

**Traumatic Connotations of Objective Correlatives in & Bugs  
Don't Bleed as a Case Study**

الوسيط الموضوعي لذاكرة الصدمة الحربية المتقطعة في

**"And Bugs Don't Bleed"**

---

**Prof. Dr. Awfa Hussein Al-Doory**

ا.د اوفى حسين الدوري

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Arwa Hussein Al-Doory**

ا.م.د اروى حسين الدوري

**Ayoub Ibrahim Oliwi**

ايوب ابراهيم

جامعة تكريت / كلية التربية / قسم اللغة الانكليزية



## ABSTRACT

In literary criticism, an objective correlative is a group of objects or events which systematically represent emotions in a given text. According to this context, the study argues that Matt Gallagher's *And Bugs Don't Bleed*, a trauma fiction, exemplifies this term as it contains many fictional objects which convey the emotions in the text to the reader. The argument is mainly tackled through the literary term of T. S. Eliot's 'Hamlet and His Problems' embedded within the theoretical framework of trauma and its literary representation. The study aims to answer the following questions: how does Eliot's literary term find its echo in the examined narrative and what are fictional objects that implicitly indicate the multiple meanings that help to motivate the reader's emotional and critical response.

**Key Words:** objective correlative, trauma fiction, post-traumatic stress disorder, *And Bugs Don't Bleed*, Matt Gallagher.

### المستخلص:

يشكل صدمة الحرب موضوعًا بارزًا في أدب الصدمة، حيث تبرز التمثيلات الروائية لهذا النوع من التجارب معاناة الجنود الذين يعانون من صعوبة التكيف مع الحياة المدنية ومواجهة ذكريات الحرب المرعبة التي تظهر بأثر رجعي على شكل كوابيس وومضات ذاكرة متطفلة وأفكار متكررة. إن هذا النوع من الواقعية النفسية المتقطعة لا يمكن تمثيله روائيًا إلا إذا كان له وسيط موضوعي يعكس بشكل فعال ودقيق، ويوازي، ويشهد على تاريخ الحرب الجارف. وفي هذا السياق، تدرس هذه الدراسة رواية مات غالاجر "And Bugs Don't Bleed" باعتبارها أدب صدمة يحول طبيعة الصدمة من سياق ما قبل لغوي إلى سياق لغوي من خلال وسائط موضوعية تضع التجربة برمتها ضمن نسيج سام. ويتم تناول هذا الموضوع بشكل أساسي من خلال الجوانب النظرية للصدمة وتمثيلها الأدبي إلى جانب مصطلح الوسيط الموضوعي، الذي

وضعه تي. إس. إليوت في مقالته "هاملت ومشكلاته". وتهدف الدراسة إلى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية: كيف يجد مصطلح إليوت النقدي صداه في السرد قيد الدراسة؟ وما هي الوسائط الموضوعية الروائية التي تشير بشكل ضمني إلى معنى اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة؟ تتبع أهمية هذه الدراسة من تناولها لتجربة جياشة يعترف بها على مستوى العالم في أعقاب أحداث ١١ سبتمبر.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** الوسيلة التعبيرية، رواية الصدمة، اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة، وكتاب **'And Bugs Don't Bleed'** لمات غالاجي.

## INTRODUCTION

The significance of the study springs from its treatment of an overwhelming experience that is globally recognized in the aftermath of 9\11. Analyzing the literary representation of post war trauma's symptoms through the lenses of objective correlative, the study aims to bridge the empathetic chasm between the characters who fictionally practice this experience and the reader who would be witness to this horrifying experience, namely war post-traumatic stress disorder.

Using a qualitative method, the study focuses on how fictional characters tell their stories and so get insight into how they interpret and make sense of their own experiences. The method used in this study enables the researcher to evaluate the nature of post-traumatic stress disorder, including its quality, various forms, the context and the viewpoints from which it might be viewed.

T.S. Eliot reintroduced the phrase "objective correlative" in his essay "Hamlet and His Problems," which was originally used in 1840 by American painter Washington Allston. A literary item that fulfills a symbolic function is known as an objective correlative. It's a conventional object that elicits an emotional reaction from the reader or evokes a mental picture in their mind, alluding to a deeper significance than what is really there. Eliot explains that:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of



that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (Eliot, 1932, 145) Feelings may be elicited by a writer, poet, or dramatist by finding a combination of pictures, objects, or descriptions that evoke the desired emotion. There is no one item, picture, or phrase that is responsible for the emotional response. The mixture of these occurrences, when they happen together, is what elicits the emotional response. When a tale item or character becomes a translating mechanism for a larger topic that isn't immediately on the page, it is called objective correlative. They aren't essential to the object's design; rather, they're a purposeful addition by the author, imbued with context, description, and, in many cases, repetition. As the tale progresses, it becomes easier for the reader to embrace the object's significance as a whole, and its existence functions as a type of bridge that leads the reader to accept a wider, thematic meaning in it.

Eliot believes a literary text that works and incites the correct kind of emotional response may be attributed to a well-chosen objectivity. Objective correlatives fail when a scene is too heavy-handed, or if the audience doesn't have an emotional response, or if the text evokes a feeling that isn't suitable for the situation. (Eliot, 145) As exemplified by Eliot in his "Hamlet and his Problems," Shakespeare's Hamlet is a "total failure" in spite of the fact that the play has been deeply rooted in the literary culture to the extent that one can never discern its shortcomings. In Eliot's opinion, though Hamlet has a significant issue, Shakespeare's talents go much beyond the issue of vengeance that forms the core of the play. Shakespeare's portrayal of Hamlet, according to Eliot, is too "large" for the play's storyline and its "intractable material". According to Eliot, since Shakespeare tried to accomplish too much with the character, Hamlet's feelings in the play seem to be ambiguous because of this. His ambitions and breadth grew beyond the tight limitations of the vengeance story because he lost command of his basic material. There is a huge difference between the medieval chronicle's depiction of Hamlet's emotions and the action in Shakespeare's play. (Eliot, 1932, 146) Using an example from another Shakespeare tragedy, Macbeth, Eliot argues that the skillful accumulation of imagined sensory experiences' communicates Lady



Macbeth's state of mind, shown in sleep walking, to the audience. Lady Macbeth's death has an appearance of 'inevitability' due to the deliberate collection of imagery, stage-effects, and emotional subtleties that precede her demise. As a matter of fact, the ongoing quest for an "objective correlative" is part of the evolution of a language. The sign, which comprises both the signified and the signifier, is one of the three components of a word's "objective correlative" (i.e. "the linguistic sign combines" a concept and sound-image). As long as a group of individuals who speak the same language utilize a given sign, even if it seems to be random at the time of its inception, it will remain in place.

This idea of the 'objective correlative' would prove to be hugely influential on mid-twentieth-century criticism, which was often concerned with interpreting the symbols and images employed by writers to convey the emotional 'life' of a character. But the term's origins in nineteenth-century American art criticism are less well-known, and show that Eliot seized upon this useful term and transformed its fortunes, through applying it to the action of a play's drama. All in all, T. S. Eliot's "objective correlative" term pinpoints a fundamental phenomenon in literary discourse, claiming its domain in the micro, literary means and methods, as well as in the macro, literary genres. It is indispensable for literary creation, and its traces can be detected in all kinds of literary forms, including fiction, drama, and poetry, but in poetry most of all.

## 2:2 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

In the discipline of trauma studies, the key issues include psychological trauma, linguistic representations of trauma, and the function of memory in shaping personal and social identities. The term "trauma," which is itself a subject of debate, refers to an event that has a lasting influence on the way a person organizes and perceives their emotions and their relationship to the outside world. Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman were three of the most famous academics in the 1990s who studied the topic of trauma and its impact in literature and society. This first wave of criticism helped promote the idea that trauma is an unrepresentable occurrence that reveals the fundamental inconsistencies in language and experience that it is meant to highlight.



people develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after experiencing a shocking, scary, or dangerous event. It is natural to feel afraid during and after a traumatic situation. Fear is a part of the body's normal "fight-or-flight" response, which helps one avoid or respond to potential danger. People may experience a range of reactions after trauma, and most will recover from their symptoms over time. Those who continue to experience symptoms may be diagnosed with PTSD.

According to the National Center for PTSD, a program of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, about seven or eight of every 100 people will experience PTSD in their lifetime. Women are more likely than men to develop PTSD. Certain aspects of the traumatic event and some biological factors (such as genes) may make some people more likely to develop PTSD.

Symptoms of PTSD usually begin within 3 months of the traumatic incident, but they sometimes emerge later. To meet the criteria for PTSD, symptoms must last longer than 1 month, and they must be severe enough to interfere with aspects of daily life, such as relationships or work. People with PTSD often have co-occurring conditions, such as depression, substance use, or one or more anxiety disorders. After a dangerous event, it is natural to have some symptoms or even to feel detached from the experience, as though one is observing things rather than experiencing them.

Before the formalization of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a diagnosis in 1980, war-related psychiatric syndromes were known under a variety of names, including shell shock, traumatic war neurosis, and combat exhaustion. Whatever the label, it is clear that these labels referred to a condition much like what it is now recognized as PTSD. For example, Kardiner and Spiegel describe a chronic traumatic war neurosis that involved preoccupation with the traumatic stressor, nightmares, irritability, increased startle responsiveness, a tendency to angry outbursts, and general impairment of functioning.

Young individuals have been sent to war for thousands of years. Many have died in the battles, but in every war, there are far more wounded than fatalities; millions of soldiers have returned from wars and battles with serious damage to their body and soul (Watson, 2008) Advances in battlefield medicine mean more wounded are surviving



their wounds; however, many injuries are not as visible as missing limbs and other physical body injuries, namely traumatic brain injuries and posttraumatic stress suffered by both combatants and civilians. Empirical research has shown that the consequences of various traumatic events are not limited to the traumatized veteran, but may also affect significant others in their environment such as family and friends (Ray and Vanstone, 2009; Dekel and Monson, 20)

Other mental illnesses, like major depressive disorder and alcohol and drug abuse disorders, are often linked to PTSD in military veterans. In a study by Kulka et al., they found that male Vietnam veterans with PTSD were more likely than non-PTSD veterans to have a history of dysthymia, major depressive episodes, panic disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorders. They also had a history of alcohol abuse and dependence, substance abuse and dependence, and antisocial personality disorder. It is found that female veterans with PTSD were just like male veterans without PTSD when it came to having obsessive compulsive disorder, current alcohol abuse/dependence, and lifetime substance abuse/dependence. Because the study had a small number of people, the figures for the prevalence of both current and lifetime antisocial personality disorder were not used.

Military experiences change veterans in fundamental ways that shape, mold, destroy, and redeem the rest of their lives, including the end of their lives. In many ways, veterans face the end of life the same as civilians; however, there are some fundamental differences in the ways they experience death. Traumatic memories are harder to suppress at the end of life, causing unbidden recollections to surface. Later-life Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) manifests much like childhood PTSD, as the original trauma is acted out.

Traumatic memories are encoded and stored differently than non-traumatic memories. Traumatic memories often emerge in involuntary fragments unconsciously triggered by internal or external reminders of the original trauma. These traumatic memories are nothing but a moral injury of the soul.

Moral injury is a specialized subcategory of soul injury that is primarily associated with combat veterans. At the core of a moral injury is often the inability to forgive one's self for letting others die or for killing others. This caption captures the dilemma:



## Hoping and wishing

### you can settle

this whole thing in your mind about this war resolving it within yourself before the time of atonement comes, weeping and crying at the end of your life Experiencing or witnessing violence can be disturbing for anyone; but the difference with veterans is that they also committed violence. That is a deeper level of traumatization.

### 2:3 The Poetics of Trauma Fiction:

Literature has a profound effect on the lives of those who read it. It uses a strong language to express the human psyche. Memories, introspection, remembrance, and flashbacks that are tinged by pain, wound, and trauma may be found in this realm. Writing about one's own or collective traumas is a crucial part of the healing process.

Critic James Berger claims that trauma provides a “method of interpretation” because it makes clear that the effect of a catastrophic event can be revealed in multiple ways that are not directly linked or associated with original event’s time or location (572). Analyzing traumatic narratives can be of great value in revealing the cause of social and cultural illnesses that might not be directly linked to any single event.

Literary texts that deal with traumatic stories provide readers with two sides of the traumatic event. First, they show what is known about the first encounter with the catastrophe, that is, the actual event that occurred to the victim. Secondly, they demonstrate the missed or unknown part, which manifests itself later in the form of the repetition compulsion. Caruth argues that Freud uses “literature to describe traumatic experience [...] because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersects that the language of literature and psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet.” (Caruth, 1996, 3) Thus, as soon as traumatic experiences are not fully comprehended as they occur, literature provides a good vehicle for exploring trauma. It provides both the actual traumatic incident as well as the delayed traumatic reactions of the victims or their attempt to comprehend what they fail to grasp in the first place.



The representation of trauma in fiction often faces the danger of falling into the "Fact versus Fiction" trap. The readers of this type of fiction may search for the exact representation of his/her traumatic experience, expecting to find the discussion of the similar emotions and consequences. Thus, authors who take up the topic of collective traumas, face many challenges: these novels examine transpersonal dimension of collective memory that spreads beyond the individual and across an entire culture. A trauma novel includes a definite realistic and historical dimension, and is often based on documents and testimonies. The reader of this work of fiction, Dori Laub argues, becomes "a participant and coowner of the traumatic event". (1992, 57) Literary representation of massive trauma evokes "mutual recognition of a shared knowledge" (Laub 1992: 64). According to Anne Whitehead "the desire among various cultural groups to represent or make visible specific historical instances of trauma has given rise to numerous important works of contemporary fiction." (2004, 3) In the trauma novel, the reconstruction of massive trauma becomes a process of restatement, during which the response to the work of fiction contains both, a personal and transpersonal dimension.

The term "trauma novel" refers to a work of fiction that represents an emotional and/or cognitive response to profound loss, disaster, disruption, or devastations on the individual or collective level. Laurie Vickroy states that trauma narrativists "sharpen victims' pain with readers, shifting between what can and cannot be revealed. " (2002: 4) Vickroy determines different approaches undertaken by trauma fiction writers: transfer of traumatic responses, an informational approach, or an empathic approach, since "literary texts can provide pathways for reader empathy." (2002, 21) Analyzing stylistic devices in trauma fiction, Vickroy emphasizes the use of symbols, metaphorical language, flashbacks, and elaboration of "the dynamic relationship between individual and collective memory" (2002: 33). Symbols, when carefully chosen, become a powerful tool in disclosing different dimensions of trauma. A trauma novel is based on different levels of the "affective memory" (Nora, 2011, 307). Although different types of readers may possess different emotions, the degree of empathy is one of the factors in better understanding the scope and effects of the traumatic event. Vickroy points out dialogism (especially, the narrator-reader



dimension) as a structural element of trauma fiction, which becomes particularly significant in describing historical traumas. (2002: 183-185) Making a reader experience, or rather re-experience, a traumatic event, a trauma novel, in this case, turns a reader not only into a witness, but also into a victim of a wide-scope collective trauma.

Trauma fiction is often based on the memories of experiencing a personal or collective traumatic event; thus, usually, the fictional narratives of collective traumas explore both personal and collective dimensions. A trauma narrative always includes both the reader, whose role may be that of a person in whom the victim/narrator confides or one with whom the victim/narrator shares the traumatic experience. Dori Laub discusses the acknowledgement of the password, which signals the mutual recognition of shared knowledge. Often a direct reference to the setting (time and place) serves as a unifying password in the recognition of trauma. (1992, 57)

In trauma fiction, the protagonist becomes "a historical marker to unspeakable experience" and "a marker for potential change if healed." (Vickroy 2002: xiii) The traumatized protagonist brings to awareness the specificity of individual trauma that is often connected to larger social factors and cultural values. Often the fictional figure magnifies a historical event in which thousands of people have suffered similar violence.

Consideration of the multiple models of trauma and memory presented in the trauma novel draws attention to the role of place, which functions to portray trauma's effect through metaphoric and material means. Descriptions of the geographical place of traumatic experience may express a larger cultural context, while the physical environment offers an opportunity to examine both the personal and cultural history attached to the described landscape. Thus, in the trauma novel, the setting becomes a structural element that organizes the memory and meaning of trauma.

#### **2:4 Matt Gallagher: The War Writer**

Matt Gallagher is an American author, former U.S. Army captain and veteran of the Iraq War. Gallagher has written on a variety of subjects, mainly contemporary war fiction and non-fiction. He first became known for his war memoir *Kaboom* (2010), which tells of his



and his scout platoon's experiences during the Iraq War. He works as a writing instructor at Words After War, a literary nonprofit devoted to bringing veterans and civilians together to study conflict literature.

After leaving the Army, Gallagher moved to New York City and wrote his war memoir, *Kaboom: Embracing the Suck in a Savage Little War*, which was published in April 2010 by Da Capo Press. It received much critical acclaim. Michiko Kakutani in *The New York Times* praised Gallagher for "his love of language, acquired as an avid reader, and his elastic voice as a writer – his ability to move effortlessly between the earnest and the irreverent, the thoughtful and the comic." (2015)

Gallagher and Roy Scranton co-edited *Fire and Forget: Short Stories from the Long War* (Da Capo, 2013), an anthology of literary fiction by veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. *Fire and Forget* featured an introduction by National Book Award Winner Colum McCann, and stories by Colby Buzzell, David Abrams, Phil Klay, Siobhan Fallon, Gavin Kovite, Jacob Siegel, and others.[26] *The New York Daily News* wrote that "Some of America's greatest works of literature have come from its wars. Be it Stephen Crane, E.L. Doctorow, Ernest Hemingway, Norman Mailer, Joseph Heller, Thomas Pynchon, James Jones or Tim O'Brien, war has been memorialized, glorified, satirized and revealed in all its valor and depredation ... Now, as another comes to a close, a new generation of authors will come forward to define themselves through their own fictional narratives. Among the finest have been enlisted in *Fire and Forget*."

About war and Iraq in the aftermath of 2003 Gallagher says:

The general public thinks of the Iraq war as one cohesive event, and the truth is there are so many parts of it, both from the American side and the Iraqi. There's the invasion, of course, in 2003, which occurred over the course of three weeks and that was it. Mission accomplished. The Iraqis view that very differently. They call it "the collapse." Their entire infrastructure, their entire way of life was totally upended. And then there are different phases: the sectarian war, the rise of the insurgency, from 2004–2006, then the shift to counterinsurgency, which took place in 2007. The most vivid description of COIN I ever got as a young lieutenant was, "You know, like British imperial occupation." That's not totally exact but it ain't wrong, either. It's



about the long-game, being a jack of all trades immersed with the people, being beat cops and conducting electricity surveys and dealing with roadside bombs and snipers all at the same time. Obviously that conflicts with the popular American understanding of what war is, or at least what our wars “should” be. We push back fascist onslaughts! But the reality is that it’s much more likely that America will conduct another counterinsurgency campaign in the 21st century than we will fight another standard force-on-force war.

In his short story “And Bugs Don’t Bleed,” Matt Gallagher digs into the isolation and frustration of readjustment that leads one soldier to violence. The story paints a startling and bleak picture of Long War veteran and his life after combat. While certain characters in this story may hope to one day readjust and to be whole again, several are completely lost, or soon will be.

“And Bugs Don’t Bleed” is one of the 15 short stories of a collection entitled *Fire and Forget* Edited by Roy Scranton and Matt Gallagher. It talks about the long war veterans their lives before and after war. The story starts in a coffee shop in Hawaii where two college friends Brett and Liz talk about Liz’s boyfriend who is a war veteran recently returned from Iraq. Liz describes her friend’s PTSD and the way he represses memories of his traumatic experience by means of addicting alcohol and refusing to talk about his experience. While Brett advises Liz to abandon her friend because he is “self-destructive, controlling, and emotionally abusive”, she refuses to be selfish because of she loves him. The other part of the story takes the reader to another location where the focus will be on Liz’s friend and other two characters, namely Sunny and her Grandmother. While Sunny and her Grandmother represent they sunny and peaceful side of life, Liz’s friend represents the grim side which he deals with in such an aggressive way. The story ends with an aggressive action committed by Liz’s traumatized friend against nature.

### **3. War, PTSD and Objective Correlatives in And Bugs Don’t Bleed**

#### **3:1 Testimony and Bearing Witness**

Bearing witness is a term that, used in psychology, refers to sharing one’s experiences with others, most notably in the communication to others of traumatic experiences. Bearing witness is a valuable way to



process an experience, to obtain empathy and support, to lighten one's emotional load via sharing it with the witness, and to obtain catharsis. Most people bear witness daily, and not only in reaction to traumatic events. One bears witness to one another through writing, through art, and by verbally simply sharing with others.

Trauma survivors often cite the importance of the therapist's validating role in their treatment; the simple act of accepting an individual's life story can be highly therapeutic. While bearing witness is vital in the therapeutic recovery from trauma, all people have stories to tell, even in the absence of trauma. psychologist and psychoanalyst Nancy R. Goodman writes in her *The Power of Witnessing: Reflections, Reverberations, and Traces of the Holocaust*, "Witnessing is a powerful force that allows massively traumatic experiences to become known and communicated" (2012, p 3)

"And Bugs Don't Bleed" highlight this issue by means of two characters, namely Liz and Brett. While Liz tries to work through the trauma of being close to a veteran, Brett takes the role of a therapist who represents the act of bearing witness to be thus intimately bound to the healing of traumatic suffering: "I'm sorry to bring it up." Brett leaned across the table and placed his hand on Liz's arm. "But has he been, I mean, did he ..." (Gallagher, 137) Bearing witness to trauma and survivor testimony as physician or psychologist concern the discovery of intelligible truth in the manner of a "healer-expert in the vitally important aim that is healing or "curing" the survivor from his or her traumatic wounds. The process of healing cannot take place without the intention of the survivor to speak about his or her suffering. This is recognized in the way Brett encourages Liz to talk: "Live Strong" etched into it, shook his head. "it's fine. That can wait. Talk to me." (Ibid)

When it comes to the testimony of survivors, the clinical psychologist must consider both what he or she is hearing or seeing and how he or she is hearing or seeing. How to bear witness must be investigated with reference to the most important aspects of bearing witness regarding the information surrounding traumatic pain. Will is Liz's source of traumatic pain. She suffers the way he unconsciously destructs, controls, and abuses her. Will and Liz's relationship is described alongside visionary and auditory images that are employed as objective correlative of their destructive and traumatizing action and



reaction:

She frowned and stared at a Hawaiian queen on the wall made of red and yellow circles standing by a sea of blue circles. The queen held a spear in one hand and a dark Tiki mask in the other. A strong gust of wind blew by the shop, pending the palm trees by the windows into upside down horseshoes. Rainwater cut across the air sideways. (201)

One may notice that the above quotation entails certain signs that signify nothing but destruction, selfishness, instability, and shock. Each of Will and Liz are shocked by what they confronted. While Will is shocked by his war experience, Liz is shocked by the “new self” of her friend. Will, according to Brett, uses Liz as “a crutch instead of dealing with his problem.” (202)

How does a counselor therapist respond to the “truth” of a survivor’s testimony which gestures towards the possibility of “understanding” of trauma? In *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, Agamben suggests that: “Some want to understand too much and too quickly; they have explanations for everything. Others refuse to understand; they only offer cheap mystifications. The only way forward lies in investigating the space between these two options” (1999, p.13) In response to Liz’s testimony which stands for any testimonial narrative made by military families, Brett tries to confront Liz with the burden she carries in the name of love. He tries to enlighten her that she has to be selfish and pay attention to her own life: “ you have your own life to lead—you are young, fun, social, and there is a lot going beyond these wars. You need to ask yourself—is this what you really want.” (202) Confronting the storms and the disturbance inside Liz is echoed by the full description of the weather outside the café. Everything about the remote hills become now “visible.” Though “the wind whistles sharply and the sound of the rain echoed through the coffee shop” (202) Liz now can see with fresh eyes what is going on outside and inside her.

### **3:2 Repression and Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

Many veterans are traumatized by their experiences and are unable to enjoy relationships with themselves, family and friends because of their distress. More than 20 years ago, Crews (1995) coined the term “memory wars” to refer to a contentious debate regarding the existence



of repressed memories, which refers to memories that become inaccessible for conscious inspection because of an active process known as repression. Many critics explain that the concept of repressed memories traces its roots to the psychoanalytic theory and practice of Sigmund Freud, who in turn was influenced by physician-hypnotists, such as Jean-Martin Charcot, in the final decades of the 19th century.

At the heart of this concept is the idea that traumatic experiences are often so overwhelming that people use defense mechanisms to cope with them. One of these mechanisms involves the automatic and unconscious repression of the traumatic memory with the consequence that people no longer recollect or retain awareness of the experience that triggered it.

Will's war memory is motivated consciously by different means such as a "poster of that Sadr Guy...He's an Iraqi terrorist." (198) Retaining such a poster imprisons Will in the same site of the past a matter that hampers any attempt to move on, regain the old self, or even readjust to civil life. His war memory "crinkled up and has Arabic scrawl on it and terrorist in the desert with guns—big guns—and a big red moon and that creepy, creepy fat man. It's terrible." (ibid) His memory is nothing but a wrinkle structure marked by colors of war, namely red and black, the colors of blood, fire, guns, and smoke of explosions. Amid all these colors the ghost of past creeps in an image of "a fat man" . Though captured by these "freak-outs," Will doesn't have any desire to free himself and work through his trauma. The accumulative heap of these memories is indirectly linked with a description of the tropical weather that is fueled by "a cluster of thunderheads." (ibid) Indeed, Will's inner self is fueled by the thunder of war memory which he insists on silencing every time Liz tries to give it a voice and thus heal him: "Every time I try to talk to Will about this, he either ignores me or tells me he is fine and not to worry, but I just want him to talk to me." (200)

Will's symptoms of PTSD is indicated by different things inside and outside him. In the second part of the story he sits alone under the rain and the whole location indicates his feelings of estrangement and alienation. He sits in the rainy weather when the night is dark and the clouds are grey. The whole location is a jungle which stands as an objective correlative to the chaotic jungle inside him. Coping with the traumatic jungle inside him, Will drinks alcohol. In an attempt to



intoxicates his mind and his body, Will promotes the development of traumatic disorders and thus aggravates existing PTSD in the long run. Using alcohol as a coping mechanism, Will decreases his level of self-reflection, his ability to process multiple cues, as well as deters himself from making mature decisions and learning how to resolve the conflict of his trauma: “That fire water may keep you warm, but it won’t keep you from getting sick.” (204)

Aggressive behavior is among the most recognized symptoms of PTSD. Traumatized people, in the case of aggressive behavior for example, are totally captured by their traumatic memories which are described by Levine as “fixed and static. They are imprints from the past overwhelming experiences [that] do not yield to change. The “fixity” of imprints prevent [them] from forming new strategies and extracting new meaning.” (2015, 7) In parallel to this, the more Will tries to rid himself to the past, the more it haunts, torments, and strangles his life’s force, seriously restricting his capacity to live the present. Day after day, Will drowns in the sea of the past—a matter that is symbolically indicated by the following description of the sea: “Wave after wave of wild blue crashed into the crags with increasing recklessness.” (209)

The correlations between aggression and PTSD is recognized in the last scene of the story when Will murders a rooster:

The rooster flapped its wings in protest and attempted to bite and scratched him, but he held it tight to his chest...he clutched the rooster by its neck and repeatedly smashed it against the cement pavement until it ceased to move or squawk... he cleaned his hands on the grass, and sat back down on the couch. “there it is,” he said” (210)

What is distinguished about his aggressive action is feelings of satisfaction when he finishes his crime. It is as if this crime against nature is a coping mechanism that helps him to manage the stormy and tropical conflict inside him. Murdering the rooster enhances the fact that violence is among many influential factors that reside in the very behavioral consequences of being traumatized.

Furthermore, murdering the rooster objectively correlates with the theme of peace (life) vs. war (death). While Will represents the grim of war and its forceful contentions, Sunny, the girl Will meet, and the rooster



represent nature with all its peaceful conditions and primordial connotations: “ a red rooster with a full black tail strutted over to sunny. She picked it up, put it in her lap, and stroked its feathers. “This is my favorite thing in the whole world, she said. “His name is Bob.” (208)

### 3:3 Objective Correlative of the Other

The idea of ‘otherness’ is central to sociological analyses of how majority and minority identities are constructed. This is because the representation of different groups within any given society is controlled by groups that have greater political power. After many years of 9\11 terrorist attack and followed by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, most Muslims and Westerners are convinced that relations between them are generally that one of the Self and Other. Many in the West see Muslims as fanatical, violent, and as lacking tolerance. Meanwhile, Muslims in the Middle East and Asia generally see Westerners as selfish, immoral and greedy – as well as violent and fanatical. 9\11 brought about a greater sense of fear across the EU, where anxieties about the perceived threat from potential internal terrorists and reciprocal attacks in Europe became incorporated into those prejudices that were already identifiably existent in numerous nationally constrained manifestations of ethnic xenophobia.

“And Bugs Don’t Bleed” presents this idea through its title which is highlighted in the conversation between Sunny and Will. Sunny believes that war is the place where blood shade is allowed. Will, on the other hand, justifies this by saying that he murders only “bad people.” Implicitly, Will refers to Muslims who are stereotyped as “terrorists” in the aftermath of 9\11. He enhances the inferiority of Muslims by comparing them to “Bugs.” In comparison with spiders and stuff, murdering bugs does not matter because they do not bleed. Such inferiority is engendered by the attacks of 9\11. Just after September 11, numerous Arabs, Muslims, and individuals perceived to be Arab or Muslim were assaulted, and some killed, by individuals who believed they were responsible for or connected to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Many of the victims of post-9/11 hate violence were neither Arab nor Muslim, yet these men were selected because their perpetrators thought they were Arab or Muslim and in some way responsible for 9/11. While the image of the Arab-as-Terrorist is not a new stereotype, it has become increasingly entrenched in the public imagination since 9/11 because of the



increased frequency of news coverage of actual Islamic terrorism. Anyone who watches the news has seen video footage of jihadist training camps depicting men in black face masks with assault style machine guns engaging in rigorous boot camp exercises as if preparing for hand-to-hand combat. Increasingly we hear of Arab men, & sometimes Arab women, strapping bombs to themselves and acting as suicide bombers.

### Conclusion

According to Thomas Stearns Eliot, the writer can give the audience the opportunity to respond sympathetically to any kind of art by finding and using the right objective correlative. This exact theory is used in Matt Gallagher's "And bugs don't bleed" to make the reader feel the same way as the story characters feels and thinks when he suffers from Post-traumatic stress disorder.

So many fictional elements as well as events are used to reflect on the symptoms of people who are suffering from PTSD as a side effect of traumatic experience in their lives , and how this disorder effects not only them, but also the lives of people who have relations with them. The story gives some of the symptoms of PTSD . Which is represented by the character "Will" like repression, drinking, and violence.

"And Bugs Don't Bleed" presents the idea of the "Other " which is indicated through a particular event that highlights war as a dark spot practicing all kinds of bloody forces, including killing, that are against humanity. The act of killing "bad people" highlights a post-orientalist tendency which depicts Islam and Muslims as sources of terrorism and thus the American war against Iraq and Afghanistan is a "war on terrorism" Objective correlative achieves two things in the examined story. First, it enables the reader to be part of what is known as the first encounter with the catastrophe (the actual event that occurred to the victim of PTSD.) Second, it gives the reader some good knowledge about what is unknown, that is the part which manifests itself later in the form of the repetitive compulsion. Another way which can be useful by the application of this theory is by simply sharing your experience with others throughout various ways. This can also be considered as a therapy to victim of any type of mental illness or disorder. So, using the right objective correlative to deliver a good sense of emotions to others can be helpful to both the audience and the writer himself ( Matt Gallagher in the case of "Bugs don't bleed) .



## Bibliography

1. Agamben, G. Remnants of Auschwitz: The witness and the archive (D. Heller-Roazen, Trans.). New York, NY: Zone Books, 2002.
2. Berger, James. "Trauma and Literary Theory." Review of Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History; Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma; Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma. *Contemporary Literature* 38.3 (1997): 569–582. Jstor. Web. 1 August 2015.
3. Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
4. Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
5. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course In General Linguistics*, trans., Wade Baskin. New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.
6. Kakutani, Michiko). "Human Costs of the Forever Wars, Enough to Fill a Bookshelf". *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331. (December 25, 2014
7. Kardiner A, Spiegel H: *War Stress & Neurotic Illness*. New York, Paul Hoeber, 1947
8. Kulka RA, Schlenger WE, Fairbank JA, et al: *Trauma and the Vietnam War Generation*. New York, Brunner/Mazel, 1990
9. Laub, D.. "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening" in *Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. New York: Routledge Press, 1992.
10. Nora, P. *Présent, Nation, Mémoire*, Lonrai: Éditions Gallimard. 2011
11. Ray, S. L. and Vanstone, M. *The impact of PTSD on veterans' family relationships: An interpretative phenomenological inquiry*. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 2009.
12. Ron Mann, Atoning, [https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.hospicefed.org/resource/resmgr/hpcfm\\_pdf\\_doc/warriors-dgrassmann\\_slides.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.hospicefed.org/resource/resmgr/hpcfm_pdf_doc/warriors-dgrassmann_slides.pdf)
13. T.S. Eliot. *Selected Essays*, London: Faber and Faber Press, 1932.
14. Vickroy, L.. *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002
15. Watson, A. *Enduring the Great War: Combat, morale and collapse in the German and British armies, 1914–1918*. Cambridge University Press., 2008
16. Whitehead, A. *Memory*. London: Routledge, 2009.
17. Whitehead, A. *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.

