously resist understanding too much, so that it can also convey the disruptive and resistant force of a traumatic historicity.

There is also possibility of secondary traumatism, Rodi-Risberg (2010: 257) notes. Trauma narratives can be so powerful that the readers become traumatized themselves. For historian Dominick La Capra, the process entails what he calls "emphatic unsettlement", where there is both understanding and critical distance, which makes over-identification avoidable (Rodi-Risberg 2010: 257). As Whitehead (2004: 7) notes, there is a fragile balance between the need to witness with sympathy what cannot be fully represented and, at the same time, respect the otherness of the experience. According to La Capra, trauma should be worked through only to the point where the survivor is not stuck in the past anymore and is not acting out the traumatic memory: he/she is moving the present but has not forgotten (Rodi-Risberg 2010: 258).

Not forgotten does not mean haunted by trauma. As Whitehead (2004: 6) notes, for Caruth, this another time's invasion to other time can be seen as a form of haunting. "To be traumatised is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (Caruth 1995: 4-5). Whitehead (2004: 6) writes: "The ghost represents an appropriate embodiment of the

disjunction of temporality, the surfacing of the past in the present". One example of trauma fiction is Pat Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy (1991, 1993, 1995) which "explores the history of the First World War as a site of haunting and demonstrates that 'regeneration' is not possible until the past has been worked through" (Whitehead 2004: 6). Barker also asks whether the act of killing is a war narrative which is passed on as family history (Whitehead 2004: 21). "In the *Regeneration* trilogy, the ghosts represented the soldier's dead companions, or those whom they killed, and Barker empahasised the unprecedented loss of the war" Whitehead (2004: 28) writes. Whitehead (2004: 7) concludes that in contemporary fiction, the ghost story explores the nature of trauma as psychological possession. The traumas of history are manifested in the ghosts, and they represent a form of collective or cultural haunting. Whitehead (2004: 7) writes: "as John Brannigan points out, haunting in contemporary fiction often represents the figurative return of elements of the past which have been silenced or culturally excluded".

In this subchapter I have discussed the trauma in relation to literature studies. It is time to move to discuss trauma in practice.

2.2 Trauma in practice

In this subchapter I will discuss trauma in practice: how healing from traumas can happen and how using words can aid in the healing process. I will do this with help of Bessel van der Kolk's text.

Bessel van der Kolk (1943) is a psychiatrist well known for his research on post-traumatic stress. He explains that silence strengthens the isolation related to trauma, and healing can begin when you can talk to someone about the traumatic event (van der Kolk 2017: 283). But as van der Kolk states, the limits of language become obvious

when attending therapy. It is hard to know what you are feeling, and at the same time, narrate those feelings to someone. One can either feel or describe logically, but when narrating, it is easy to lose touch with yourself and focus on the reactions of the person you are talking to. (van der Kolk 2017: 287-288)

Van der Kolk (2017: 288) explains that people have two different levels of self-awareness: biographical self, which relates to language and forming your changing and ever-developing story, and in-the-moment self, which relates to the body and its functions. These levels of self-awareness are located in different parts of the brain. One part creates your story, and when the story is repeated often enough, it can feel like the whole truth. The other level, your body, may be telling another story, and this is the part of yourself you must find and make peace with. Trauma damages the connection between these levels of self-awareness, and repairing the connection is an essential part of the process of finding and creating, hopefully, a whole, consistent story (van der Kolk 2017: 301).

According to van der Kolk, it may be hard to find a safe place to express pain. Also an attempt of having control may result in clean, tidy stories or silence. Trying to control emotions while narrating your story may result in an evasive impression given to the listener. (van der Kolk 2017: 297) Van der Kolk (2017: 297) writes that he has seen many asylum applications denied, because asylum seekers have not been able to be coherent while narrating their story, though it is quite normal to appear confused or silent in therapy. According to van der Kolk, people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder have problems in their everyday life, and they spend their time on those, instead of spending it on making peace with their past. They have also more problems with concentration and absorbing new information. (van der Kolk 2017: 298-299)

Van der Kolk argues that language is an essential tool when dealing with trauma. Your self-awareness assumes an ability to organize memories into a coherent entity. Due to traumatic events, the connections between the levels of self-awareness, of mind and body, may be damaged. Repairing those connections makes it possible to tell a coherent

story and, essentially, find yourself. (van der Kolk 2017: 301) According to van der Kolk (2017: 291), the possibilities of language in dealing with trauma were systemically studied first time in 1986 at the University of Texas by James Pennebaker. One of the students said that the result of the experiment was peace of mind. When you had to think, process and write about experiences and feelings, you started to understand how you felt and why (van der Kolk 2017: 293). When writing about trauma, both levels of self-awareness can be combined without worry about the reception (van der Kolk 2017: 291). Van der Kolk admits that language may not always be necessary for healing. People suffering from PTSD may not benefit if they are required to share their stories. However, writing for yourself, and telling yourself what you have been trying to avoid, seems to be beneficial. (van der Kolk 2017: 296)

In this subchapter I have discussed trauma in practice, how healing can happen, and how language can help the healing process. Below I move to discuss the relation of trauma and war.

2.3 Trauma and war

Cultural and literary historian Paul Fussell (2013/1975: 184) writes about the limits of language and the silence surrounding the trauma of the First World War in his book *The Great War and Modern Memory*:

> One of the cruxes of the war, of course, is the collision between events and the language available – or thought appropriate – to describe them. To out it more accurately, the collision was one between events and the public language used for over a century to celebrate the idea of progress. Logically there is no reason why the English language could not perfectly well render the actuality of trench warfare: it is rich in terms like *blood, terror, agony, madness, shit, cruelty, murder, sell-out, pain* and *hoax*, as well as phrases like *legs blown off, intestines gushing out over his hands, screaming all night, bleeding to death from the rectum*, and the like. […] The problem was less one of 'language' than of gentility and optimism, it was less a problem

> of ‘linguistics’ than of rhetoric. […] soldiers have discovered that no one is very interested in the bad news they have to report. What listener wants to be torn and shaken when he doesn’t have to be? We have made *unspeakable* mean indescribable: it really means *nasty*.
> (Fussell 2013/1975: 184)

The actuality of war can be written and talked about, we have the words for it, but it is entirely a different matter if people are willing to do it, or indeed, willing to listen when the horrors of war are being discussed.

As Marita Nadal and Monica Calvo (2014: 1) state, Sigmund Freud defined traumatic neurosis as “a consequence of an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli” in 1920. He had become interested in trauma when observing shell-shocked soldiers of the First World War. As historian Ville Kivimäki (2013: 33, 35) describes, British soldiers started to use the term shell shock, a shock from grenade, which described the psychological and the physical hit and blow caused by war experiences. The term shell shock was coined in the British army in 1914-1915, but it spread quickly to the everyday language of the soldiers. In German they used words Granatschock and Zitterneurose (shaking neurosis). The soldiers had strong physical symptoms: they were trembling and having cramps and strokes. The soldiers thought that it described well the effects of the endless shellfire. (Kivimäki 2013: 33, 35) To the psychology of killing specialized author and US Army lieautenant colonel Dave Grossman (1995: 55) writes that during the First World War it was more probable that a soldier had psychiatric problems than that he was killed by enemy fire.

According to historian Joanna Bourke (2000: 250, 252), in the early years of the First World War the shell shock was believed to be the result of a physical injury to the nerves. Physical traumas were considered plausible explanations for ‘nervous’ collapse, but fear and guilt were not seen as important factors in the development of neurosis. Gradually psychological factors became more emphasized, and fear and the act of killing became more important. However, it was generally believed that there were two types of men to be liable to collapse in combat: cowards and ‘feminine’ men. Many

medics believed that psychological breakdown was a form of cowardice. (Bourke 2000: 250, 252)

Officially the phenomenon of trauma was recognized as late as 1980, when the American Psychiatric Association added post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in its diagnostic manual, thanks to the campaigning of the veterans of the Vietnam War (Nadal & Calvo 2014: 1). The experience of the war in Vietnam was quite a different one compared to the First World War. According to Grossman (1995: 250), in the Second World War 75 to 80 percent of riflemen did not fire their weapons at the exposed enemy. They did not fire even to save their own lives or the lives of their friends. These nonfiring rates were similar in previous wars. However, in Vietnam the nonfiring rate was close to 5 percent. Something had clearly happened in military between those wars. For military authority the nonfiring rates were obviously a problem that had to be solved. The solution was to psychologically override the resistance to killing. (Grossman 1995: 250)

Grossman (1995: 251) lists the methods used to achieve the increase in killing: desensitization, conditioning and denial defense mechanisms. As Grossman (1995: 252) writes, soldiers have always tried to convince themselves that the enemy is different, the Other. However, at the time of Vietnam, the process of killing was thoroughly institutionalized, and every aspect of it was rehearsed, visualized and conditioned (Grossman 1995: 252-254). This all came with a cost. Grossman (1995: 250) argues that when psychological safeguards are overridden in such a way, there is a possibility of psychological trauma.

Grossman (1995: 282) describes the manifestations of PTSD as follows: “recurrent and intrusive dreams and recollections of the experience, emotional blunting, social withdrawal, exceptional difficulty or reluctance in initiating or maintaining intimate relationships, and sleep disturbances.” The symptoms can make readjusting to civilian life difficult. The result may be alcoholism, divorce and/or unemployment. The symptoms of trauma can persist a long time after the event, and often they emerge after

a long delay. (Grossman 1995: 282) As Grossman (1995: 282) writes, estimates of the number of Vietnam veterans suffering from PTSD vary, for example from somewhere between 18 and 54 percent of the 2.8 million military personnel who served in Vietnam, and it was a big problem. Acknowledging the problem and the campaigning of the Vietnam veterans led also to formally acknowledging the phenomenon of trauma.

According to Solomon, Laor and McFarlane (1996: 104-109) combat stress reaction (CSR) is the most studied type of acute stress reaction, but not only soldiers suffer from stress caused by war. In a research conducted on Israeli civilian's reactions to the Gulf War, the result was that more people died from fear than direct contact with missiles. From the war-related hospital emergency room visits 22% of the injuries were from the actual contact with missiles or flying debris and 78% were from indirect casualties. These indirect casualties (suffocation caused by faulty use of the gas masks, heart attacks) happened because of fear caused by the air raid alerts. Most people evacuated from their houses showed initially a very high level of nonspecific distress. The results of the research indicated that the vast majority of people respond to traumatic events with high levels of stress and with symptoms that would be deemed pathological if those symptoms persisted. (Solomon, Laor & McFarlane 1996: 104-109)

However, massive traumatic events like wars are not a requirement for getting traumatized. According to Finnish army psychiatrist Kai Vilkman (2018), 35-40% of people experience during their lives a traumatic event that fulfills the criteria of PTSD. In Finland that means around 100 000 cases per year. Part of them heal on their own, but part need treatment.

3 WAR AND POETRY

In this chapter on war and poetry I will first discuss definitions of some military concepts like war, warfare, and soldier. Then I will shortly write about studying war. Next I will move into war poetry of the 20th century. This provides important background information from the more researched areas of war poetry. After touching the history of war poetry I move forward to more present time and discuss the Iraq War. I will conclude this chapter by discussing the Iraq War in fiction and non-fiction.

3.1 War and words – definitions of military concepts

As military professor Aki-Mauri Huhtinen (2005: 18-19) notes, war is in our tradition, myths, stories, and in our language. Through the rhetorics of war humans have discussed courage, responsibility, and cohesion. However, the rhetorics of war are elsewhere too: in medicine, in stock markets, in our education, in sports, and in our ordinary life. The enchantment of the western though is in its warlike disposition. War related language has been taken into use wherever a some kind of battle is involved. Most of it is probably meant as metaphorical, but their metaphorical quality is not very visible every time. That is why many concepts related to war are losing their old framework of interpretation. The interpretation of these war related words becomes more difficult and more unclear, when they are used widely outside the original context. What it means when there is a war? If the concept of war is unclear, what is peace? The words war, warfare, strategy, tactics, battle, and soldier are common in everyday use. But what do these words actually mean in the military context? (Huhtinen 2005: 18-19) This is a question I try to clarify.

According to Maasalo (2002: 122), the definition of *warfare* is interesting, because in everyday use, it is equated with *war*, though they are not synonyms: one describes a situation and the other action. The change in the paradigm in warfare is well debated,

and another question in itself. According to historian Ian Speller and defence studies scholar Christopher Tuck (2015: 1), war is a hostile conflict between nations or states, or between parties in the same nation. Wars differ from armed conflicts by the by the large number of combatants, casualties and the intensity of fighting. Contemporary British military doctrine describes war as follows:

> Armed conflict is a situation in which violence or military force is threatened or used. War is the most extreme manifestation of armed conflict and is characterised by intense, extensive and sustained combat, usually between states.
> (quoted in Speller & Tuck 2015: 1)

Speller and Tuck consider the definitions that include the fatal casualties in the definition of war far from satisfactory. If a conflict is a war after 1000 deaths and an armed conflict with 999 deaths, it seems too simplistic. Other definitions include legal issues: war as a state of law that regulates armed conflicts. This reflects a conventional understanding of war as organised rule-bound violence between the uniformed armed forces of states. (Speller & Tuck 2015: 1-2)

According to Speller and Tuck (2015: 3), warfare is about fighting: the employment of organised violence. How the violence is applied and the degree of it varies according to circumstance. Warfare is about the preparation for organised violence and conduct of it. Political, social, cultural, economic and technological factors set the conditions in which warfare is conducted. (Speller & Tuck 2015: 3)

Information warfare is a form of warfare that has been discussed at length in recent years. Maasalo (2002: 123) notes that information warfare, like economic warfare, can be used in normal situations; it does not require a formal declared war. This, according to Maasalo (2002: 123), does not mean entering to a permanent state of war. War as a condition presupposes peace, and if the word war loses its meaning, peace disappears as well. Maasalo (2002: 123) argues that war is an exception to the normal, and peace at least an absence of war.

According to Huhtinen (2005: 20-21), war is closely connected to politics in the most prominent and extensive war theories. Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz famously said that war is the continuation of policy by other means. For Chinese military strategist and philosopher Sun Tzu war was the question of living for the state. Clausewitz and Sun Tzu are still recognized for their thoughts on war, so they offer a good starting point, though they did not write about the concept on information. Our context is different. In classical war theory, the concept of war is communal. You need a group to go to a war. War is a form of such a communal action, which strives for political aims (either to achieve something or to maintain something). Not all communal action with political aims is war, war always has an element of violence, either in mental or in physical form. An essential part of war is a battle: if there is no confrontation or resistance, there is no war. In case of no resistance, there may be oppression or genocide, but not war. War supposes an opponent, an enemy. War should be directed towards peace. War, which does not strive towards its end, may be just suffering. The aims of the war can be directed inside the society or outside of it. (Huhtinen 2005: 20-22)

According to Huhtinen (2005: 23), warfare is where war is manifested. Warfare means all the violent action to achieve the goals of the war. An attack is an aggressive action meant to harm the enemy. The action meant to defy an attack is defence. 20th century has established the economic and psychological warfare beside the direct military action as warfare. The means of the action define the type of warfare, whether it is economic warfare, psychological warfare, or information warfare. (Huhtinen 2005: 23)

There are many levels of military leadership: strategic, operative, and tactical levels. As Huhtinen (2005: 25) explains, in Ancient Greece, *stratêgòs* meant a military (stratos) commander in chief, chosen for the duration of the war. He had to have skill to lead (agein) his troops. He also needed to have a good idea of the principles of successful warfare, aka good strategy. Tactic comes from the greek words *tâ tàktikâ,* which meant organizing your troops to the battle and later, the skills of the commader in chief in war in general. Nowadays it means also planning of a battle, and preparations, execution and

leading of it. Tactics can be attack, defence or stall, and they are used to achieving the goal of the battle. Operations are the series of movements, which lead to the battle. The word *battle* has many meanings, but generally it means positioning in relation to the operations and the strategy. In English is often talked about "battle campaign". (Huhtinen 2005: 25)

Huhtinen (2005: 26-28) explains how strategy and battle relate to each other: battle is the framework of the strategy. Fire and movement are the two central elements of the battle. Movement leads to the battle, which creates and is requirement for new movements. Strategy defines the means, the opponent, the timing and the location of the war. Tactics defines how these are executed. The aim of the strategic action is to win, and most of the time, it is achieved only through a battle. Quick solution is always the main goal. The battle itself has no intrinsic value, it is just a tool to achieve the goals set by the strategy. (Huhtinen 2005: 26-28)

As Huhtinen (2005: 28-29) notes, battle begins when an attack faces opposition. Battle contains all the actions required to win. Battle is about using violence. *Fire, movement,* and *rest* are the most central concepts of a battle. Movement is like moving a pawn on the chess board. By moving the pawn, the relations of powers are changed. Movement aims to a certain goal, and this happens by changing a position of a power. This can be a physical movement of a soldier, or strategic moves like building weapons/weapon systems. The first move of your own power is concentration: transportation of the troops, assembling, and arranging before the action. (Huhtinen 2005: 28-29)

Huhtinen (2005: 29-30) gives an example of this from the Iraq War, when US troops were transferred in silence a long time beforehand. They were trying to avoid the attention of the press by timing the transportations to the holidays and at the same time as international events. The idea was to move to the attack straight from the movement, so that rest of the world would not be able to see the difference between the concentration of power and the movement to attack. Operations, movements to the

battle and the battle itself lead to the first contact with the enemy. (Huhtinen 2005: 29-30)

Rest is not just an absence of movement, Huhtinen (2005: 30) explains. The actions related the rest are such that they do not change the spatial relations of powers of the war. They are actions that relate to maintaining your own power or improvement of it, meaning for example eating or maintenance processes when it comes to machinery. Most of the time war is just waiting for the battle. Huhtinen (2005: 30) says that an authentic movie about a war would be so boring no one would even want to watch it. Mental pressure of preparations of the battle and waiting for it lead to boredom and homesickness of the soldiers. (Huhtinen 2005: 30)

Huhtinen (2005: 30) describes fire as the violent actions used against the enemy, and, naturally, the word comes from firing a gun, the most basic violent action. Under the concept fire are all the actions in which using violence one aims to impact on the qualitative state of the enemy or to remove the power of the enemy. Fire are the actions that aim to paralyze, destroy or kill the enemy. (Huhtinen 2005: 30)

As Huhtinen (2005: 31) reminds, the goal of the battle is to win. Strategy aims to achieve the goal, and operations are designed that strategic goals can be achieved. The use of fire and movement in the battle aims to that same goal. Tactics tells how that should be done. Attack is the first law of the battle, without it defence is impossible. The purpose of an attack is usually to destroy the power of the enemy. If defence is chosen, its purpose is first and foremost to save own power. Huhtinen (2005: 31) describes defence as the easiest and strongest form, and attack as the harder and weaker form. It is rare to achieve your goals simply through defence. Both defence and attack are often needed together in order to win. (Huhtinen 2005: 31)

The aims of the battle are ultimately achieved by the actions of the individual soldiers. But who is a *soldier*? As Maasalo (2002: 121) notes, nowadays the everyday use of the word soldier is based on being a part of some organized and legitimate group; if the

group is not legitimate, the speaker uses other words, like a terrorist. Huhtinen (2005: 34) explains that a soldier is the agent of war, the one who acts and uses violence against the enemy. Combatants are called in different names: *soldier, combatant, warrior, mercenary, draftee,* even an *unlawful combatant* is used. Words like *discipline, command, order, training* and *drill* are also connected to the concept of a soldier. A soldier has got a military training and he/she carries a uniform. A soldier also knows the obligations of the rules of war. (Huhtinen 2005: 34)

According to Huhtinen (2005: 34), the different concepts of a soldier have significant differences in meaning. The most neutral and descriptive is *combatant*, which is common name for all the people who take part in a battle. In the Finnish military, a person becomes a combatant when he/she masters the basic skills needed in a battle. This is common but not universal practice; for example in many African and Asian conflicts many untrained children have taken part in battles, and to use untrained adults has been quite common through the history. (Huhtinen 2005: 34)

What makes a combatant unlawful? Here it does not mean the unlawfulness or criminality of an action. Huhtinen (2005: 35) argues that the most prominent sign of an *unlawful combatant* is that he/she has not identified with some feature as a combatant fighting against the US. The lack of signs causes constant problems and tragedies. It is forbidden to disguise oneself as a civilian according to Geneva Conventions. The contradiction is that US uses this method themselves as well. (Huhtinen, 2005: 35) The Geneva Conventions are the treaties which establish the rules and international law for war and humanitarian treatment in wars. (Huhtinen 2005: 35)

Huhtinen (2005: 35-36) explains that to be a *soldier*, a person does not have to be a combatant. The concept of a soldier is closely connected to being part of an organization. A group of soldiers makes one a soldier through initiation, indoctrination and rites. One can be a professional soldier, or to be obligated to act like a soldier in certain circumstances (draftee). To be a *warrior* is more of an existentialist choice. Difference to a professional soldier is that a warrior does not have to join any

organization. A professional soldier commits to a certain lifestyle through the ideals of his/her organization, but for a warrior the lifestyle is part of himself/herself. The difference of a warrior and a *mercenary* relates to the community they are fighting for: a warrior is an integral part of the community, and a mercenary fights for the ones who pay the best. (Huhtinen 2005: 35-36)

According to Huhtinen (2005: 36-37), *discipline* is integral part of warfare. Without discipline, private aspirations can jeopardize reaching the common goals. Military discipline means the unyielding obeying of the *orders* and *commands*. An order demands action, and the skill and the will of a military leader manifests in orders, commands, and the example of his/her own action. Orders and commands are executed regardless your own desires. Huhtinen describes how orders and discipline form the surface, which helps a soldier to adhere to tactics and strategy, and through them to the overall framework of warfare. Discipline forms through group dynamics, training, and drills. Training and drills are very important for battles and warfare in general. One must be able to do things one is asked for in a battle, in order to win them. (Huhtinen 2005: 36-37)

What are the most important skills of a soldier? According to Huhtinen (2005: 37-38), they are the ability to use a weapon, and the skill to survive in a battle. Courage, the sense of duty, and honour are important qualities in a soldier. A soldier is often considered as a hero, who has to be someone who removes evil; something to coincide with the ethical standards of the civilians. The nature of operations is changing from just using pure physical strength to more intelligence gathering ones, and it affects the role of a soldier too: the traditional role may be narrowing, but other roles such as “traitors” and hackers are increasing. Also, the identity of a soldier may in the future approach the role of an expert and political decision making rather than traditional military leader one. (Huhtinen 2005: 37-38)

I have now discussed the definitions of the words war, warfare, and soldier from a military perspective. Next I will shortly write about studying war. I will do it with the help of Christine Sylvester's text.

3.2 Studying war

War is a complex phenomenon, especially when you look at it from the perspective of people. As Christine Sylvester (2013: 1-2) notes, war was easier to count and recognize in earlier times, when wars were seen from more state-centered perspective. Today's wars have so many participants (states, guerilla forces, private firms, organizations, and mixed coalitions) that it is not always even clear who the main actors are. The people involved and the casualties of war are diverse, and sometimes not easily counted. The casualties are not equally grieved, as some damage is just seen collateral rather than important. Sylvester argues that to understand war it is essential to understand people's experiences of war. War cannot be fully understood if it is not studied also as a physical, emotional, and social experience, not just as a cut and dried set of politics, strategies, actions, and events, where blood and complex emotions of human beings are ignored. (Sylvester 2013: 1-2) This thesis will not focus on the military operations or events, or war as an intellectual phenomenon – it tries to explore the emotions which war brings forth.

The usual way of defining war is as collective violence used to achieve political aims. Sylvester (2013: 3-4) encourages to think about the violence, its meaning rather than the mere fact. She argues that "war is a politics of injury: everything about war aims to injure people and/or their social surroundings as a way of resolving disagreement, or, in some cases, encouraging disagreement if it is profitable to do so" (Sylvester 2013: 3-4). As a result, many will try to avoid the injury by fleeing or protecting themselves in other ways. Some people can be both inflicting injuries and fleeing from them. Sylvester notes that literature professor Elaine Scarry saw the point a long time ago ago:

that injury is not the consequence of war but the content of war. (Sylvester 2013: 4) These injuries can be both physical and mental.

Sylvester (2013: 4-5) notes that all wars nowadays have international components: from recycled weapons, combatants with military training received elsewhere, and funds, to straightforward attack from other states. She states that war should be studied as a social institution. People, their different experiences and relations can affect war just like strategy or weapons. Sylvester lists some institutional components of war: heroic myths and stories, memories of war passed from generation to another, the actions of militaries, creation of masculinities glorifying war, production and development of weapons, the popular culture that supports violent politics by bringing it to everyday. When war is considered as a social institution, people are counted as meaningful participants; not only as important decision makers or soldiers, but also as mourners, artists, parents, protesters, medical practitioners, refugees, photographers, readers. (Sylvester 2013: 4-5). According to Sylvester, Vivienne Jabri refers to a system matrix of war. We are all part of it, one way or other (Sylvester 2013: 5). This makes war a good topic to study from various perspectives, from literature to history, sociology, philosophy and numerous other fields of study (Sylvester 2013: 13).

How to study war as experience? As Sylvester (2013: 5) notes, experience as a word is both very ordinary and concrete and abstract and difficult to define. She sees bodies as integral fact: war is experienced through the body. Therefore, experience is "the physical and emotional connections with war that people live – with their bodies and their minds and as social creatures in specific circumstances". (Sylvester 2013: 5) The body can experience war in various ways: through wounds, running, falling, feeling hungry, photographing war (Sylvester 2013: 5). According to psychologist Richard Lazarus (1991: 46) emotions are internal, mental, affective, and psychological experiences. Lazarus (1991: 46) sees emotions relational as well as internal: what provokes them is also important. Emotions have always been essential to humans: they are at the center of human experience (Lazarus 1991: 4-5).

Rather than falling into mind/body dualism or arguing if the mind is part of the body or something else, it may be useful to approach the question with the basis of how the mind and the body mutually create experiences (Sylvester 2013: 6).

I have now shortly discussed studying the phenomenon of war. Next I will move to the important subchapter of war poetry in the 20th century.

3.3 War poetry in the 20th century

In this subchapter I will look at the history of war poetry in the 20th century, especially relating to the First World War and the Vietnam War, as they provide a good background for understanding war poetry and the changes in it during the 20th century. This gives the context for the study of war poetry in the Iraq War.

The poetry of the First World War (1914-1918) contains probably the most well-known examples of war poetry. It is also a widely researched area of war poetry. The First World War was a life-altering experience for many, and poets tried to express with words what they felt and experienced. The naivety, enthusiasm, and excitement of the beginning gradually turned into suspicion and the attitudes towards the war changed. The war was not a glorious thing, after all, it was a landscape of madness, a landscape turned into alien and destroyed, a never-ending nightmare. The war became a machine, both metaphorically and in reality.

This change in attitudes during the course of the war shows clearly in the poetry written during the First World War. Images of patriotism, idealized homeland, glorified sacrifice, and necessity of killing were replaced by anger, revulsion, observation, compassion and descriptions of comradeship. The futility of war became apparent. The poets were a part of the process of making sense of the madness, telling and remembering. The poetry of the war was more about the war than the poetry.

As historian Joanna Bourke (2000: 6) writes, warfare was transformed by the mechanization of the battlefield. Technology meant that fewer men were required to kill, and it made the process of killing more mechanical. Opponents rarely saw each other. In the First World War there was a physical and psychological distance between front and home. As 20th century war poetry expert Lorrie Goldensohn (2003: 14) notes, there was severe censorship of the battlefield events in the First World War. There were also logistical problems with transporting the dead bodies of soldiers from the front. Soldiers were killed and they disappeared, their bodies vanished in the mud. The soldiers in the front lived in the middle of a carnage, but for the people at home, war was an abstract thing. People could not actually see the bodies and the amount of loss. The poets of the First World War wanted to report, to shock and to warn the public, and to counter the propaganda and disinformation of the authorities. According to Goldensohn (2003: 31), paradoxically they created an effect that was not desired: there was a fascination with the torments of the First World War that lasted a long time. Isherwood wrote in 1938:

> Like most of my generation, I was obsessed with the idea of "War." "War," in this purely neurotic sense, meant the Test. The test of your courage, of your maturity, of your sexual prowess. "Are you really a man?"
> (quoted in Goldensohn 2003: 31)

Suspicion towards the bourgeois world and its values showed in the change of cultural atmosphere and in the development of art and science. There was a fundamental shift in attitudes from late 19th to mid-20th century with the rising of modernism. Modernism promoted a protest against old values and a re-interpretation of the contemporary world. The world had changed with industrialization, mechanization and urbanization. Modernism questioned authority, religion and class structures, and with it came new morals, new technology and new ideas. In literature modernism experimented with form and expression. It wanted a conscious break from traditions and traditional styles. Ezra Pound challenged his fellow poets to "make it new".

As English literature scholar Gary Day (1993: 42) notes, the achievement of Wilfred Owen and other war poets of the First World War was to engage poetry with experience, shared experience. There is also an urgent immediacy in the poetry of the First World War, as it often shared gruesome details from the battles. Day (1993: 43) writes that "the unique character of the war meant that there was no tradition to which it could be assimilated". Under the pressure the verse can begin to disintegrate. According to Day (1993: 43-44), a stylistic feature of the poetry of the First World War is the predominance of verbs: in earlier Georgian poetry the stress was on the adjectives which implied a static world, but the graphic verbs of the First World War poetry express movement and violence. The poems are not necessarily just descriptions of horror, but they can be aestheticized descriptions of horror. When the war is being aestheticized it is made manageable. "The experience of war both includes the individual within the collective and causes him or her to protest against it", writes Day (1993: 44). Day (1993: 42-44)

Wilfred Owen is the iconic voice of the First World War poetry. As Goldensohn (2003: 18) notes, his poems describe his fellow soldiers as unlucky sacrificial victims. Owen´s attitude towards higher leadership was hostile and suspicious. He regarded midlevel or junior officers and their men as part of a sacralized brotherhood. (Goldensohn 2003: 18) They were not sinners, they were the ones sinned against. Their heroic status was reinforced by the form used in the poems, as Owen often used the heroic couplet as the form in his poems. Strand and Boland (2000: 121) describe it as an old form, a form for high subject matters. It was the form often used for translation of epic poetry from the classical Latin and Greek.

According to Howarth, the disturbing experience of the First World War shows thoroughly in modernist form. However, the poetry of serving soldiers like Owen does not sound specifically modernist. They sometimes experiment with free forms, but their attachment to forms like sonnet and heroic couplet is a means of distancing themselves from the trauma of their memories, being sensitive and self-protective at the same time. When time had passed and the pressures of survival were less immediate, it also meant

that modernist style and war poetry were more successfully combined, like in David Jones's In Parenthesis. (Howarth 2012: 195)

When thinking of modernist poetry, the adjectives that come to mind quite often are difficult, complex and exclusive. Individuality, fragmentation and allusions are characteristics of modernist poetry. As Sleigh (2013) notes, modernism offered David Jones a wider set of conventions than the ones available to Owen when writing war poetry. *In Parenthesis* represented a retrospective understanding of Jones's war experiences, since it was not published until 1937. As Howarth (2012: 196-197) writes, in the end of *In Parenthesis* the modernist style mimes the panic and confusion of the attack. At the same time, Jones is connecting those soldiers' experiences to other battles in other times and to the mythic world of King Arthur's knights. According to Howarth,

> Jones saw art as a kind of gathering-in of present and past times into symbolic shape; poets, he thought, are 'evocative, incantative and have power of 're-calling', of 'bringing to mind', like the art of the man at the Altar, the work known as anamnesis, 'an effectual re-calling''
> (Howarth 2012: 196-197)

The war shattered the soldiers in body and mind. As Howarth notes, Jones' verbs have no nouns because all distinctions between body and mind, people and mud disappear in the chaos, confusion and destruction. The soldiers' wounds are the literal counterpart of this merging of interior and exterior. War left permanent marks and disfigurations. After all those years in the fields the fact that the bodies could belong to either side reinforced the soldiers' feeling of borderslessness. The war rearranged the relations of past, present and future. The soldiers and their families were living in a continual now, present, where everything was unsure and everything could change suddenly. (Howarth 2012: 18-19)

They were living "without beginning or end", like Gertrude Stein (quoted in Howarth 2012:19) put it when comparing the war with cubism. She thought that character, visual perspective and narrative time were all dislocated in the experience of war (Howarth 2012: 19). "Without beginning or end" in cubism means the feeling of borderlessness:

the painting can continue endlessly and the borders remain open and unfinished in a sense. The subject matter can be shown from multiple perspectives. Radical decomposition of the subject matter was typical for analytical cubism (Kubismi 2010). Howarth notes that this living "without beginning or end" was the future for the mentally traumatized soldiers as well, as they were living with endlessly repeating traumas after the war (Howarth 2012: 19).

According to Sleigh (2013), Jones said that he wanted poetry to be "incarnational", literally meaning dressing the spirit in flesh with words that made the war so physically intimate that abstractions disappeared. Jones did not write about war with moral outrage. For Jones, class solidarity was a basis for solidarity with enemy. The soldiers were not sacrificial, symbolic lambs, just ordinary men, British and German, who just happened to get to the hell of war. (Sleigh 2013)

Typically in the First World War poetry the soldier was the one sinned against, for example in Owen's poetry, but later during the Second World War and onwards the soldier was the one doing the sinning. For Owen, the poetry of the war was in the pity, but for example the poets of the Vietnam War generally had less pity for themselves. The war poetry painted a more complex picture. In First World War poetry the aim was often to warn, to make visible what the people had not seen. Woods (quoted in Goldensohn 2003: 16) explains that the Vietnam War was seen by the public in television and media in quite another way than the First World War. War and dead soldiers' bodies became real also in the home front, unlike in the First World War.

According to Goldensohn (2003: 23), the poetry of the Vietnam War "describes soldier-civilian interaction, with shame, guilt, and futility as the overwhelming 'climate' of wartime behavior". In these poems, responsibility was part of war at all levels and ranks, not just on the leadership level. Antiwar themes in poetry became more prominent. (Goldensohn 2003: 23) As Goldensohn (2006: 287-288) writes, it is important to note that these war poets represented themselves as soldiers who are both victim and victimizer. There is a weight of personal responsibility. In the First World

War poetry the common soldier was more of a victim. There was a slight change during the Second World War, but for example Randall Jarrell's poems speak within the shelter of the third person and the war remained ultimately justified to Jarrell. The confessional "we" and "I" in the Vietnam poetry is less forgiving than "they". (Goldensohn 2006: 287-288)

Compared to the earlier war poetry, the Vietnam War poetry dealt more with the relation between soldiers and civilians, as well as between older and younger generation and between men and women (Goldensohn 2003: 23). Goldensohn (2003: 29-30) writes that there was a striking change how civilians, particularly women, were discussed in the poems. There are also more descriptions of wartime sex. Graphic memories and images of women the soldiers encountered fill them constantly with shame and desire. There are also more descriptions of prostitution, rape and sexual abuse in the post-Vietnam war poems. (Goldensohn 2003: 29-30) This change regarding women and sexuality does not only relate to the change of times and sexual liberation, but also women becoming more visible in work done at the times of war. In asserting masculine dominance, the penis becomes a weapon of war. On the other hand, active women encouraged revisions on old stereotypes and myths, and in the process changed the imagery of desire. (Goldensohn 2003: 30)

There was also a new development in poetry: a theme of isolation, which undermined fraternity in the battle (Goldensohn 2003: 23). There were some differences in who participated in the war when comparing the First World War and the Vietnam War. Goldensohn (2003: 28) notes that during the Vietnam War the educated, young, American middle-class male, equivalent of Wilfred Owen, was protected from the war by his class privilege. After the war there was a gulf between those who served and those who did not. (Goldensohn 2003: 28)

Goldensohn (2003: 29) writes that the photographic imagery of the Vietnam War and news footage gave new shapes to the rhythms and forms of the language. As Goldensohn (2006: 286-287) notes, the Vietnam War poems used mainly free verse and

first-person narrative. The language was more informal; it stole liberally from prose and emphasized techniques borrowed from the cinema. Direct, colloquial language tried to bring the speaker closer to reality. (Goldensohn 2006: 286-287)

According to Goldensohn (2003: 29), the aftermath of war also occurs more as a subject in the poetry of the Vietnam War. There are more poems about the lingering effects of the war, written by tormented survivors. They describe the long-term effects and the poems are more of a memory of war, unlike many of the First World War poems which were written in the midst of the war and horror. (Goldensohn 2003: 29)

I have now discussed war poetry in the 20th century, and given some background to the subject of war poetry. Now, I move to discuss next the Iraq War.

3.4 The Iraq War

It is quite necessary to know something about the events, the framework of the human experience when discussing the Iraq War, the framework of the poetry and autobiography studied in this thesis.

As Christine Sylvester (2013: 2) explains, some wars start from set of participants and goals and end up for something quite different. The Iraq War started as a high-tech American military operation to demonstrate their force and competence and to force the troublesome regime head Saddam Hussein to surrender. Militants, both religious and secular, responded to the attacks and urban street battles across the country ensued, both against the Americans and against each other. This lead to a complex civil war, and the coalition responded with a long-lasting counterinsurgency. (Sylvester 2013: 2)

As media and communications professor Lilie Chouliaraki (2007:1-4) writes, there was fierce controversy concerning the Iraq War (2003-2011), about the reasons of declaring it, possible effects of it, the legitimacy of the war, and the actual military operations.

The legitimacy and credibility of the Iraq War were largely justified by a humanitarian argument: overthrowing Saddam Hussein from power would free suffering Iraqis from a ruthless regime and remove the threat of the regime's alleged weapons of mass destruction. Tony Blair's speeches from 2002-2003 feature "increasing association of moral claims with combative action and the justification of the war in the name of the 'liberation' of Iraqi people", as Chouliaraki (2007: 4) writes. More controversy was created when the coalition decided to enter the war without a mandate from the United Nations. The reality of the situation in Iraq has been unstable after the long war even to this day. (Chouliaraki 2007: 1-4)

Professor Paul Cornish (2008: 179) notes that the military operations were reported in great detail, and they have been examined from various perspectives. According to Cornish (2008: 180), the war was also a demonstration of a new style of Western strategic thought and practice – namely 'effects-based' warfare or operations (EBW or EBO). One of the definitions of this 'effects-based' operations is from the US Joint Forces Command and it goes as follows:

> Effects-based operations (EBO) is a process for obtaining a desired strategic outcome, or effect, on the enemy through the synergistic and cumulative application of the full range of military and non-military capabilities at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. Effects-based thinking focuses upon the linkage of actions to effects to objectives.
> (quoted in Cornish 2008: 180)

According to Cornish (2008: 180), for some effects-based warfare/operations represents a fundamental change: the warfare can be more focused and more purposive, and the goals can be pursued by military and other means more immediately and simultaneously. The fundamental change EBW/EBO represents is due the closeness of the conduct of warfare and the political rationale for the use of armed forces. "The overall aim of EBW/EBO is to tighten the decision making circle so considerably that an opponent would immediately perceive himself to be overwhelmed", Cornish (2008: 180) writes. The critics of EBW/EBO argue that the concepts are not new, that it relies too much on technology, and that it creates divisions among allies due to the

overwhelming capacity of the US armed forces (Cornish 2008: 180-181). As Cornish (2008: 181-182) notes, there are also ethical considerations: the just war tradition tries to keep *jus ad bellum* (the ends) and *jus in bello* (the means) separate, but in effects-based warfare there is a fusion of ends and means. Effects-based warfare reduces the distance between strategic ends and tactical means, making the end the focus for everyone, from politicians to combatants, while communications technology makes the long-distance micro-management of warfare more possible.

The US Army experienced the micro-management, with adverse consequences, in Iraq, by an account of N. Aylwin-Foster:

> Whilst the US Army may espouse mission command, in Iraq it did not practice it […] Commanders and staff at all levels were strikingly conscious of their duty, but rarely if ever questioned authority, and were reluctant to deviate from precise instructions. Staunch loyalty upward and conformity to one's superior were noticeable traits. Each commander had his own style, but if there was a common trend it was for micro-management, with many hours devoted to daily briefings and updates. Planning tended to be staff driven and focused in process rather than end effect. The net effect was highly centralized-making which […] tended to discourage lower level initiative and adaptability.
> (quoted in Cornish 2008: 194)

The US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld described the plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom as "an unprecedented combination of speed, precision, surprise, and flexibility" (quoted in Cornish 2008: 182). Cornish (2008: 182) states that the operations were "executed at a remarkably fast pace, by closely integrated forces, using the most sophisticated military technology". Casualties were kept to a minimum. "(B)etween 20 March and 1 May 2003, when President George Bush announced the end of combat activity, the United States had lost 138 troops, 114 from combat", writes Cornish (2008: 183). The Iraqi forces could not match to the equipment of the coalition. In the operation, close co-ordination was enabled by the massive computing power. The forces of the coalition achieved dominance in the sea and air. On the ground, coalition forces had "advanced personal weaponry, highly mobile armoured vehicles, precision artillery and short-range missile systems" (Cornish 2008: 183). Military satellites were

used for communications and intelligence gathering. Intelligence was also provided by ‘unmanned aerial vehicles’ (UAV). (Cornish 2008: 182-184)

According to Cornish (2008: 184), the campaign in Iraq was a culmination for military doctrine of ‘Revolution in Military Affairs’ (RMA), or ‘network centric warfare’ (NCW). This has been described as follows:

> The idea of NCW is to collect intelligence for rapid processing, analysis, and interpretation and to share timely battlespace information between decision-makers at all command levels and the individual warfighter. NCW promises superiority in weapons systems’ efficacy through the rapid distribution of information to each position within a theatre of operation. This is being achieved by distributing intelligence which is gathered by a multiplicity of highly advanced sensors carried by various platforms. (quoted in Cornish 2008: 184)

As Cornish (2008: 185) notes, advances in military technology (communications and computing, target sensing and identification, and target acquisition and attack) has made possible the lighter and more responsive forces used in Iraq. Military command and control has become faster, more responsive, and better informed. New technologies enable the operational and the strategic framework, which in turn enables the full use of modern military technology. (Cornish 2008: 185)

According to Cornish (2008: 187-188), effects-based warfare is essentially a modern restatement of an old idea: how to defeat enemy cleverly, swiftly, and as painlessly as possible. These old military goals are more achievable as the modern military technology and modern communications has developed, to the likes seen in Iraq in 2003. The overall strategic, military and political rationale effect the military means more, and effects-based warfare prioritizes end over means. As Cornish (2008: 188) notes, this makes it possible for military activity to be ‘more Clausewitzian’. Clausewitz, the nineteenth-century Prussian military thinker, is famous for saying that “war is not a mere act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of

political activity by other means" (quoted in Cornish 2008: 188). (Cornish 2008: 187-188)

I have now discussed the Iraq War and the type of warfare that was used in it and move forward to discussing the Iraq War in fiction and non-fiction.

3.5 The Iraq War in fiction and in non-fiction

In this subchapter I will discuss the way the Iraq War has been portrayed in fiction and in non-fiction. The best source for this is Roger Luckhurst's article *Not Now, Not Yet: Polytemporality and Fictions of the Iraq War*, which was published in 2014. I will also discuss a small but interesting take on the Iraq War from a Finnish perspective.

According to Luckhurst (2014: 51-53), there is a definitive and extensive canon of novels concerning the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001 in the US, but literary responses to the Iraq war are less definitive: even defining the events of the Iraq war is not clear, how to name them (war, civil war, occupation) or even when they started or ended. Luckhurst explores in his article the cultural representations of the Iraq War, and he argues that some of the most interesting representations do not directly mention the war. According to Luckhurst, professor of English Stacey Peebles has studied the cultural responses to the Iraq War that include novels, short stories, blogs, poetry, comics, and video games, but these are difficult track and assess, as they indicate desire to "transcend categorization". Luckhurst adds photography as a good starting point. After Vietnam, press photography was severely restricted for a long time. In Iraq freer movement was allowed, but the press corps were embedded. It meant that more images were available, but their complicities were not clear. Uncontrollable circulation of images from Aby Ghraib prison put photography in the spotlight. These images created an intensely traumatic response and critical reflection. Abu Ghraib haunted both American and Iraqi artists. (Luckhurst 2014: 51-53)

Luckhurst (2014: 53-54) states that the way in which mainstream American media reported the war prompted many documentary works and narrative reports from journalists such as Sebastian Junger. Junger had also reported from the American posts in Afganistan in *War* (2010) and filmed documentary *Restrepo* (2010) with photographer Tim Hetherington. The documentaries from the Iraq War have been so powerful, that Geoff Dyer has suggested that novels look superfluous compared to them. These documentaries have often had major cinema releases, which has circumvented the multinational conglomerates and the control they have in circulating images of war in television news reporting. The iconography of contemporary asymmetric warfare comes mostly from films. Many Hollywood films, that focused on the Iraq War, showed a returning veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress. The films gradually revealed a repressed traumatic event. According to Luckhurst, film critic Ali Jafaar has argued that much of the commentary of the cinema of the Iraq War has focused on its failures both in aesthetics and attracting audiences, and, also, on its failure to make significant cultural statements in the same way many films of the Vietnam War did. Martin Barker (quoted in Luckhurst 2014: 54) has suggested that this rhetoric of failure has been a way of neutralizing the message of many of these films, as they were trying "to undermine presumed ways of understanding the war and to provoke disquiet". (Luckhurst 2014: 53-54)

Meanwhile, Luckhurst (2014: 54-55) writes, there is significant amount of poetry and new forms of witnessing a war, for example online journals and blogs. These new forms are mostly ignored by literary commentators, and they pass the publishing industry. Brian Turner, the subject of this thesis, is one of the most well-known published poets of the Iraq War, and his second poetry collection *Phantom Noise* was shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot prize in 2010. Internet is full of self-authored material and anti-war poetry collections, but poetry has less presence in contemporary public sphere. The Iraq War coincided with the growth of self-authored publication via internet. By 2013 there were nearly four thousand blogs by military personnel tracked by the website milblogging.com. The ability to evade military censorship and the immediacy made

these new forms, by both American and Iraqi bloggers, important as responses to the American invasion and the aftermath. (Luckhurst 2014: 54-55)

According to Luckhurst (2014: 55), the Iraq War has also sparked some critical discussion of theory of war, for example by Slavoj Zizek in *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* (2004) and Judith Butler in *Frames of War* (2009). Philosopher Adriana Cavarero coined the term *horrorism*, describing the contemporary violence and the destruction which have extended beyond terrorism. The focus in Cavarero's *Horrorism* (2009) is on the destruction of the defenceless during the occupation and the civil war in Iraq. (Luckhurst 2014: 55)

As Luckhurst (2014: 55-56) notes, there is a conventional assumption that there is a time gap between the war and novels describing it, but there are often also instant reactions to war. Luckhurst argues that there has not been prose fiction from the Iraq War that could compare to some of the instant reactions to the Vietnam War, like ones from Norman Mailer and Tim O'Brien. In the early years of the Iraq War, small presses published some polemical novels. Thrillers have used Iraq contexts, and crime books have strengthened the cliché of the returning soldier. (Luckhurst 2014: 55-56)

Luckhurst (2014: 56-57) suggests that direct experience of war seems to guarantee certain authority. Yasmina Khadra's *The Sirens of Baghdad* (2008) tells a story of making of an insurgent during the aftermath of the invasion in Iraq. Kevin Powers had experience as a machine gunner in Iraq, and his experience combined with the polished literary style made *The Yellow Birds* (2012) a reviewers' favorite and a very powerful account on war. Powers also wrote a poetry collection *Letter Composed During a Lull in Fighting* (2014), which I also considered for the subject of my thesis. The Iraqi experience of the war have been available through translations by academic presses, like in collection *Contemporary Iraqi Fiction*. The journal *Words without Borders* published a special issue in 2013 featuring translated Iraqi fiction and a survey on Iraqi writing scene. (Luckhurst 2014: 56-57) Hassan Blasim is an interesting author writing about

Iraq. He moved to Finland in 2004, and he has become an acclaimed and award-winning author. Blasim writes in Arabic.

David Shields (quoted in Luckhurst 2014: 57) argues that the novel has changed, incorporating larger parts of reality into prose, and that the "most compelling energies seem directed at nonfiction". Luckhurst suggests that the problem of Iraq is one of the main elements behind Shields ideas. Mostly small presses published novels about Iraq, until they started to emerge in large numbers from mainstream American presses in 2012. (Luckhurst 2014: 57)

Luckhurst (2014: 58) argues that from 9/11 it was easy to create trauma narratives. It produced death and wounding on a large scale, but also traumatic secondary witness through the media spectacle it created. 9/11 was intended to produce an aftermath, and shock after the event fits in the discourse of post-traumatic reaction, from an individual level to community and national levels. Compared to 9/11, the Iraq War was not as clear, existing a stage of incompletion. It was a war, a civil war, post-war occupation, an intervention that changed from symmetrical engagement of armies into asymmetrical guerilla warfare, insurgency, and a violent aftermath following colonial withdrawal. The politics of the Iraq War remain divisive, and the public opinion and sympathies confused. Luckhurst describes that American soldiers are portrayed at the same time as victims of a military-industrial complex or cruel Iraqi resistance, but also as ignorant and as killers of unaccountable number of non-combatant civilians. The images of Abu Ghraib produced shock and influenced much of the American cultural commentary of post-war Iraq. (Luckhurst 2014: 58)

According to Luckhurst (2014: 59), Ross Chambers described *aftermath culture*, which is defined "by a strange nexus of denial and acknowledgement of the traumatic" that leaves traces of haunting trauma everywhere. Luckhurst suggests that a lesson from Vietnam is that wars need a definitive end before enduring cultural reflection of the events. Therefore, Luckhurst argues that cultural narratives about contemporary wars are often displaced or filtered through prior wars, due to this resistance to narrative.

Luckhurst also suggests that this is the only way of understanding a contemporary war. Luckhurst writes that this is not a new insight, for example Marx writes about repetition of events, but this insight of a kind of multi-temporal overlay of times has become essential in recent theories of the contemporary. Giorgio Agamben (quoted in Luckhurst 2014: 59) defines contemporary through its untimeliness: “Only he who perceives the indices and signatures of archaic in the most modern and recent can be contemporary.” According to Steven Connor, the essential condition of “impossible” present is best understood as a times mixing together. (Luckhurst 2014: 59)

From a Finnish perspective, one small but interesting example of books relating to the Iraq War is a memoir of Finnish Olli Toukolehto, who served in the US Army in Iraq. This memoir has been written down by Petri Sarjanen, and it is based on Toukolehto’s diary. It describes the everyday life of a soldier in the Iraq War. In Sarjanen’s book Toukolehto shares his belief that the troops and the commanding officers did their best trying to stop Iraq from declining into a full scale civil war and anarchy. The soldiers wanted to believe they were advancing peace and democracy in their often tedious work. (Sarjanen 2010: 72) Sarjanen (2010: 80) writes that Toukolehto believed that they were doing a job that someone had to do. However, killing or witnessing death brought mental burdens to the soldiers. There were suicides, and many left or were removed from service. According to Toukolehto, being part of the infantry was the hardest job in the army, the navy and the special forces excluded. Toukolehto found it odd that training for the army did not include any studies of psychology, which would have helped the soldiers to stay balanced. (Sarjanen 2010: 80)

According to Sarjanen (2010: 87-88), Toukolehto noted a gradual change in the morale of the soldiers, when they realized they were going to be part of the mess for a long time. There was little heroism and a lot of tedious routine in their days. Soldiers reacted to that in different ways. Some withdrew from social contact and became silent, others were cursing loudly and smoking all the time. Smoking was popular activity due to stress and lack of stimulus. Phone calls to home were one way to escape reality.

Complaining and backtalk lowered the motivation for those who tried to do their best. (Sarjanen 2010: 87-88)

Sarjanen (2010: 174) continues that after the war, during his medical training in the US, Toukolehto realized that it would have been important to share his experiences, but those, who had been in the war, were very quiet about it. Those who had no experience had nothing to say. Toukolehto felt out of touch of the reality his fellow students were living in. He felt that he was often listening to himself like an outside observer. (Sarjanen 2010: 174) Sarjanen (2010: 175-176) writes that Toukolehto noticed also the inability to control his body and reactions. He remembers an important lecture, when he spent time staring at the entrance imagining an assailant coming to the lecture hall, figuring out possible defence reactions and trying to determine what would be the best scenario. He tried to convince himself that he was safe, but nevertheless, the same recurring thoughts haunted him, day after day. He tried to maintain safety distances to other people, assessing at the same time who you could fight and who you should run from. The sound of an ambulance made him froze from fear, and when someone whistled, he went down. Sense was no match to emotions. (Sarjanen 2010: 175-176) Toukolehto continued his studies, specializing in psychiatry, and he has done some research on treating psychological traumas of veterans.

I have now discussed the Iraq War in fiction and non-fiction. This ends the theory part of my thesis and to the next one is the analysis of the war texts by Brian Turner.

4 BRIAN TURNER´S WAR

In this chapter I will first discuss ghosts of war in Brian Turner's poetry and autobiography. Then I will move on to discuss more of how Turner sees the war and how the healing after it is described. I will do it with help of his poetry and parts of his autobiography in order to deepen the understanding of Turner's war and how the ghosts of war were present in it, and, in the end, what helped him to heal.

First I discuss the ghosts of war in Brian Turner's poetry and autobiography. I have chosen 6 poems from the book *Here, Bullet* and 8 poems from the book *Phantom Noise*, that either mentions ghosts directly or are otherwise haunted by ghosts. From *Here, Bullet* these poems are *Hwy1, Ashbah, Observation Post #798, Mihrab, Cole's Guitar,* and *9-line medevac* and from *Phantom Noise* the selected poems are *VA Hospital Confessional, At Lowe's Home Improvement Center, Perimeter Watch, Illumination Rounds, On the Flight to Alamosa, Colorado, On the Surgeon's Table, Homemade Napalm,* and *.22 Caliber.* I have also selected some parts from the autobiography.

The ghosts of these poems are various kinds of ghosts. The Iraqi ghosts appear in the poems *Hwy1, Ashbah, VA Hospital confessional, At Lowe's Home Improvement Center, Perimeter Watch,* and *Illumination Rounds.* American soldier ghosts appear in the poems *Ashbah, At Lowe's Home Improvement Center, Perimeter Watch, On the Flight to Alamosa, Colorado*, and *On the Surgeon's Table.* In *Mihrab*, there is an abstract ghost: beauty. Material ghost appears in *Perimeter Watch*: a vehicle, a Stryker. The narrator is the ghost in the poems *Observation Post #798*, *Mihrab, Cole's Guitar, 9-line medevac,* and *Perimeter Watch.* Turner, the narrator, as a ghost is repeated in the autobiographical parts as well. There are also transgenerational ghosts both in the poems *Homemade Napalm* and *.22 Caliber* and in the autobiography.

The poems from *Here, Bullet* (*Hwy1, Ashbah, Observation Post #798, Mihrab, Cole's Guitar, 9-line medevac*) describe the ghosts during the war, and the poems from *Phantom Noise* (*VA Hospital confessional, At Lowe's Home Improvement Center,*

Perimeter Watch, Illumination Rounds, On the Flight to Alamosa, Colorado, On the Surgeon's Table, Homemade Napalm, .22 Caliber) describe the ghostly visitations after the war, and also transgenerational haunting. I will discuss the American soldier ghosts, the Iraqi ghosts, the narrator as the ghost, the transgenerational ghosts, and war, trauma, and healing each in their own subchapters.

4.1 The American soldier ghosts

The American soldier ghosts appear in the poems *Ashbah, At Lowe's Home Improvement Center, Perimeter Watch, On the Flight to Alamosa, Colorado,* and *On the Surgeon's Table*. The ghosts of American soldiers are wandering the streets of Balad in the poem *Ashbah*, which title is Arabic for ghosts (Turner 2011: 77). American soldier ghosts are "unsure of their way home, exhausted" (Turner 2011: 28), alone, lost. There are also Iraqi dead in this poem. They watch in silence. The ghosts in this poem are not frightening. They are human: lost, tired, not sure how they will find their way home. The Iraqi dead are not frightening either: the enemy is silent and just watching. They feel neutral as they do not either help or fight the American soldier ghosts. The setting is almost peaceful in its tiredness. War is exhausting for all the participants. The scene is surrounded by desert wind blowing trash through the narrow alleys. The soulful voice sounding from the minaret reminds the soldiers how alone they are, in this land far from home. Iraq is described in Turner's poems very beautifully, and it is an integral part of the poems.

After returning home from the war, war haunts Turner both nights and in waking hours. It can haunt a soldier even when he visits a store, like described in the poem *At Lowe's Home Improvement Center*. Both the dead Iraqi and the American soldiers haunt him there. In the poem it is an Iraqi boy "who sees what war is / and will never clear it from his head" (Turner 2013: 15), but it seems that the soldiers are no different in that matter. The war follows him even to a store, where ordinary sounds take him back to war: nails

pouring onto the tile floor like shells falling in Baghdad, the cash registers opening and sliding shut like a sound of machine guns being charged. Quite ordinary visit to a hardware store gets surprising and upsetting tones when memories of the war return.

The narrator imagines his fellow soldiers walking the store aisles in full combat gear, wounded Iraqis with IVs in another aisle. Dead Iraqis walk amazed of the lamps in the corridor of lights. “Dead soldiers are laid out at the registers, / on the black conveyor belts, / and people in line still reach / for their wallets.” (Turner 2013: 16) Other customers do not see what the narrator is witnessing, and they go on their everyday lives. Turner asks in the poem if he should do those everyday things, and what does it matter what kind of tile he chooses. He is marked by war, marked by death, and cannot get rid of it. His fellow soldier Bosch is worn out from fatigue, guiding an Iraqi boy to him. “*Here*, Bosch says, *Take care of him. / I’m going back in for more.*” (Turner 2013: 15). Another fellow soldier carries someone’s blown-off arm to him, saying “*Hold this, Turner, / we might find who it belongs to.*” (Turner 2013: 16) Turner describes the narrator, himself, standing in mute shock beside the Iraqi boy.

The ghosts in this poem are mostly active. They walk, talk, they are holding things. Dead soldiers are laid out the registers. The American soldier ghosts are tired, worn out from fatigue, but going in for more, or wanting to find out who the arm belongs to. They are tired but active. They want the narrator to take care of the boy and hold the blown-off arm, engaging him in the action that is going on. They are not frightening but sympathetic. One feels sorry for them. They are trying to fix things. Like in the poem *Ashbah*, the soldiers are exhausted. The Iraqi ghosts are wounded, amazed by the lights, standing by the narrator and writing in his forehead the letter T. They are silent – the American soldier ghosts are the ones talking. The Iraqi ghosts are silent like in the poem *Ashbah*.

Turner, the narrator, is surrounded by ghost also at home, like in the poem *Perimeter Watch*. Through the venetian blinds he sees the Iraqi prisoners staring back at him. They are silent, like Iraqi ghosts in previous poems, and like they were in the winter of 2004

in Iraq, silent, staring in the dark. There are snipers, helicopters. It is difficult to tell the living from the dead. The narrator sees Bosch, his old rifleman, who appeared in the poem *At Lowe's Home Improvement Center*, too. He is sleepwalking, unaware that he is on fire. The narrator sees the vehicle, Stryker, Ghost 3. Inside of it the guys watch Iraqi women. The past and the now intertwine in imagination as the neighbor's car alarm is set off by an explosion.

There is a doctor looking after the wounded in the backyard. There the narrator sees the Turkish cook, who has a shrapnel in the back of his head. His mouth is foaming. Beside the cook there is a dead infant the narrator remembers from a cold blue morning in the orange groves of Balad. A battalion scout floats face down in the pool. The narrator wonders why he is not wearing vests and plates of body armor, he wonders where his smoke grenades are. He searches the house for them, while a 12-year-old looks for his father just outside the door: "*Where is my father? Let free my father. / My father no bad man. Let go my father."* (Turner 2013: 28). While the narrator dials 911, he is still in the land of imagination, as the operator reminds him to use proper radio procedure, reminds him that his "call sign is *Ghost 1-3 Alpha*, / and that it's time, long past time, to unlock the door / and let these people in." (Turner 2013: 28)

This poem features several kind of ghosts. There is the narrator himself ("my call sign is *Ghost 1-3 Alpha")*, a ghost of a vehicle, Stryker ("I see the Stryker, *Ghost 3")*, Iraqi ghosts, American soldier ghosts, a doctor, a Turkish cook, children. The narrator is surrounded by them. This time it is an Iraqi boy who talks. He pleads the narrator to let go of his father, as he is not a bad man. In the previous poems the Iraqi dead were silent. There are silent Iraqi ghosts in this poem, too. This time Bosch, his fellow soldier, is silent, and sleepwalking, on fire. There are snipers, soldiers in the vehicle watching women. Soldiers doing what they do, in a normal day. The operator speaks, and says that it is time to unlock the door and let these people in. The Iraqi ghosts should be let in. This might suggest that Turner should psychologically accept the presence of the ghosts, and by accepting, work with the meaning their appearance in his life gives. The ghosts are not frightening, except maybe the cook with a foaming mouth. The dead are

dead, soldiers are silently doing what they do. The Iraqi ghosts are either silent, staring in the dark, silently deadly, or a sympathetic Iraqi boy pleading desperately for his father. This is a very active poem: there is a lot of things happening in Turner's imagination.

The Stryker is an interesting addition, and Turner mentions them in his autobiography, too, in relation to ghosts:

> I am in the first Stryker brigade to deploy to combat and the path of a number of careers depends upon how lethal and how durable this unit will be during its time in-country – maybe that's why we are getting special attention. Our Strykers weigh nineteen tons and are fitted with wheels rather than the tracks of traditional armored personnel carriers; soon local Iraqis will refer to us as *the ghosts* because of the speed and the silence of our approach. When we learn about this, our platoon sergeant, SFC Daigle, changes our platoon nickname from The Bonecrushers to The Ghostriders. (Turner 2014: 3)

So the American soldiers are called 'the ghosts' by the Iraqis, and their platoon's nickname is 'The Ghostriders'. Turner is surrounded by ghosts already in Iraq, not just at his home after the war. The Iraqis see Americans as ghosts: they are quick and silent and deadly. They must be frightening ghosts to the Iraqis. Turner describes his fellow American soldiers as active and exhausted, going in for more, looking for who the blown-off arm belongs to, sleepwalking, watching women. For him they are not frightening, they are to be understood. They are haunted by the ghosts, too.

In some poems the haunted is the one doing the haunting. In the poem *On the Flight to Alamosa, Colorado* the soldiers "haunt the streets of Balad" (Turner 2013: 45). In the poem the narrator is flying, the lights of Denver fade and the pressure blocks out the conversation. The narrator imagines himself in war once again with his fellow soldiers (named Fiorillo, Hathaway and Jax), cold rifles in their hands. The Highway of Death guides them. They haunt the streets of Balad at midnight. They kick in doors, raid houses, separate men from women and children, cuffing wrists and sandbagging heads.

They search from house to house “for all we have left behind – / the missing arms, the missing legs, the dead nerves / in Bosch’s hand, the blood drained from Miller’s head.” (Turner 2013: 45)

In this poem the soldiers are the haunting ghosts, looking for missing arms, legs, dead nerves, all they have lost. They are doing what soldiers do: raiding houses, sandbagging people. One may feel sympathy for what they have lost, but not necessarily how they go about it. The rifles are cold and so is soldier’s duty. Turner also writes about raiding of houses in his autobiography:

> “The soldiers enter the house one fire team after another, and they fight brutal, dirty, nasty, the only way to fight. The soldiers enter the house with the flag of their nation sewn onto the sleeves of their uniforms.
> […]
> They enter the house with their left foot, they enter the house the way one enters cemeteries or unclean places. The soldiers enter the house with their insurance policies filled out, signed, beneficiaries named, last will and testaments sealed in manila envelopes half a world away.
> (Turner 2014:49)

The soldiers enter the houses like unclean spaces, fighting brutal and dirty, but also other, kinder, things are mentioned in his autobiography. Ghosts, Iraqi and American, too:

> The soldiers enter the house to sit cross-legged on the floor as the family inside watches on, watches how the soldiers interrogate them, saying, *How do I say the word for ‘friend’ in Arabic? How do I say the word ‘love’? How do I tell you that Pvt Miller is dead, that Pvt Miller has holes in the top of his head? And what is the word for ghosts in Arabic? And how many live here? And are the ghosts Baath Party supporters? Are the ghosts in favor of the coalition forces? Are the ghosts here with us now? Can you tell us where the ghosts are hiding? And where the ghosts keep their weapons cache and where they sleep at night? And what can you tell us about Ali Baba? Is Ali Baba in the neighbourhood?*
> The soldiers enter the house and take off their dusty combat boots and pull out an anthology of poetry from an assault pack, *Iraqi Poetry Today*, and commence reading poems aloud. The soldiers say, ‘This is war then: All is well.’
> […]

> these soldiers remove the black gloves from their hands to show the frightened little children how they mean no harm, how American soldiers are, how they might bring in a pitcher of water for the bound and blinded men to drink from soon, perhaps, if there's time, and how they read poetry for them, their own poetry, in English, saying, 'Between time and time, between blood and blood. All is well.'
> (Turner 2014:49)

Turner carried with him a book of Iraqi poetry (*Iraqi Poetry Today*), so it seems he is really talking about himself. Turner writes a poem, Ashbah, whose title is Arabic for ghosts. He also uses the words friend and love in Arabic in his poems. The soldiers interrogate the Iraqi people, but things they are asking are about language and how to talk about the casualties of war. The ghosts are mentioned several times. The soldiers are asking if the Iraqi ghosts are there with them, where they are hiding, where they sleep, where their weapons are. The soldiers are also trying to convince that American soldiers are kind: they could bring water, read them poetry: their own poetry, in English, maybe to show that they have things in common, that they are not the enemy. That might have felt condescending from the Iraqis point of view.

There is also a ghost of Pvt Miller in this part of the autobiography, as is in the poem *On the Flight to Alamosa*, too. His fellow soldier Pvt Miller's suicide is something that haunts Turner, and he has written about Miller in several occasions. The poem *Eulogy* is written about his death. It happens on a Monday, 11.20 AM on March 22nd 2004, "on a blue day of sun" (Turner 2011: 30), when Private Miller pulls the trigger, gun in his mouth. And it cannot be stopped or reversed. There is a blur of motion, and confused voices in the radio, and "only for this moment the earth is stilled, / and Private Miller has found what low hush there is / down in the eucalyptus shade, there by the river." (Turner 2011: 30) Private Miller, "a young man from New Jersey who wrote poetry and wanted to become a lawyer one day" (Turner 2014: 117), has found peace in this poem. His death does not bring peace to his fellow soldiers. Turner writes about Miller's suicide in his autobiography too:

> Pvt Miller wrote a short message while sitting in a port-o-let in the motor pool on FOB Patriot.

> Pvt Miller placed his squad automatic weapon on its buttstock, leaned over to take the muzzle of the barrel into his mouth. A mongoose paused under ab orange tree down by the river. And then Pvt Miller depressed the trigger to put about six rounds through the top of his skull.
> (Turner 2014: 56)

Turner himself did not hear it: "I didn't hear the sound of the weapon when it fired." (Turner 2014: 57). Turner describes what happens afterwards in another part of his autobiography:

> "That night, I helped the platoon sergeant and Bruzik go through Pvt Miller's duffel bag, rucksack and assault pack in his hooch. We were tasked with dividing up Miller's personal effects from any military equipment the army required as part of its inventory. By tradition, as I understood it, his weapon should be destroyed.
> […]
> We stood in the dim fluorescent light of that room and scanned through his magazines and personal effects because the platoon sergeant said we wanted to make sure that we didn't send anything home that might disturb his mother.
> Our platoon leader was one of the finest officers I served with during my years of service. As I lay in my own rack that night and thought about all that had happened that day, I realised he must be trying to formulate the words and sentences to an impossible letter home, the words meant to convey our own loss within the platoon and to console a family continents away.
> (Turner 2014: 58)

Miller's belongings were cleared away, but Miller himself was never far from thoughts. It is not easy, to move forward, and Turner asks a relevant question: "How does anyone leave a war behind them, no matter what war it is, and somehow walk into the rest of his life?" (Turner 2014: 114). Miller's death is one of the images Turner and his fellow soldiers must carry with them, as this part of the autobiography describes:

> He sees the look in my eyes. He knows, and I know it, too – that it's not the things I've seen that I'm worried about, exactly. I know that, when I leave the tent, tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of dead people will begin leaving the tent and following us home. And the wounded, and the maimed, and the traumatised, and the frightened, and the shattered, and the shivering, and the bruised, and the broken, and the disfigured. The ruined world will call its home inside of me. And all of them

> will follow us to our planes and board with us. They'll walk through the streets of America, through my home town, standing in my backyard late at night, sometimes, sitting at the foot of the bed to witness my wife and me curled together in a dream.
>
> Bruzik can see the look of it as I stare the sheet in front of me. He pauses, and then says a few words about Miller – Miller, who killed himself in Mosul. 'That's one of the things I'm gonna have to take home. Seeing him after. You know? Seeing him like that. That's what I'll have for the years to come, brother. But let me tell you – that's the best we can do. We can't carry more than the ruck on our back. That's the best we can do.'
> (Turner 2014:115)

The dead will follow them home, like they have done in countless wars before. The traumatized, the broken, will follow the soldiers to their homes. All they can do it to carry the memories the best they can, each of his own. Other wars are present in Turner's texts. He describes how soldiers were received from war centuries back:

> What happens when you come home?
> A band of Vietnamese warriors, centuries back, returning to their village after a battle. Their loved ones gather everyone from the village and head out in the direction of the returning warriors. The warriors are not allowed to return to their village until the ritual is completed, until those they loved meet them in the jungle to wash and clean their bodies of all that war had placed upon them. They have to be given back their names just as their warrior names have to be returned to the tribe, given to the work of memory, history. The warriors lay down their weapons while the villagers sing a song to greet them. Their bodies are washed. Washed until the warriors shone with the light that water brings to the skin that carries it.
> (Turner 2014:116)

The soldiers get a cleansing ritual before going home, and their warrior names must be given away, as they are history. When the soldiers come back home it can be important how they are received regarding to the development of PTSD. In the First World War soldiers were heroes, apart from those who suffered from 'nervous' collapse. According to historian Joanna Bourke (2000: 250, 252), in the early years of the First World War the shell shock was believed to be the result of a physical injury to the nerves. It was generally believed that there were two types of men to be liable to collapse in combat: cowards and 'feminine' men. Many medics believed that psychological breakdown was

a form of cowardice. (Bourke 2000: 250, 252) For example the Vietnam War was so unpopular among the public that the soldiers did not get a great welcome when they came back from the war. But how did Turner's coming home go? He describes in his autobiography:

> When my brigade returned from Iraq, platoons and companies and whole battalions stood in formation on a grassy parade field at Ft Lewis, Washington. Crisp uniforms. Fixed bayonets. Flags unfurled. The Colonel gave a speech as family and friends and reporters watched from the aluminum bleachers. It was difficult to hear him from where I stood, even over the loudspeakers. He was a small and distant man, and as he delivered his speech, one bromide at a time. I thought his men were equally small in his own eyes. Distant figures echoed by the pine trees beyond. He paused. A moment of silence, and he read the names of those who did not make it back.
> He completed the list and continued on with his speech, and I realized that he hadn't spoken the name of Private First Class Bruce Miller. A young man from New Jersey who wrote poetry and wanted to become a lawyer one day.
> The entire brigade stood there in the clipped grass, motionless. The Colonel drifted further and further away on a speech of heroes and sacrifice and nation-building. A soldier locked up his knees and passed out, instantly pissing his pants while slumping forward and cutting the man in front with his bayonet. I listened to the bugle play. We rendered our salute to the colors and tears welled in the eyes of those standing in the bleachers with their hands over their hearts. I did nothing to deserve the notes that rang from that horn.
> (Turner 2014: 117)

Turner gets a formal ceremony upon his return, but the speech of heroes and sacrifice seems distant. Turner writes that he did nothing to deserve it. In the First World poetry the soldier was the one sinned against, for example in Owen's poetry, but later during the Second World War and onwards the soldier was the one doing the sinning. For Owen, the poetry of the war was in the pity, but for example the poets of the Vietnam War generally had less pity for themselves. As Lorrie Goldensohn (2006: 287-288) writes, the war poets of the Vietnam War represented themselves as soldiers who are both victim and victimizer. There is a weight of personal responsibility. Turner does not see himself as a hero. He does not demonize the enemy either. Turner is more in line of

David Jones from the First World War, for whom, according to Sleigh (2013), class solidarity was a basis for solidarity with enemy. The soldiers were not sacrificial, symbolic lambs, just ordinary men, who just happened to get to the hell of war.

In the poem *On the Surgeon's Table* the speaker tells the doctor to "try not to dream the charnel visitations / of the dead" (Turner 2013: 52). He has done everything he could, so best if he tried to forget and sleep a while. The dead would have many questions about how they could have died. "Sleep awhile", says the speaker. Sleep is one thing that is disturbed or lacking after coming home from the war. The ghosts are not silent, they are speaking and asking questions: questions the doctor may not have answers. The doctor has done the best he could, he has earned a bit of rest. Rest is something the soldiers need.

Turner describes in many poems the American soldier ghosts as exhausted. It is their main characteristic. They are not sure how to find a way back home. They are alone, lost, tired. They are worn from fatigue, but going in for more, or wanting to know more. They are often active. They are doing what soldiers do. They are not frightening but sympathetic. They are trying their best to fix things. They are to be understood: they are haunted by ghosts, too. Private Miller's suicide is something that haunts Turner, and he has written about Miller in several occasions.

But there is the other side too: the soldiers are the ones haunting the streets, haunting ghosts, looking for things they have lost, raiding houses, sandbagging people. There may be feelings of sympathy for what they have lost, but not necessarily about the methods they use. The rifles are cold and so is soldier's duty. The American soldiers were called 'the ghosts' by the Iraqis, and their platoon's nickname was 'The Ghostriders'. For Iraqis Americans are quick, silent, and deadly ghosts. Frightening too, one must assume. The ghosts are sometimes silent, sometimes they talk. They engage Turner to the action, or ask questions from the tired doctor. The American soldier ghosts are not heroes.

4.2 The Iraqi ghosts

The Iraqi ghosts appear in the poems *Hwy1, Ashbah, VA Hospital confessional, At Lowe's Home Improvement Center, Perimeter Watch,* and *Illumination Rounds*. The poem *Hwy 1* talks about generations of war and a highway of death the ghosts are wandering. The Al-Jawahiri quote in the beginning of the poem says that "I see a horizon lit with blood, / And many a starless night. / A generation comes and another goes / And the fire keeps burning." (Turner 2011: 16) It all begins with the Highway of Death, where "untold number of ghosts / wandering the road at night, searching / for the way home" (Turner 2011: 16). The home is in Najaf, Kirkuk, Mosul, Kanni al Saad – the wandering ghosts are Iraqi. Turner continues by describing the road and its history: it is an old caravan trail, where camels carried Egyptian limes and sultani lemons, merchants brought flowers, musk, aloe, honeycombs and silk from the Orient and traded them. The minarets sound the muezzin's prayer. Children are waving and admiring the painted guns. There are cranes' nests atop power lines. A sergeant shoots one of the cranes, and "it pauses, as if amazed that death has found it / here, at 7 A.M. on such a beautiful morning" (Turner 2011: 16).

The surroundings are described with vivid detail, and Iraq is, as usual, an essential part of the poem. But as beautiful the surroundings are, death finds the travelers, both human and animals, there. After all, it is the Highway of Death. The Iraqi ghosts are looking for a way home, a generation after a generation. The horizon is lit with blood. The ghosts are not terrifying, they are sympathetic. They are just looking for a way home, wandering the road. The ghosts are not described in more detail. Although the poem describes very beautifully the surroundings, yet death is always present. There is no escape from it, generation after generation experiences that.

The Iraqi ghosts are wandering in the streets of Mosul too, as Turner describes in his autobiography:

> The ghosts rising from the mist along the river. The slow-moving ghosts in the streets and alleys of Mosul. The many ghosts returning to their homes each night. To sleep with the ones they love.
>
> Dead tanks rust in a graveyard of metal beyond the outskirts of the city, like skeleton in a field. They remind me of images of German and French and British soldiers left on the battlefields of the First World War. […] Wind blowing through them, as through a flute.
> (Turner 2014: 63)

These ghosts wander the streets and alleys too, but unlike the ghosts in the poem *Hwy 1*, they have found their homes where they return every night. The images remind Turner of images he has seen from the First World War. There are several occasions when Turner mentions other wars in his texts. Earlier, it was mentioned that according to literature professor Roger Luckhurst (2014: 60), multi-temporality of traumatic memory that Michael Rothberg has argued for, means that one war will always be seen through another. Luckhurst (2014: 59) also argues that cultural narratives about contemporary wars are often displaced or filtered through prior wars, due to resistance to narrative. Luckhurst suggests that this is the only way of understanding a contemporary war.

The ghosts that are wandering the streets of Balad in the poem *Ashbah* are American. This poem was discussed earlier in the chapter of American soldier ghosts. The poems title is Arabic for ghosts (Turner 2011: 77). Now it is American soldier ghosts who cannot their way home. They are exhausted. The Iraqi dead are silent in this poem, they are watching. They are not frightening in this poem either. They are just silently watching. They feel neutral as they do not either help or fight the American soldier ghosts. The setting is almost peaceful in its tiredness. War is exhausting for all the participants. The scene is surrounded by desert wind blowing trash through the narrow alleys. In this poem, too, Iraq is described very beautifully. It is an integral part of the poems.

In the poem *VA Hospital confessional* the ghosts are Iraqi. This poem is in the book Phantom Noise, which deals with the aftermath of the war. VA in the title of the poem stands for Department of Veterans Affairs. The poem describes nights of the soldier

who has returned home, and it begins by stating: “Each night is different. Each night is the same. / Sometimes I pull the trigger. Sometimes I don’t.” (Turner 2013: 11) The ‘I’ of the poem is personal – confessional, like in the title of the poem. It is personal like the ‘I’ of the Vietnam war poets. It is Turner who speaks to the reader. When he pulls the trigger, the ghost just “stands there, / gesturing, as if saying, *Aren’t you ashamed?*” (Turner 2013: 11) When the narrator does not pull the trigger, the ghost pours gasoline over himself and sets himself on fire. The platoon sergeant orders the narrator to shoot a barking dog. Turner writes: “Some nights I twitch and jerk in my sleep. / My lover has learned to face away.” (Turner 2013: 11)

Helicopters come flying low when she sleeps. Men are bound to their knees and the narrator whispers into their ears, “saying, / *Howlwin? Howlwin?* Meaning, *Mortars? Mortars?* / *Howl wind, mutherfucker? Howl wind?*” (Turner 2013: 11) Suddenly there is a milk cow who is staring with huge brown eyes, wanting to know the narrator can do this to another human being. The narrator checks haystacks and sewage sump for weapons. Turner writes: “I tell no one, but sometimes late at night / I uncover rifles and bullets within me.” (Turner 2013: 11) Some nights he drives through Baghdad, Firebaugh, Bakersfield, Kettleman City. Some nights he shoots someone’s radiator or a crashing car. Some nights he hears a woman screaming. He mistakes a cantaloupe for a human skull when getting a plate of fruit. Sometimes there is a gunman who fires into the house, sometimes he fires at the narrator. The poem ends by returning to the statement that started the poem, but with a slight difference: “Every night it’s different. / Every night the same. / Some nights I pull the trigger. / Some nights I burn him alive.” (Turner 2013: 12)

The Iraqi ghost stands there, or pours gasoline over himself and sets himself on fire. If the ghost just stands, the narrator imagines him gesturing, as if asking the narrator the question: aren’t you ashamed? Some nights the narrator pulls the trigger, some nights he burns the ghost alive. The guilt is his, and the death is due to his action. Sometimes he is the target of the bullet, sometimes the actor. The narrator discovers rifles and bullets within himself: the imagery of the war is in him, and he goes through that every night in

some form or other. The milk cow wants to know how he can do this to another human being. There is guilt that needs to be processed, and the ghost is the outcome of the guilt of the narrator. The Iraqi ghosts are mostly silent in Turner's poems, and it seems that sometimes the silence has an accusatory tone. There is no need to say anything, because Turner already knows what he has done. The guilt is already there. The narrator, Turner, is doomed to repeat this cycle of destruction in his imagination, until he can process the trauma of war and move forward to healing. This is a hospital confessional, which indicates that he is getting help for the injuries of his mind.

Dreaming, while his lover has learned to face away, every night is the same and different: Turner is haunted by the ghosts of war. He imagines himself flying while his wife sleeps in his autobiography:

> I am a drone aircraft plying the darkness above my body, flying over my wife as she sleeps beside me, over the curvature of the earth, over the glens of Antrim and the Dalmatian coastline, the shells of Dubrovnik and Brcko and Mosul arcing in the air beside me, projectiles filled with poems and death and love.
> (Turner 2014: preface)

In the preface of Turner's autobiography there is also another sequence like this:

> Each night I do this, monitoring heat signatures in the landscape, switching from white-hot to black-hot lenses as I bank and turn, gathering circuit by circuit the necessary intelligence, all that I have done, all that we have done, compressed into the demarcations in the map below.
> (Turner 2014: preface)

Each night he goes through the motions, learning what he has done, all that they have done. The projectiles are filled with poems and death and love – powerful things. The poems are, too, filled with death and love, and ultimately love provides healing from death.

After returning home from the war, war haunts Turner both nights and in waking hours. It can haunt a soldier even when he visits a store, like described in the poem *At Lowe's*

Home Improvement Center, which was discussed earlier in the chapter of American soldier ghosts. Quite ordinary visit to a hardware store gets surprising and upsetting tones when memories of the war return. He is haunted there by both the American soldiers and the dead Iraqi. In the store, ordinary sounds take him back to war: nails pouring onto the tile floor like shells falling in Baghdad, the cash registers opening and sliding shut like a sound of machine guns being charged.

The narrator imagines wounded Iraqis with IVs in an aisle, soldiers in full combat gear in another. Dead Iraqis walk amazed of the lamps in the corridor of lights. There are dead soldiers laid out at the registers, but people do not see what the narrator is witnessing, and they go on their everyday lives, reaching for their wallets. The narrator, Turner, is marked by war, marked by death, and cannot get rid of it. Turner's fellow soldier Bosch is worn out from fatigue, guiding an Iraqi boy to him. "*Here*, Bosch says, *Take care of him. / I'm going back in for more.*" (Turner 2013: 15). Turner describes the narrator standing in mute shock beside the Iraqi boy. The Iraqi boy is one "who sees what war is / and will never clear it from his head" (Turner 2013: 15). It seems that the soldiers are no different in that matter.

The Iraqi ghosts in this poem are wounded, amazed by the lights, standing by the narrator and writing in his forehead the letter T. They are silent – the American soldier ghosts are the ones talking. The Iraqi ghosts are silent like in many other poems. They see what war is and are forever tainted with that imagery. The silence in this poem is neutral. The Iraqi boy writes T to the narrator's forehead, marking him to the war. This is an active poem, but the American soldier ghosts are the active ones: they walk, talk, hold things. They are tired, but going in for more, or wanting to know whom the blown-off arm belongs to. They engage the narrator to the action. The American soldiers are exhausted, sympathetic ghosts.

Turner, the narrator, is surrounded by ghost also at home, like in the poem *Perimeter Watch*, which was also discussed earlier in the chapter of American soldier ghosts. The narrator sees Iraqi prisoners staring back at him when he looks through the venetian blinds. The Iraqi ghosts are silent, like in many other poems. They are silent like they were in the winter of 2004 in Iraq, staring in the dark. Inside of the vehicle, Stryker Ghost 3, soldiers watch Iraqi women. They are object of the gaze. The narrator sees the Turkish cook, who has a shrapnel in the back of his head. His mouth is foaming. Beside the cook there is a dead infant the narrator remembers from a cold blue morning in the orange groves of Balad.

There are snipers, helicopters, a doctor looks after the wounded in the backyard. A battalion scout floats face down in the pool. It is difficult to tell the living from the dead. The narrator's old rifleman Bosch is sleepwalking, unaware that he is on fire. The narrator searches the house for vests, plates of body armor, and smoke grenades, when a 12-year-old looks for his father just outside the door: "*Where is my father? Let free my father. / My father no bad man. Let go my father."* (Turner 2013: 28). While the narrator dials 911, he is still in the land of imagination, as the operator reminds him to use proper radio procedure, reminds him that his "call sign is *Ghost 1-3 Alpha*, / and that it's time, long past time, to unlock the door / and let these people in." (Turner 2013: 28)

The narrator is surrounded by ghosts, and there are several kind of them, one being the narrator himself. In other poems the Iraqi ghosts have been silent, but in this poem there is one who talks. The Iraqi boy pleads the narrator to let go of his father, as he is not a bad man. There are silent Iraqi ghosts in this poem, too. This time silence has a slightly threatening tone: they are silent like they were in Iraq, staring silently in the dark. The operator speaks, and says that it is time to unlock the door and let these people in. The Iraqi ghosts should be let in. This might suggest that Turner should psychologically accept the presence of the ghosts, and by accepting, work with the meaning their appearance in his life gives.

The ghosts are not overtly frightening, except maybe the cook with a foaming mouth. The dead are dead, the soldiers are silently doing what they do. The Iraqi ghosts are either silent, staring in the dark, silently deadly, or a sympathetic Iraqi boy pleading desperately for his father. As they are usually silent, when they say something it must mean something. The boy pleads the narrator to let go of his father, as he is not a bad man. The Iraqi ghosts are not bad, and they should be let go, to be free from the pressure of the American soldiers. The enemy is human in Turner's eyes. There might not be that much communication between them, but he sees them as human. The guilt he feels comes through these poems.

One of most memorable appearances of ghosts is in the poem *Illumination Rounds,* where the narrator's lover finds him shoveling at 3 A.M. She sleeps as Iraqi translators come in through the doorway. They are visiting like loved ones might visit a hospital room. They are ill at ease, and they are holding their sawn-off heads in their hands. Silently they wait for the narrator to dress to his desert fatigues. His aid pouch with painkillers is of little use when trying to sew the larynx back, but he tries anyway. His lover finds him shoveling at 3 A.M. in their backyard. The narrator is digging, determined to dig deep.

Turner writes: "*We need to help them, if only with a coffin*, / I say" (Turner 2013: 29), and continues: "and if she could love me enough / to trust me, to not cover her mouth / in shock or recognition, her hair lit up / in moonlight; if she could shovel / beside me" (Turner 2013: 29). Then she begins to see them, the war dead, as they stand under lime trees. They have papyrus and stone in their hands. The blurry figures are both very young and very old. With a gently hand she stays the shovel the narrator holds and says: "*We should invite them into our home. / We should learn their names, their history. / We should know these people / we bury in the earth.*" (Turner 2013: 30)

Then the narrator is out on patrol again, driving both in America and Iraq. Turner writes: "I wish I could tell you / I've come to save someone, / I've come with bandages and IVs / for the wounded – / but it's all bullshit" (Turner 2013: 30). The narrator is

there for the war: “gunshots echoing years later, the incoherent / screaming I’ve translated a thousand times over” (Turner 2013: 30). He drives until he understands who he is supposed to kill.

The Iraqi ghosts, the war dead, are silent. This time their silence is not threatening. They wait for help. The Iraqi translators were not treated well after the war, they experienced the consequences of working to the American troops. Their heads are sawn-off in this poem, and the narrator tries to help them, though there is little he can do. The only way he can help the Iraqi war dead is with a coffin, so he stands in his backyard shoveling graves. The war dead stand under lime trees, waiting silently. They are both very young and very old. The narrator tries to help. He is hoping he would be one that comes to save someone, but in the end he knows that he was not there for that. The narrator is haunted by the sounds of war years after the war: gunshots, the screaming. The narrator’s lover has a big role in this poem: she tells him that the ghost should be invited to their home, and they should learn their names and history. They should know the ghosts they are burying. The narrator cannot stop driving until he understands – learning to know the dead, accepting them to their home will help him do that.

Turner writes about shoveling in his autobiography too, remembering it while having a sweat lodge experience:

> I’m wearing pajamas and standing in the backyard with a shovel. Florida. Home.
> […]
> A shovel in the earth, blade by blade, and the dead line up in silence under the lime trees. […]
> *We should ask their names*, my wife says, *and write them down. If not for us then for those who come after.*
> […]
> We lift our feet and press down. Tamp the soil. Stand to the side when their loved ones mourn.
> (Turner 2014:136)

Ilyse, Turner's wife, says in the texts that they should learn the names of the war dead, they should know them; not only for themselves but for those who come after. The dead need to be remembered.

The Iraqi ghosts of these poems are looking for their way home. They are silent, watching, staring in the dark, waiting for help. There are poems where their presence feels neutral, then there are ones with a slightly accusatory tone or a slightly threatening tone. They are mostly silent, and their silence must mean something. There is no need to say anything, because Turner already knows what he has done. The guilt is already there. The narrator, Turner, is doomed to repeat this cycle of destruction in his imagination, until he can process the trauma of war and move forward to healing. The imagery of the war is in him.

There is an Iraqi boy who talks: he pleads the narrator to let go of his father, as he is not a bad man. This must, too, mean something, as it is the only time the ghosts say something. The Iraqi ghosts are not bad, and they should be let go. The enemy is human in Turner's eyes. The guilt he feels comes through these poems. Most of the time the Iraqi ghosts are silent. Their silence is mostly not threatening. They may just be waiting for help. In two poems Turner writes about letting the ghosts in to his home. This might suggest that Turner should psychologically accept the presence of the ghosts, and by accepting, work with the meaning their appearance in his life gives.

There is also more simple explanation to the silence of the Iraqi ghosts: they are dead in real life. Turner ended up as a character to an online computer game for the army after the war, and turned to a ghost in a phantom world. Part of describing it in his autobiography there is also a part about the enemy dead:

> And the enemy dead – they are left in their profound silence to remain face down on the hard soil they come from, not one of them rising from the broken clock of the body, as a ghost might do, to follow Sgt Turner through the streets and fields of this phantom world.
> (Turner 2014: 135)

A ghost might rise and follow Sgt Turner in this phantom world, unlike the enemy dead, who remain silent and broken on the ground. The enemy dead are silent because they are dead. This might also explain the silence of the Iraqi ghosts in Turner's poems.

4.3 The narrator as the ghost

The narrator is the ghost in the poems *Observation Post #798*, *Mihrab, Cole's Guitar, 9-line medevac,* and *Perimeter Watch.* The narrator as the ghost is repeated in the autobiographical parts as well. The texts are representations, where the narrator is described as the ghost. Turner is writing autobiographical texts about his war experiences, so reader can assume that he means himself, when he is discussing about war experiences and using the confessional 'I' in the texts.

The poem *Observation Post #798* begins by a quote from Qur'an: "*It is in the watches of the night* / *that impressions are strongest* / *and words most eloquent*." It describes a watch the soldiers are doing. There is a brothel-house with a green light above the door, panels of the windows open. It is hot even in the time of dusk. The narrator is scanning each story with binoculars. He is hoping to glimpse the girls. There is a woman who walks out onto the rooftop. She is smoking a cigarette and shaking loose her long hair. Everyone wants to hold the binoculars, but the narrator is stilled by the look of her, transported thousands of miles, like "a ghost might gaze upon the one he loves" (Turner 2011: 50). He is thinking how lovely she looks, her pain and beauty, and he wants to remind himself that he is still alive.

The soldier is just like a ghost who looks at the one he loves. He wants to be reminded that he is still alive, stilled by the image of this woman with pain and beauty. In a way she represents life, with its pain and beauty, and reminds the soldier that he is still alive, to experience things like that. The ghost in this poem is sympathetic. There are many war poems, especially in the Vietnam war poetry, that describe the soldiers looking at

beautiful women. This one is respectful, despite the fact they are looking at a brothel-house. Brothel-house can be significant also in the way that sexuality represents being alive, life as its peak moment. The ghost looks at life, wants to be reminded that he is alive. In the middle of war and death there is life.

In *Mihrab*, which title is Arabic for gateway to Paradise (Turner 2011: 79), Turner writes about the beauty of the place. The ghost is the ghost of beauty, and, also, the narrator. Turner writes: "They say the Garden of Eden blossomed here / long ago, and this is all that remains" (Turner 2011: 58) The things that are left are wind scorpions and dust. There is "a ghost of beauty / lingering in the shadow's fall. / Let me lie here and dream of a better life." (Turner 2011: 58) The narrator asks the beauty, that is left, to be given to the greater world. The narrator listens to the termites eating the earth. He asks to stay there with the birds and listen to their song.

The narrator says that "if there is a heaven it is / so deep within us we are overgrown / that the day brings only a stripping of leaves / and by sundown we are exhausted" (Turner 2011: 58). He ends the poem as follows:

> […] if there is a definition
> in the absence of light,
> and if a ghost can wander amazed
> through the days of its life, then it is me,
> here in the Garden of Eden,
> where it is impossible to let go
> of what we love and what we've lost,
> here, where the breath of God is our own.
> (Turner 2011: 58)

"Let me lie here and dream of a better life" (Turner 2011: 58), wishes the narrator, as he, the ghost, is left to wander exhausted in the lost Garden of Eden. There is a ghost of beauty, but also a ghost of the narrator, who is there in the remains of the Garden of Eden. This ghost is sympathetic. He finds that it is impossible to let go of what he loves and what he has lost. If there is a heaven, it is impossible to reach. He wants to stay there, listening to the birds. It is an escape from the war. The ghost is tired, like the

American soldier ghosts are in Turner's poems. The place is significant in this poem. Iraq is featured in many of Turner's poems, the nature and the beauty of it. What is left from the Garden of Eden is wind scorpions and dust. There is a lingering ghost of beauty, that should be given to the greater world, according to the narrator.

The narrator, the ghost, is missing America, too, and America comes to him in the poem *Cole's Guitar*. There is place marked in the poem: *Al Ma'badi, Iraq.* The narrator wakes up to the sound from the aid station: the thin steel of Doc Cole's six-string guitar. He is hearing America: "a 4 A.M. sound of sour whiskey" (Turner 2011: 66), slow like "a lover with only the blues to sing" (Turner 2011: 66). He is hearing county highways, "Indian summergrass whispering, / foghorns under the Golden Gate bridge, / Ella Fitzgerald from a 4th floor window" (Turner 2011: 66). He is in Wyoming, he is in New York. He is "leaning in to kiss a woman / in the cornfields down by the river" (Turner 2011: 66). He is hearing "the wind on the redwood coast" (Turner 2011: 66). The narrator asks Doc Cole to palm-mute the strings and strum the song until the narrator can see

> the breath on a bus window, the faces
> of strangers in the rain, my own hands
> tracing the features of every one of them,
> the way ghosts might visit the ones they love,
> as I am now, listening to America,
> touching the cold glass.
> (Turner 2011: 66)

The ghost, the narrator, misses home in America as he listens to the song. It fills him with nostalgic longing. A cold window separates him from the Americans he misses and loves. He is a ghost who can only trace the features of them through a window. It is raining, which adds to the sad feeling of the poem. The narrator compares the slow song he hears to a lover who has only the blues to sing. This is also one of the sad elements of the poem. Nostalgic longing and sadness are the main elements of the poem. This time the ghost feels separate from all he loves, and he misses them. The ghost is sad.

The narrator is the ghost in the poem *9-line medevac*, too. This is a long poem. In it there is a radio connection with alternating questions from a soldier and answers from the narrator, who requests for a pick up. There are patients in need of care. The soldier asks for location, number of patients, their nationality and so on. He says: "Son, tell me the terrain, that's all we need and we'll be there for you" (Turner 2011:69). The narrator tells that he is a ghost:

> […] I tell the Sheriff my call-sign is Ghost 1-3 Alpha, which is like telling him he speaks with the dead, and the dead wish for his help, that dead wait for him in Baghdad on asphalt stretched out flat as a river of oil, fuming —
> (Turner 2011: 67)

Turner's call-sign 'Ghost 1-3 Alpha' is repeated several times in the texts, both in the poems and in the autobiography. He is dead, and the dead need and wait for help. There is urgency in his request. The air is heavy and charged. Turner writes about romanticizing in this poem:

> […] too eager to romanticise the land and maybe even what's happening, though there is nothing romantic about this, unless pain and sweat and heat and blood and a grown man pissing in his pants with fear are romantic, all of this and more is where we are […]
> (Turner 2011: 67)

The time has stopped, and there is only pain, sweat, heat, and blood – there is nothing romantic about a war and its consequences. Turner describes Iraq very beautifully in his poems, and he recognizes the need to romanticize the land. Aestheticized descriptions of horror make the war manageable, as discussed earlier. It gives a breathing distance to horror that is too hard to handle. Turner's poems have notes of romanticizing, but I do not see them as fully aestheticized descriptions of horror. Turner writes about all sides of war with ease, and the horror and the guilt are present in the poems. A grown man pissing in his pants is not exactly romantic. Turner does not consider himself as a hero either. To Turner all people are human, including the enemy. The text above describes the body's reactions, and in the poem Turner also writes about the importance of treating the mind:

> […] send the best surgeon there is, someone who knows more than the mechanics of the body, someone who knows how to treat that drifting of the mind into the fizzling lights, how mind seems to vanish into the skull's stratosphere of bone, untethered, rising to where the world ends, that edge, bring a doctor who can bring them back from there, and quick —
> (Turner 2011: 68)

Treating the mind is important, as the soldiers never will be the same:

> […] even if they live, it will be theirs as well — the land that tested their souls and changed them —
>
> […] here where the Blackhawk flares down in a cloud of dust in the rotorwash I run into with Sgt Randolph's stretcher, a soldier who will never be the same.
> (Turner 2011: 69)

Soldiers are never the same after the war. War changes them. They might need help to bring themselves back from the war, from where the world ends. They are ghosts that want to find a way back home.

The narrator is the ghost in many of the poems in *Here, Bullet*. The narrator has Turner's call-sign 'Ghost 1-3 Alpha', so it is safe to assume he is writing about himself. There are two sequences in his autobiography where he describes himself as dead:

> Sgt Turner is dead.
> I was there when it happened. […]
> I imagine him wandering around […]
> where the vast assembly of the dead have gathered before him. […]
> Some of the dead harden their gaze when Sgt Turner parts the tall grass and wades into the river. Some of the dead stare off toward the city skyline.
> (Turner 2014: 112)

There is also a second time this is repeated at the very end of the autobiography, after the war:

> Sgt Turner is dead.

> Some nights he walks the streets and alleys of Mosul, in the company of the dead. Others, he steps into the homes of the living, perches on the beds of lovers, and considers the world as it continues on.
> […]
> He will maintain his standoff distance. He will steady his hand on the weapon systems at his disposal. He will monitor the heat signatures of the living. And, because Sgt Turner is dead, he will remain at his post.
> There is nothing strange in this at all.
> (Turner 2014: epilogy)

In these sequences Turner writes about himself in third person. He writes about himself from outsider's perspective, distancing himself from Sgt Turner. He is there when Sgt Turner dies. Sgt Turner, his war persona, walks in the company of the dead, and "considers the world as it continues on" (Turner 2014: epilogy). Sgt Turner maintains his distance, monitors the heat signatures of the living. Sgt Turner remains at his post because he is dead. The world goes on living, and he, Sgt Turner, is dead, shifting his position between the dead and the living. He is in between the both worlds. This describes well the position the soldiers are in their minds after the war: one part of them is still with dead, in the world of ghosts, and one part tries to find a way to live in the world of living.

Turner's war did not stop when he returned home, as he turns to a ghost in a phantom world: he ended up as a character to an online computer game for the army. This is how he describes it in his autobiography:

> And I've wondered about the digital version of me, Sgt Turner, wandering through the wreckage of war, year after year, calling out to the others in the game, shooting at blurry enemy combatants, crawling through the grass, running through the ruined streets of unnamed cities and villages, scanning through the scope of my rifle for the silhouettes framed by windows across a digital river. I've wondered at the things I've seen there, the things I've done
> […]
> After 3 a.m., when I've finally drifted off to sleep after curling up with my wife in our bed in Florida, someone in Saginaw or Portsmouth and Kettleman City toggles Sgt Turner forward into the firefight
> […]

> And the enemy dead – they are left in their profound silence to remain face down on the hard soil they come from, not one of them rising from the broken clock of the body, as a ghost might do, to follow Sgt Turner through the streets and fields of this phantom world.
> (Turner 2014: 135)

A ghost might rise again after being broken, like a character in a computer game. He, Sgt Turner, wanders through the horrors of war, year after year, performing his military duties. Sgt Turner continues to fight when Turner himself is sleeping at home. A ghost might rise and follow Sgt Turner in this phantom world, unlike the enemy dead, who remain silent and broken on the ground. The enemy dead are silent because they are dead.

The narrator, Turner, is surrounded by ghost also at home, like in the poem *Perimeter Watch*, which was discussed earlier in the chapters of American soldier ghosts and Iraqi ghosts. One of the ghosts is the narrator himself. He is referred to again by Turner's call-sign Ghost 1-3 Alpha. This poem features several kind of ghosts. In the poem the narrator sees Iraqi prisoners staring back at him when he looks through the venetian blinds. The Iraqi ghosts are silent, staring in the dark, like they were in the winter of 2004 in Iraq. There is also an Iraqi boy who talks: he pleads the narrator to let go of his father, as he is not a bad man. There are snipers, helicopters, a soldier on fire, a Stryker called Ghost 3, a Turkish cook with a foaming mouth, a dead infant, a doctor looking after the wounded. There is a lot going on in this poem.

When the narrator dials 911, the operator reminds him to use proper radio procedure, reminds him that his "call sign is *Ghost 1-3 Alpha*, / and that it's time, long past time, to unlock the door / and let these people in." (Turner 2013: 28) The operator says that it is time to unlock the door and let these people in. The Iraqi ghosts should be let in. One interpretation is that Turner should psychologically accept the presence of the ghosts, and by accepting, work with the meaning their appearance in his life gives. The ghosts are not frightening. The dead are dead, and the soldiers are doing what they do. The enemy is human in Turner's eyes. So is the narrator, who looks for his equipment in the

house, wondering why he is not having them on. The narrator ghost is just trying to cope with things that come to his way. The guilt he feels comes through the poems.

The narrator in these poems is a sympathetic ghost. He is looking at life, wanting to be reminded that he is alive. He is tired, wanting to escape from the war. He finds that it is impossible to let go of what he loves and what he has lost. If there is a heaven, it is impossible to reach. He misses home in America. A song he listens to fills him with nostalgic longing. The narrator ghost is sad. He feels separate from all he loves, and he misses them. War changes soldiers, they are never the same after it. They are ghosts who want to find a way back home, and they might need help with that.

Turner's war did not stop when he returned home, as he turns to a ghost in a phantom world: he ended up as a character to an online computer game for the army. The world goes on living, and he, Sgt Turner, is a ghost trapped between the worlds of the dead and the living. He is surrounded by ghosts, and one of the ghosts is the narrator, Turner, himself. He is referred to several times by Turner's call-sign Ghost 1-3 Alpha. Turner does not consider himself as a hero. To Turner all people are human, including the enemy. The narrator ghost is a human, too. He is just trying to cope with things that come to his way. The poems convey his feeling of guilt.

4.4 The transgenerational ghosts

There are transgenerational ghosts both in the poems *Homemade Napalm* and *.22 Caliber* and in the autobiography. Wars do not necessarily end in the minds of the soldiers, when they end in physical reality. The dead will follow the soldiers home, as discussed earlier. These ghosts of war can haunt those who come after, as trauma affects generation after another. The legacy of war trauma is something that Turner recognizes, too. He comes from a military family, and these traditions were part of the reason he enlisted.

In the poem *Homemade Napalm* Turner writes about his childhood, and making homemade napalm with his father, referring to Marshall Turner, his stepfather, who raised him and "has always had a tremendous influence on my life" (Turner 2014: notes). Turner writes how he learned about the silence that surrounds the wound. The time of the poem has been dated to winter in 1978. Turner's father is mixing gasoline with bone meal and Ivory soap, teaching Turner to shave a bar of soap. Turner's hands are pink in the cold of the morning. Turner's father drank coffee and did not talk about Turner's grandfather. He did not need to. Turner's grandfather drank Kentucky bourbon, Turner's father drank a twelve-pack every night. For Turner, it was hard to understand why he would find him in the living room when Turner had gone to bed. His father was listening blues from a vinyl. But Turner learned:

> to be a man is to carry things inside
> no one would ever understand,
> things better left unsaid; sung about,
> maybe, those rare nights in winter, alone,
> the world fuming with alcohol,
> spinning in the blue dark.
> (Turner 2013: 41)

The fire of the napalm was a "strange kind of fire/ turning inward on itself" (Turner 2013: 41). A fire turning inward on itself is perhaps what the consequences of war are, too, burning one from the inside. The ghosts are not mentioned directly in the poem, but their presence is in the background of the silence surrounding the wound. To be a man is to carry things better left unsaid. They may be sung about, listening to blues in the darkness of the night, with alcohol as an aid. It is not unusual for a soldier suffering from PTSD to turn to alcohol for a relief. Turner's grandfather and father both knew the silence surrounding the wound.

In the poem *.22 Caliber* Turner writes about his childhood, too, and his father. It is a Saturday, and Turner's father is there teaching him how to assemble a homemade firearm, a zip gun. It is 1981. The Soviets fight in Afghanistan, and the magazine racks

have magazines like *Guns & Ammo, Penthouse, Hustler, Shooting Times* and *Country Magazine*. “It is a world / filled with ballistics, armor, lethal flights / of small metal rounds, spinning.” (Turner 2013: 50). *Soldier of Fortune* has a back cover with an armed mujahedeen lying in the ground. There is a coupon below him, which promises: “*Buy a Bullet, Kill a Commie*.” (Turner 2013: 50). Turner fires over and over at paper targets: it is an exercise in muscle memory. “I am learning how to connect / with the small dark silence / carried within the center of all things.” (Turner 2013: 50)

Turner is learning to shoot so that it comes from muscle memory. He lives in a world where guns and shooting are natural part of life, and so is being a soldier. He is “learning to connect/ with the small dark silence/ carried within the center of all things” (Turner 2013: 50) from young age. There is the dark silence of the Wound in the center of all things, like Turner’s grandfather and father have, and he is learning to connect with it. The ghosts are in the background of the silence surrounding the wound. This is a wound that his father and his grandfather carried within themselves. They did not talk about it, but it was there, nevertheless, and Turner learned what is to be a man:

> He never had to say a word about it. The scar said it all. The scar said he could take it. Pain. Hardship. Trouble. The world could carve him open and spill his guts out, raw and steaming on the summer asphalt, and he could take it all. Come back up cussing and drinking and punching any doctors who got too close. The scar said – that which is written in the flesh is irrefutable. This is the mark of a man. *This* is what it takes.
> (Turner 2014: 32)

The wound is what it takes to be man: to take it all and endure it with silence. What is written to the flesh is definitive, it is the mark of a man. It is a sign that he could take pain and hardship, and endure, even if it meant drinking and cussing and fighting. Turner’s father and grandfather did not talk about the wound. Turner’s uncle Jon was in Vietnam, and he did not talk about the hard things. Neither did Turner’s father’s friend Ray. “When I come home from my own war, we’ll talk about these things.” (Turner 2014: 35), Turner writes.

They did talk about the harder things related to war after Turner's own experience. Silence around war experiences seems to be a common feature among soldiers. Turner's grandfather was in the military, too, and fought as a Marine in the Pacific (Turner 2014: 64). He did not talk about his war experience. Not until Turner was ready to go to his own war:

> I stood in my parents' kitchen as Papa hoisted his left leg up to rest his foot on the seat of a dining-room chair. 'I don't think I've ever shown anyone this – except my wife, of course,' he said, rolling his pant leg up to reveal a wide, pink, horizontal scar, maybe three inches long, at the midway of his shin. 'I got this on Guam.'
> Other than Grandma, he hadn't shared this with anyone – for over sixty-five years.
> […]
> Papa never spoke to me of that long night on Guam, or the night to follow. He was a man of historical silence. It wasn't until I was ready to ship out to Iraq that he spoke directly to me of anything that had to do with combat. In the family living room, he cautioned me to pick up the biggest weapon I could get when shit hit the fan. *Carry all the ammo you can*, he told me. *You'll be glad you did when the time comes.*
> (Turner 2014: 71)

Turner's grandfather was "a man of historical silence" (Turner 2014: 71). He carried his wound, both physical and, also, the wound in his mind, in silence. When Turner was going to Iraq, he spoke to him for the first time something about combat. Turner's grandfather's war was something that Turner had carried with him all his adult life (Turner 2014: 65).

In Turner's childhood memories his grandfather tried to silence the ghosts of war with alcohol, like many others:

> Papa sits in his chair, hour after hour, as Saturday afternoon war movies and westerns drone on the television. I am four years old. […] Papa sits in his recliner the way he once slumped against a sand berm on the beachhead on Guam, trying to catch his breath, a Browning automatic rifle resting across his legs, his hands shaking with alcohol.
> (Turner 2014: 69)

Turner's grandfather's hands are shaking with alcohol, but alcohol does not help: the memories and the ghosts of the war are with him, and they are not going away.

Turner writes about a curious coincidence relating to his grandfather's military experience. His great-uncle Johnny went to the movies while Papa (Turner's grandfather) was serving, and he sees him there, in a landing craft. He left the theater immediately to get his mother to see the next showing. He should have watched the film to the end: Papa's landing craft took a hit and an explosion ripped it apart. Papa was thrown into the water. Great-uncle Johnny and his mother waited months to hear that he'd survived (Turner 2014: 68). "It is now family folklore – the story of how Great-uncle Johnny saw Papa that day", writes Turner (2014: 67). Turner's Aunt Karen tracked the original newsreel and had a photography made of it. Turner has the picture "with Papa in the shadowy mist staring grim-faced and determined at all that I cannot see when I hold it in my hands" (Turner 2014: 68).

Turner's grandfather had been sure that his entire platoon had been killed in the blast, but years after the war, he had met a survivor (Turner 2014: 67). Turner wonders about what happened to the cameraman: probably he was killed. Turner writes in his autobiography:

> I never considered the cameraman because I have become the camera – its images preserved through the words with which Papa and my parents created the story, the words I've shifted and reshifted, viewing the scene over and over as the years go by. When it comes down to it, we are the camera. The cameraman – even the living one on that landing craft – lives outside the historical moment. But I'm now there, I'm there with Papa's younger self, seasick and scared shitless."
> (Turner 2014: 67)

Turner identifies with his grandfather's war experience: he can imagine himself there with him, scared shitless. This brings to mind, yet again, Roger Luckhurst's (2014: 60) multi-temporality of traumatic memory that Michael Rothberg has argued for, which means that one war will always be seen through another.

Turned learned from early age what is that makes a man:

> This is part of the intoxication, part of the pathology of it all. This is part of what I was learning, from early childhood on – that to journey into the wild spaces where profound questions are givens a violent and inexorable response, that to travail through fire and return again – these are the experiences which determine the making of a man. To be a man, I would need to walk into the thunder and hail of a world stripped of its reason, just as others in my family had done before me. And, if I were strong enough, and capable enough, and god-damned lucky enough, I might one day return clothed in an unshakeable silence. Back to the world, as they say.
> (Turner 2014: 75)

Like men in his family had done before, Turner would need to experience the journey through fire and return – this would make him a man. To return, if strong, capable, and lucky enough, back to the world, to the "unshakeable silence" (Turner 2014: 75). This all reminds of the Isherwood's statement (quoted in Goldensohn 2003: 31) written in 1938:

> Like most of my generation, I was obsessed with the idea of "War." "War," in this purely neurotic sense, meant the Test. The test of your courage, of your maturity, of your sexual prowess. "Are you really a man?"
> (quoted in Goldensohn 2003: 31)

Through the ages war has meant an ultimate test of manhood. Turner knows his experience differs from the experience of the First World War:

> We know our prelude will be different from the trenches of the First World War or from the front lines of Korea. We won't hear the battle in progress and work our way toward it as baggage trains of wounded, exhausted soldiers and civilians carrying their lives on their backs travel in the opposite direction. Our battle space – and perhaps it's the cliché now – will occur in a 360-degree, three-dimensional environment.
> (Turner 2014: 4)

The environment of the war has changed when the technology of war has developed. But Turner sees the common ground of all wars:

> The soldiers march on, though, generation by generation, one war to another, through mud and rain and blistering sun. They practice the principles of patrolling, they lock and load their weapons, they feel the sickness in their stomachs and some of them feel the dread in their chests as they cross the line of departure, or worse still: they feel nothing at all, boredom perhaps, routine, moving to contact, on radio silence, communicating with hand signals, gestures, a movement of the head, a look of recognition in the eye.
> The creeper wine hooks around their ankles and calves with its green embrace. The creeper wine takes them all under. The wind at their backs pushing them into the quiet spaces of history, where names and lives and moments and words and hopes and all manner of human beings are pulled down, sand and water and the hard weight of what they've done eventually turning them to stone.
> (Turner 2014: 77)

Generation after generation goes to war, experiencing what it really means. The wars follow the soldiers back home, the sheer weight of it all, "turning them to stone" (Turner 2014: 77) in the end.

One of Turner's relatives, Kurt, is one more who experienced war and it followed him home. Turner (2014: 128) describes an incident, where Jenny, Kurt's partner, finds him sleepwalking. The ghosts of war are part of Kurt's life too, like Turner's. For Kurt, the ghost is his sergeant. The nights are the same: "Jenny knows the bullets will start soon, as they always do." (Turner 2014: 128). After taking several medications, Kurt will fall asleep. He dreams that his sergeant's body lies on the road, as the voices of Iraqis and Americans sound in the darkness. There are bullets, and the soldiers run for cover. Jenny knows that they are lying next to Kurt's dead sergeant, too. Jenny does not want to startle Kurt, to provoke an involuntary reaction where he might start to choke her because of some instinct of combat. The ghosts of war follow Kurt and Jenny has learned to live with them too. She knows what to do or not to do, to avoid reactions, and to help Kurt, some way that she can. Kurt has several medications to help him. It seems

that Turner has medication to help him, too: “I remember my mother asking, ‘So what pills, if you don’t mind, do you have to take, honey?’” (Turner 2014: 126).

Family history is an important part of Turner’s war story, and Turner writes about history repeating itself in many of his poems. In the poem *A Soldier’s Arabic* he writes about “an echo of history, recited again” (Turner 2011: 11). Turner writes that it is a language made of blood, sand, and time. “To be spoken, it must be earned” (Turner 2011: 11), Turner writes. Rodi-Risberg (2010: 17) gave an example of Kali Tal, who believes that only those who have experienced trauma as survivors can and should write about trauma. Not all agree with this, though. Roger Luckhurst (2014: 56-57) does suggest that direct experience of war seems to guarantee certain authority. In the poem *The Martyrs Brigade* Turner writes about repeating history, too. The poem also asks a relevant question: “*Is it worth it? Can there be no other way?*” (Turner 2011: 38) Wars brings pain, suffering, and death. Indeed, in the poem *The Hurt Locker* Turner writes: “Nothing but hurt left here” (Turner 2011: 21).

4.5 War, trauma, and healing

In this subchapter I discuss more about war, trauma, and healing, and how ghosts are related to them. War is a complex phenomenon. The act of killing is in the core of it. What does Turner think about it? In the poem *Sadiq* Turner writes about the consequences of killing, what they should be, and often are if a soldier is traumatized. The poem begins by a quote by Sa’di: “*It is a condition of wisdom in the archer to be patient / because when the arrow leaves the bow, it returns no more.*” (Turner 2011: 63). Turner writes that killing should make you shake and sweat, it should give you nightmares, “strand you in a desert / of irrevocable desolation, the consequences / seared into the vein” (Turner 2011: 63). No matter what adrenaline gives you courage, no made what god you have, no matter what anger and pain, “it should break your heart to kill” (Turner 2011: 63).

The title of the poem is Arabic for friend. Turner addresses the person he writes to as "my friend". Turner (2011: 79) writes that the epigraph comes from The Gulistan of Sa'Di, Chapter VIII, 'On Rules for Conduct in Life', Admonition 18. This was written in 1258 A.C.E. In the same year, "Daras Salam (ancient Baghdad) was sacked – it is said that 800,000 lay dead in the streets after forty days of siege followed by forty days of brutal plunder" (Turner 2011: 79). Turner writes about an archer in his autobiography too:

> In a museum in Kyoto, Japan, years later, I find myself mesmerized by an oil painting of an archer.
> […]
> The archer shows no signs of strain, despite the tension of the bow. He simply gazes forward at something out of the view. Maybe the is a target and maybe there isn't. The painting doesn't show us. That's not the point. The point is to become one with the moment. The meld with the motion of the instrument. To become the archer and the bow combined.
> (Turner 2014: 5)

Soldier becomes one with his weapon. "*when the arrow leaves the bow, it returns no more"* (Turner 2011: 63) says the epigraph of the Turner's poem, describing the finality of the action: it cannot be reversed. When the arrow (or the bullet) leaves, the consequences are what they are. And according to Turner, "it should break your heart to kill" (Turner 2011: 63). It should bring nightmares, it should make you sweat. Turner says that the consequences of war are deserved, that the ghosts are rightfully there.

During the war Turner is scared. He is afraid much of the time. Being afraid becomes normal and he does not even realise he is scared. Turner writes:

> And that it'll be my fault. That I'll make a mistake. One quick and misguided decision that I'll have to live with for the rest of my life, or else lie in my grave, dismantled by it.
> (Turner 2014: 17)

Turner is afraid of making a mistake. Consequences of a small mistake can be devastating in a war. The consequences of all action or not acting can be significant. But war is not just these peak moments, war is routine, too, for a soldier. The soldiers drove through the neighbourhoods, stopped traffic, searched vehicles. They laughed and drank water, pissed, watched porn and listened to music. “We kicked in the doors of people’s homes and we put many of them in prison. In Mosul the war became routine.” (Turner 2014: 42) The war’s routine can be like this, too, as Turner writes in his autobiography:

> The men talk mostly through boredom and from the need to stay awake. They are their loudest when they have a target in sight, the intensity of the room charged in the hunt for souls – but there’s calmness at work then, too: the toggle the zoom the lens in smoothly to witness human heat signatures running across the field somewhere in Iraq, one of them stumbling and then pitching over as another pauses to help them stand. To haunt. This is the drone pilot’s charter.
> (Turner 2014: 46)

They are the Ghostriders who haunt. It is their work. They are the terrifying ghosts to the Iraqi, but for the soldiers, this is work and routine. There is calmness, too, in their work.

If the war is difficult at times, it may not be easier to be at home. Turner went home on leave in April 2004. He describes leaving in his autobiography:

> We were told to travel in civilian clothes, which I hadn’t used in months. I wore Levis and a nondescript t-shirt, but kept my desert combat boots on. Just a short time before this, I’d put an Iraqi ex-sergeant major down on his knees in a rain-darkened street, put a sandbag over his head and wound duct tape around his skull, writing his ‘target number’ on the tape with a black-tipped Sharpie. I’d seen him shiver in fear as I did my job – a man we’d been told had planned and orchestrated the downing of a Chinook helicopter ferrying troops home for leave. As I boarded the plane home, I closed my eyes and tried not to think of the possible weapons waiting in the darkness beyond the edge of the airfield.
> (Turner 2014: 78)

He finds himself back in America, home in Fresno. He takes a trip with his friend Brian Voight and does not talk about the war. After the trip Turner meets with another friend, Stacey Lynn Brown. Turner is in a vacation but the war is not far from his mind. War goes on in his head. He is feeling guilty about the cool breeze, about how relieved he is to be in America, about how coward he is. "The silence of John Wayne, but not the hero." (Turner 2014: 84) Turner does not see himself as a hero, as was discussed earlier. Turner is relieved to be in America, but feels guilty, too. War is always present, even if it is far away. Every day is a day he avoids death or injury, every day is a day away from the horrors of war (Turner 2014: 85).

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Turner's friend Stacey tells him years later:

> I asked you why you were scanning the rooftops of Berkeley and you told me you couldn't stop – that if you let your guard down while here, your men might die when you got back over there. In fact, you Xeroxed your journal so I would understand what was happening to you – so that someone, somewhere, would know what was happening to you. You marveled at concrete beneath your feet instead of sand. Silverware instead of sporks. I tried my hardest to keep you grounded and focused and tethered to this world I prayed you would return to. You told me it was dangerous to stay in this world. That you had to stay where you were and take your chances. I told you that was unacceptable. That this world was waiting for you. All you had to do was return to us. To it. To me.
> (Turner 2014: 86)

Turner feels the need to stay alert, not to let the guard down, even during his vacation. He scans the rooftops and cannot stop. He feels it is dangerous to stay in this world of everyday wonders. Turner felt that he had to stay in his world, in the world of war, and take his chances. After returning to the war, he feels different, a stranger, but after few days and few missions the routine of the war sinks back in (Turner 2014: 95).

In the poem *Night in Blue* Turner looks back and wonders if this experience has made him more compassionate. He writes:

> Will I understand something of hardship,
> off loss, will a lover sense this

> in my kiss or touch? What do I know
> of redemption or sacrifice, what will I have
> to say of the dead – that it was worth it,
> that any of it made sense?
> I have no words to speak of war.
> (Turner 2011: 70)

He is not able to say that it was worth it, or that he learned something. Turner writes that he has no words to speak of war, which clearly is not true, as he has had many words to say about war. Maybe this is more of a silence in front of something enormous, something hard to talk about: it is related to the silence of Turner's father and grandfather and countless of others returning from the war, speechless. And after the war, the war and its ghosts follow him. He flies all over the world, everywhere he finds beauty, and, without exception, war (Turner 2014: 118). Turner writes: "Countries are touching countries and I cross over from one to another, trying to shake the past and find a world I can live in." (Turner 2014: 122).

When visiting Bosnia, where he was once with the army, he wonders about the way the nature takes over the signs of war:

> In a sense, I'm witnessing the erasure of a kind of set design, the dismantling of a stage treatment. It's satisfying and troubling at the same time: to see how the landscape pulls the vestiges of war under and replaces them with a monument of cypress and birch. In the decades and centuries to come, the violence that took place in the Balkans will be forgotten and passed over by many, footnoted in historical texts, perhaps, or mentioned in a paragraph sketching the atrocities of the twentieth century.
> Still, war is far more relentless, far more patient, than this. Just as the body is known to 'weep' glass shards and embedded debris long after an injury has scarred and healed over, war shares its deep reserves of trauma, with those searching for it or not.
> (Turner 2014: 119)

Trauma of war stays whether you want it or not, and keeps reminding of itself for a long time after. It is a process that takes years to struggle with. The nature may take over the physical reminders of the war, but the wounds in the minds are harder to erase. When Turner comes back home from the war, it takes years and years to process. "The wars

continue as I get married, drive from California to Florida, move from one ocean to another", Turner (2014: 130) writes.

The wars continue and the ghosts of war follow him for years. Turner writes in his autobiography:

> Many years later, I arrive in Florida. My wife and I make love in sheets the color of rare wine. As we kiss and roll over in bed, in the heat of our bodies joined together, her legs folding on my lower back, a nurse wheels a shallow-breathing veteran into our bedroom – a man with pellets from shotgun lodged in his brain, the surgeons following behind and standing over his gurney, whispering how they might proceed. The nurse motioning for more gurneys to be wheeled in.
> Journalists shuffle into our bedroom and wait patiently for us to finish making love. They want me to talk about suicide. They want me to talk about hand-to-hand combat – something I really know nothing about. They want a modern definition for the word *obscenity* and the word *slaughter*. If that's what drives the veterans to kill themselves, well, that makes sense, they say. The horror and all. That makes sense.
> And they wait for us to finish making love. The journalists with their questions. The surgeons whispering over their critical patients. The dead in their bathtubs. The dead with their mouths given to foam. The dead strung from ropes under cones of light.
> (Turner 2014: 132)

Journalists, the dead, the ghosts, and the war are present when Turner tries to live his life, in the most private moments. There is no escape from them. He is at home, but he brings the war and its ghosts with him. This is also what he notes in his autobiography:

> Maybe it isn't that it's so difficult coming home, but that home isn't big enough space for all that I must bring to it. America, vast and laid out from one ocean to another, is not large enough space to contain the war each soldier brings home.
> And, even if it could – it doesn't want to.
> (Turner 2014: 134)

Silence that follows the war experience continues even today. America does not want to include the traumatic war experience better than before, like in Turner's grandfather's

past when silence of the experience was the answer to the question of how to continue life after a war.

As noted earlier, according to Whitehead (2004: 6), for Caruth, another time's invasion to other time can be seen as a form of haunting. "To be traumatised is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (quoted in Whitehead 2004: 13). "The ghost represents an appropriate embodiment of the disjunction of temporality, the surfacing of the past in the present", writes Whitehead (2004: 6). Turner is haunted by the ghosts of the war even in the most private moments, and the past is not letting go of him. The past times are present in the now, and that can be seen as haunting. Ghosts get many different meanings in Turner's work. The ghost is a metaphor of trauma that also contains the seeds of healing. The ghosts in Turner's texts are varied: they are both American and Iraqi, they can even be material, and in many poems the narrator is the ghost himself. Turner's family history regarding war and traumatic haunting is present in his texts. The past has to be worked through, and that is what Turner does with his poetry and his autobiography.

As noted earlier, trauma moves beyond the text towards the "real" world: the study of trauma is inseparable from the "real" rather than opposed to it (Rodi-Risberg 2010: 15). Turner's texts and trauma are rooted in the real, even if they include imagined parts. The experiences behind the texts connect the texts with the "real". Earlier was also noted that according to historian and trauma theorist Dominick La Capra narratives in fiction can give "a plausible 'feel' for experience and emotion which may be difficult to arrive at through restrictive documentary methods" (quoted in Rodi-Risberg 2010: 16). The imagined parts add dimension and depth to the poetry and autobiography, and they may convey a "feel" for the emotions and experiences to be understood more deeply.

It was stated earlier that for Vickroy, "these writers employ fictional techniques such as figurative language to represent trauma and its concerns with dissociation, shattered identities, and fragmented memories, thus making traumatic experience more accessible and real to readers." (Rodi-Risberg 2010: 18) Turner has used fragmentation especially

in his autobiography. This makes the text resemble traumatic memories better. His autobiography does not contain page numbers. The text in his autobiography is divided partly into numbered chapters, so references to the autobiography has been made in this thesis according to its chapter numbers, if they exist.

As Rodi-Risberg (2010: 255) also notes, “Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart stress the importance of transforming “traumatic memory” into “narrative memory””. That means a chronological and coherent story. It is just what Turner is doing with his autobiography and poetry. When the traumatic is made coherent through language, it may help the writer to make his memories into a coherent entity. As it was noted earlier, Van der Kolk (2017: 301) argues that language is an essential tool when dealing with trauma. Your self-awareness assumes an ability to organize memories into a coherent entity. Due to traumatic events, the connections between the levels of self-awareness, of mind and body, may be damaged. Repairing those connections makes it possible to tell a coherent story and, essentially, find yourself. (van der Kolk 2017: 301)

The First World War poet David Jones

> saw art as a kind of gathering-in of present and past times into symbolic shape; poets, he thought, are ‘evocative, incantative and have power of “re-calling”, of “bringing to mind’ […]
> (Howarth 2012: 196-197)

The soldiers were living “without beginning or end”, argued Gertrude Stein (quoted in Howarth 2012:19). Howarth (2012: 19) notes that this living “without beginning or end” was the future for the mentally traumatized soldiers as well, as they were living with endlessly repeating traumas after the war. Turner lives repeating his traumas after the war, and he uses art to gather the present and the past into an entity that may give the reader a better understanding of what it is to live with memories of war.

What in the end helped Turner to heal? One part of his healing was his wife, who helped Turner to move forward from the war. Turner describes it like this in his autobiography:

> I don't know what it's like to have killers at the door, but I know what it's like to be one of the men with a rifle coming in. Eyes dilated night-vision green. Adrenaline in the vein. My finger pulling the safety pin and waiting for the countdown. A detonator in my hand. My body connected to an imminent explosion. The night cracking open in my hands.
> And none of this seems to faze Ilyse.
> […]
> She reaches out to unfurl my fingers gently from around the detonator, which she takes from my palm and hands to SSG Bruzik, who nods and doesn't say a word.
> She helps me to my feet and holds my hand as we quietly step away from the squad kneeling beside the wall to the target house. 'Just come with me,' she says. 'This way.'
> (Turner 2014:136)

"'Just come with me,' she says. 'This way.'" How simple act of love helps the haunted. This sequence is from a sweat lodge experience, where dreamlike states of consciousness produce haunting images.

There is a promise of light in the future. In the poem *Study of Nudes by Candlelight* Turner writes: "as if / I can see from this day forward, / how you carry my shadow in the gloss / of your skin, without complaint, the promise / of light dripping from your fingers" (Turner 2013: 73). Love helps Turner to heal, as she carries his shadow, without complaint. And he sees a promise of light. In the poem *In the Guggenheim Museum* Turner appreciates being alive:

> this is what I'm thinking about in the museum,
> the skeletons of art hung around us, petrified,
> staring through the hard lenses of framing and oil,
> staring at us from their fossilized stations
> in the past, in wonder, marveling at
> these two lovers, here, each of us
> fully given to the inexorable process
> of death, and yet, here we are
> walking among them – *alive*.
> (Turner 2013: 75)

Despite being “given to the inexorable process / of death” (Turner 2013: 75), Turner is alive, and thankful for it. The past is fossilized, petrified, skeletons hung around them. This may also refer to Turner’s past – he is moving forward.

In the poem *The One Square Inch Project* Turner writes how he visits a national park, and finds healing silence in nature. There is a medicine of landscape, and Turner forgets his life. Yesterdays are a memory, hushed by nature. Turner writes:

> There is a small red stone places exactly on the spot
> where silence grows. It is a gift. It was given by the Elder
> of the Quileute Tribe, David Four Lines, and I will not disturb it.
> And I put nothing in the *Jar of Quiet Thoughts* nearby.
> Because there is not one thing I might say to the world
> which the world does not already know.
> (Turner 2013: 76)

Turner sits and listens. When he returns to California, he finds himself changed and the city full of living. He has been gifted with silence that recharges him.

Healing can have many paths, nature being one of them. Medicines, talking, compassionate loved ones: for Turner, his wife, they all can assist the healing process. For Turner, writing about his experiences probably has been one path to healing as well. Turner’s ghosts are representations of his trauma. They also contain the seeds of healing. By going through, by acknowledging the ghosts, by accepting their presence and working through the traumas that these ghosts represent, there is also a possibility of healing and a future with promise of light.

Turner quotes John Balaban in his book Phantom Noise: “I was called out into a field of compassion / into a universe of billions of souls” (Turner 2014: 69). Turner writes with compassion. He wrote in the midst of war, but also after the war when there was some distance to the subject. In that sense he differs from the soldier poets of the First World War like Owen, who wrote in the middle of the carnage, but did not have a chance to reflect the experience after some time had passed. The Vietnam War poetry talks more

about the aftermath of the war (Goldensohn 2003: 29). Turner himself describes his writing in his autobiography:

> Poetry. The idea that soldiers might gather on an improvised stage to read poems in Iraq – it didn't seem plausible, or real. I wrote poems in my notebooks and I read poetry when I had time, but I felt alone in that process. In many ways, the language of journal entries and poetry forged an internal space within me, a space that didn't belong to the army or to the community of soldiers I served with. Sgt Turner was too small of a space for a human being to live in. I couldn't imagine sharing those words there, aloud, in Iraq. But as I write these words, Hemingway's bullshit detector pings. Maybe it was more selfish than that. Maybe I just didn't want to show how vulnerable and sensitive and afraid I was, how deeply the word *beauty* intertwines with the words *love* and *loss*. That's it. Vanity and embarrassment. Cowardice. I was afraid to admit that I loved this world. I was afraid to admit that I was alive.
> (Turner 2014: 101)

In the beginning of this thesis there was a quote from Turner's autobiography, asking a profound question: "How does anyone leave a war behind them, no matter what war it is, and somehow walk into the rest of his life?" (Turner 2014: 114). One answer was given to Turner by his fellow soldier Bruzik: "That's what I'll have for the years to come, brother. But let me tell you – that's the best we can do. We can't carry more than the ruck on our back. That's the best we can do." (Turner 2014: 115) One cannot carry more than his or her own share of the suffering. To be whole, to have peace – that may come by accepting both sides of human existence: happiness and suffering. Turner quotes the Iraqi poet Abd al-Wahhab Al-Bayati in his book Phantom Noise: "I embrace the frightful and the beautiful" (Turner 2014: 13).

I have now discussed the ghosts, war, trauma, and healing in Brian Turner's poetry and autobiography. This ends the analysis part of my thesis. Next follows the conclusion part, where the questions of ghosts of war, traumatic haunting, and healing in the texts written by Brian Turner are answered, and some further research ideas are discussed.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to study the ghosts of war in Brian Turner's poetry and his autobiography, how traumatic haunting is presented, and how he finds healing from his war experience. The ghosts in Turner's texts are varied. The ghosts are American soldiers, Iraqi, and the narrator himself; they can even be material or abstract. Turner's family history regarding war and traumatic haunting is present in his texts. Turner is working through the past. He wrote in the midst of war, but also after the war when there was some distance to the subject. Ghosts are central in depictions of trauma, and trauma is often described as a haunting. The ghosts in Turner's texts are a metaphor of trauma that also contain the seeds of healing.

Ghosts get many different meanings in Turner's work. Most of all, they are all tired, trying to find their way back home. The American soldier ghosts are exhausted from the war. They are also active doers in the poems. They are sympathetic ghosts, not frightening. They are alone, lost, trying to find a way back home. There is also the other side of the coin: they are the quick, silent, and deadly ghosts for the Iraqi. They haunt the streets, raid the houses, and sandbag people. The American soldier ghosts are sometimes silent, sometimes they talk. They are not heroes.

Turner writes with compassion. The enemy is human in his eyes. The Iraqi ghosts are also looking for their way home. They are mostly silent, watching, waiting for help. It may mean that there simply is no need to say anything: Turner already knows what he has done. There is also another possible explanation to their silence. It is that they are dead in real life. Their presence in the poems feels sometimes neutral, sometimes there is a slightly accusatory or threatening tone. There is one boy who talks. He pleads the narrator to let go of his father, as he is not a bad man.

The narrator ghost is tired, too. He is a sympathetic ghost. He wants to be reminded that he is still alive. He is sad: he feels separate from all he loves. He wants to find a way

back home. He is referred to several times by Turner's call-sign Ghost 1-3 Alpha. The narrator ghost is a human, too. He is just trying to cope with things that come to his way. The poems convey his feeling of guilt. The ghost is the outcome of the guilt of the narrator. Confessional 'I' of the poems reminds of the poets of the Vietnam War. The trauma of war affects generation after another. Turner comes from a military family, and the legacy of war trauma is something he recognizes. He learns what it takes to be a man: to take the wounds and endure it all with silence. Family history is important part of Turner's war story.

According to Turner, killing should bring you nightmares. He says that the consequences of war are deserved, that the ghosts are rightfully there. The trauma of war is a process that takes years to struggle with. Healing from it can happen in many ways. Medicines, nature, talking, and compassionate loved ones can all help in the healing process. Writing about the experiences, writing about what is hard to talk about, can help one in that process. It can help to transform the traumatic memory into a narrative memory: a coherent story. Language is indeed an essential tool when dealing with trauma. Turner's ghosts are representations of his trauma. By acknowledging the ghosts, by accepting their presence and working through the traumas that these ghosts represent, there is also a possibility of healing. The ghosts in Turner's texts promote pacifism. Through the ghosts the terrible and difficult consequences of war become apparent.

This thesis aimed to study the ghosts of war in Brian Turner's poetry and his autobiography, how traumatic haunting is presented, and how he finds healing from his war experience. I think I found some answers to those questions. This thesis was a pleasure to work on as the subject matter was so interesting. There are several ways Brian Turner's poetry and autobiography could be used in future research. I would find it interesting to see a study of light and shadow dichotomy, mind and body dichotomy, or for example dreams or women's role in his poetry.

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