Brian Turner's Poetry: Quantum Memories and the Temporal Dislocation in *Iraqi War Trauma*

شعر برايان تيرنر: الذكريات الكمومية والانزياح الزمني في صدمة حرب العراق

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Abstract
Turner's poetry captures trauma survivor fragmented, time and memory-blending experiences. The present paper reveals the deep sense of temporal collapse and psychological fragmentation that characterizes trauma in Turner's poetry. It provides a clear reflection on the long-lasting effects of war on the individual. Turner treats war as an unclaimed, ever-present experience in his poetry. The study uses Cathy Caruth's trauma theory from *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) to analyze how war trauma and temporal displacement are represented in Brian Turner's *Phantom Noise* (2010) collection. This theory will help to examine how soldiers and civilians negotiate the disconcerting terrain of hybridity and displacement in different times and places, shedding light on the tremendous repercussions of war on identity formation. Results showed a deep psychological and emotional fallout from war, illustrating the fractured, non-linear character of trauma as it affects both soldiers and civilians.
Keywords: Brian Turner, Cathy Caruth, Displacement, identity, Trauma

ملخص

يصور شعر تيرنر تجارب الناجين من الصدمة بتركيبتها المجزأة والممتزجة بين الزمن والذاكرة. تكشف هذه الورقة البحثية عن الإحساس العميق بالانهيار الزمني والتفتت النفسي الذي يميز الصدمة في شعر تيرنر. كما توفر انعكاسًا واضحًا على الآثار طويلة المدى للحرب على الفرد. يعامل تيرنر الحرب في شعره كتجربة غير مُطالَب بها وحاضرة دائمًا. تستخدم الدراسة نظرية الصدمة لكاثي كاروث من كتاب *التجربة غير المُطالَب بها* (١٩٩٦) لتحليل كيفية تمثيل صدمة الحرب والانزياح الزمني في مجموعة برايان تيرنر *ضوضاء الشبح* (٢٠١٠). ستساعد هذه النظرية في فحص كيفية تفاوض الجنود والمدنيين عبر التضاريس المركبة للهجنة والانزياح في أزمنة وأماكن مختلفة، مما يلقي الضوء على العواقب الهائلة للحرب على تشكيل الهوية. أظهرت النتائج تداعيات نفسية وعاطفية عميقة ناتجة عن الحرب، مما يوضح الطبيعة المجزأة وغير الخطية للصدمة التي تؤثر على كل من الجنود والمدنيين. الكلمات المفتاحية: برايان تيرنر، كاثي كاروث، الانزياح، الهوية، الصدمة.

Introduction:

Brian Turner is a well-known American poet and writer for his moving and raw depictions of war, especially those about his time as a soldier in the Iraq War. Turner was born in 1972, in a tiny Californian hamlet. His upbringing in a family with strong military ties impacted his decision to enlist in the US Army. He worked as a combat engineer in Iraq from 2003 to 2004 after graduating from the University of California, Irvine. This experience had a significant impact on his writing and perspective. Turner is well-recognized for his anthologies of poetry,

Most of Brian Turner's collections capture the psychological and physical realities that both troops and civilians must deal with as it examines the horror of the Iraq war and its aftermath. *The Phantom Noise* (2010), the target of the present study, explores memory, trauma, and the psychological effects of warfare while delving into the eerie afterglow of battle. His writing reflects the pain and Temporal dislocation experienced by soldiers, revealing the complex emotional landscape accompanying military service. His experiences, also, in Iraq continue to inform his poetic vision, allowing him to address the deeper psychological scars that warfare leaves on individuals and communities.

Many researchers study the negative effects of wars across different generations. In Dori Laub's (1996) *Witness to Trauma: A Memoir of the Holocaust* delves into the difficulties of testifying about horrific events and the deep psychological toll they take on both witnesses and survivors. It provides valuable perspectives that can improve our comprehension of the experiences that soldiers had as depicted in Brian Turner's poetry. In Fuchs' (2010) "Quantum Trauma: The Interplay of Memory and Trauma in Literature" which examines how trauma stories include quantum theories of time, illuminating the nuanced interactions between trauma and memory in literary settings. Understanding the non-linear temporal experiences portrayed in Brian Turner's poems is made easier with the help of this article. Furthermore, Marianne Hirsch's (2012), *The Post memory Generation: Visual Culture and*

Writing After the Holocaust explores the intergenerational transmission of trauma and memory and provides a framework for comprehending the lasting consequences of collective trauma. This framework is especially pertinent to an analysis of Brian Turner's war poetry.

Meyer's (2020) "The Quantum Self: Memory and Trauma in Literary Discourse", also, examines how literary narratives embody quantum theories of identity and memory, particularly in their representation of trauma. This article argues that such representations challenge traditional conceptions of the self and temporal continuity, offering new insights into the complexity of traumatic experiences. Finally, in Reyes's (2022). "Quantum Trauma and the Poetics of Memory: A Study of Contemporary War Poetry" explores how quantum theories are applied in contemporary war poetry to depict trauma and memory in fragmented, non-linear forms. This essay focuses on how these poetic depictions both reflect the nuanced realities of trauma survivors and subvert traditional narrative frameworks.

So, although studies of Brian Turner's poetry highlight the individual experiences of trauma, there is a lack of research on how these fractured and non-linear representations of trauma impact on collective memory and identity formation across different generations within Iraqi War veteran communities. In particular, nothing is known about how Turner's poetic language engages with cultural notions of masculinity, heroism, and vulnerability within the framework of military duty. To bridge the gap between individual narratives and the larger societal implications of war, this study will examine how Turner's work influences community discourse on healing and reconciliation. It specifically concerns the context of post-war identity and the intergenerational transmission of trauma from the past to the present and then to the future.

For the methodology, this study will use a qualitative technique to examine how trauma, memory, and identity are portrayed in some poems from Brian Turner's *Phantom Noise* (2010). The initial phase will entail a thorough textual examination of significant poems, with an emphasis on how

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is portrayed in Turner's poetry by illuminating how his poetic devices reflect the fractured and non-linear character of traumatic events. The study also sheds light on how Turner's creations encourage conversations on communal memory and identity. ultimately this study highlights the intricate interplay between individual narratives and the societal ramifications of war and provides possible avenues for community discourse on veteran healing and reconciliation.

Theoretical framework

Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History by Cathy Caruth (1996) offers a fundamental framework for comprehending how trauma is portrayed in Brian Turner's poetry as fragmented and non-linear. According to Caruth, the survivor's sense of time and narrative, coherence are disrupted since the trauma is not fully experienced at the time of the incident but rather returns later. Turner's (2010) *Phantom Noise*, in which the past and present collide to provide a sensation of timelessness and psychological disintegration, is centered on this idea of temporal dislocation. Turner's depiction of war as an unclaimed, omnipresent experience is consistent with Caruth's notion that trauma is "an event that cannot be fully integrated" (p. 11).

The abrupt transitions between ordinary civilian life and intense combat recollections in poems such as At Lowe's Home Improvement demonstrate how horrific experiences defy linear narrative. As seen by phrases like "constant as shells falling south of Baghdad," the hardware store a representation of normalcy becomes a place where the past aggressively intrudes (Turner, 2010, l. 4). Caruth's theory that trauma causes a "breach in experience" (p. 7), in which the past is unresolved and continuously disturbs the present, is reflected in this juxtaposition. Caruth also highlights how trauma is embodied, pointing out that it is not just psychological but also profoundly bodily.

Turner uses vivid imagery, broken structures, and sensory details to illustrate the intricacies of war trauma. This analysis will make use of Cathy Caruth's trauma theory from *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), which holds that traumatic events frequently cause fractured, non-linear manifestations and disturb cohesive narrative patterns. This study will pay close reading to how these poetic devices, such as the themes of temporal displacement and the enduring existence of painful memories. The psychological effects of the Iraq War in the selected poems will check Turner's poetic language that captures the complexity of veterans' collective memory and identity formation across different times and generations. Ultimately it advances our knowledge of the relationship between personal temporal trauma and larger societal quantum Memories ramifications.

Meanwhile, there is many questions have been raised in this study and they could be summarized as follows, how does Brian Turner's poem portray alienation and the inexplicable nature of pain through the juxtaposition of locales and the use of sensory imagery, how does the poem's description of terrible events benefit from repetition and the non-linear portrayal of time.

In light of this study, fragmented structures, and sensory details reflect the consequences of war trauma experienced, temporal dislocation, and quantum memories by Iraqi War veterans. So, this research attempts to analyze how Brian Turner conveys trauma, memory, and identity in his collection *Phantom Noise* (2010). The study aims to investigate how these representations shed light on individual experiences of trauma while also impacting communal memory and identity formation among several generations within veteran communities. This study should improve our knowledge of how trauma

similar to the more general difficulty of witnessing, where the victim may get retraumatized by the process of recounting. Lines like "The hurt locker waits / for you to open it" (ll. 11–12), which allude to the unavoidable weight of memory and the challenge of incorporating terrible memories into a cohesive story, exemplify this conflict. This study explores how Turner's poetry conveys the intergenerational and social aspects of war trauma by integrating Laub's idea of witnessing. The framework emphasizes Turner's art captures the difficulties of witnessing the atrocities of war and the common suffering of soldiers and civilians. Using this perspective, the study investigates Turner's poetry illuminates the lasting effects of communal trauma and the intergenerational transmission of memory by addressing both the individual experiences of trauma and the larger societal and cultural ramifications of war.

Analysis

War's Residue: The Interplay of Memory and Reality

Turner's Poetry's disjointed nature is indicative of Caruth's (1996) contention in her work Unclaimed Experience that trauma frequently eludes narrative restoration. The abrupt changes from a calm hardware store scene to intense combat graphics represent how stress shatters a person's life story. According to Caruth (1996), "Trauma is a breach in experience" (p. 7). This disarray emphasizes the disorganized quality of the soldiers' recollections and reflects their difficulty in expressing their history.

Moreover, Caruth highlights the recurring nature of unpleasant memories, a concept that Turner's poetry powerfully illustrates. The recurring appearance of wartime memories in an ordinary environment symbolizes the eerie quality of trauma. Turner's imagery acts as a reminder that the veteran's current reality is disturbed by these lingering recollections. This supports the claim made by Caruth that trauma is "an event that cannot be fully integrated."(p.11). The hardware store is one of the important settings in which the poem "At Lowe's Home Improvement" from the collection *Phantom Noise* (2010), opening Lines describing commonplace items, such as "mower blades" or "nails," provide a sense of anchorage in the here and now. But soon after, the imagery

Turner illustrates sensory triggers can generate painful memories by using sensory images, such as "tracer fire" and "oily bright shanks," to immerse the reader in the visceral reality of combat. Since the body becomes a location where the past is relived, this supports Caruth's assertion that trauma is "a deeply physical experience" (p. 14). Caruth's remark that trauma is frequently experienced as a "repetition of the event" (p. 2), resulting in an endless cycle of pain, is mirrored in Turner's poems' circular form, where memories reoccur without closure.

This study uses Caruth's trauma theory to analyze Turner's poetry shows the fractured, non-linear nature of war trauma, highlighting the severe psychological and emotional effects that both soldiers and civilians are subjected. The framework provides a sophisticated understanding of the enduring impacts of war on identity and narrative coherence by highlighting Turner's work reflects the temporal dislocation and fracture memory that define traumatic events.

The second critical lens for examining the social and intergenerational aspects of trauma in Brian Turner's poetry is provided by Dori Laub's work on trauma and witnessing, especially in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992). According to Laub, trauma produces an "empty circle" (p. 69), a void that is difficult to fully express or incorporate into a story, leaving witnesses and survivors to struggle to make sense of what they have experienced. This idea is especially pertinent to Turner's examination of the agony that both troops and civilians endure in *Phantom Noise* (2010).

Laub also highlights the importance of witnessing trauma, pointing out that it is both vital and challenging to bear witness. Turner uses the image of the "hurt locker," a storehouse of suffering that defies confinement, to examine this issue in The Hurt Locker. The recurring words, "Nothing but hurt left here" (Turner, 2010, ll. 1, 13), and the poem's cyclical structure, illustrate Laub characterizes the repeated nature of traumatized memory. The veteran's difficulty describing their memories is

Bosch walks down aisle 16 now, in full combat gear, improbable, worn out from fatigue, a rifle slung at his side, his left hand guiding a ten-year-old boy who sees what war is and will never clear it from his head.
Here, Bosch says, Take care of him. I'm going back in for more.
Sheets of plywood drop with the airy breath of mortars the moment they crack open in shrapnel. Mower blades are just mower blades (Turner,2010, ll.7-14).
The poem's arrangement illustrates a non-linear view of time in which the past and present coexist. According to Caruth (1996) "Trauma is often cyclical, affecting not just the individual but also those who witness or are related to them, creating a shared experience of suffering." (p. 20) trauma messes with our perception of narrative continuity and time. Moments of reflection, such as the "dawn" following shelling, show how trauma alters temporal perception in Turner's work, making it difficult for veterans to make sense of their experiences consecutively. This interruption highlights the long-lasting effects of trauma on identity, the poet says:
Wounded Iraqis with IVe alt propped against bones as 92 sample Paradiso fans hover it an allow revolution of blades [/.../]Cash registers open and slide shut with a sound of machine guns being charged. Dead soldiers are laid out at the registers, on the black conveyor belts, and people in line still reach for their wallets. Should I stand at the magazine rack, reling Landscaping with Stone Lathe Complete Home Improvement Repair Book? (Turner,2010, ll.18-30).
Turner's poetry's sensory imagery, moreover, intensifies this disturbance even further. The reader is grounded in the reality of shock by phrases like "tracer-fire" and "constant as shells falling," which conjure the tactile immediacy of combat. According to Caruth (1996), trauma is a thoroughly embodied experience rather than just a psychological condition. Turner uses sensory elements, like the "oily bright shanks" of nails that resemble firing pins, to show how seemingly harmless

turns to memories of fighting, with phrases like "constant as shells falling" conjuring up the sounds of battle. This contrast highlights the difficulty the speaker has articulating postwar people experience and shows how trauma distorts their sense of normalcy. The poet observes:
Standing in aisle 16, the hammer and anchor aisle, I bust a 50-pound box of double-headed nails open by accident, their oily bright shanks and diamond points like firing pins from M-4s and M-16s.In a steady stream, they pour onto the tile floor, constant as shells falling south of Baghdad last night, where Bosch kneeled under the chain guns of helicopters stationed above, their tracer-fire a synaptic geometry of light (Turner,2010, ll.1-7).
In the above Bosch, a leader in America at that time, represents this battle His wearing war gear in a civilian zone hints that his history and present are not at peace but represented black history to both American and Iraqi soldiers and people. Lines that draw attention to his mental state can serve as an example of how difficult it is for veterans to express their pain and emphasize how they feel like outsiders in a society that has gone on. By concentrating on these components, you can show how Turner's use of location and imagery represents the veterans' inability to describe their horrific experiences adequately.
Turner's use of sensory imagery, such as phrases like "tracer-fire" and "constant as shells falling," supports Caruth's claim that traumatic events trigger intense feelings. These images show how such sensory recollections interfere with day-to-day living while grounding the viewer in the visceral combat experience. As noted by Caruth (1996), "Trauma is not only a psychological experience but a deeply physical one" (p. 14). To this experience the poet claims:
At dawn, when the shelling stops, hundreds of bandages will not be enough.

According to Turner: "Believe it when you see it. / Believe it when a twelve-year-old / rolls a grenade into the room." (ll. 3-5).In this instance, the grenade represents the abrupt and erratic emergence of terrible memories. Similar to how a grenade can go off without notice, a veteran's present moment can be disrupted by recollections of battle. This unpredictability supports Caruth's (1996) contention that trauma is a recurrent experience rather than a static one, distinguished by its "belatedness" and capacity to reappear in unexpected ways. In addition to being a destructive tool, the grenade represents the irreparable harm that combat does to a soldier's inner and outer worlds.

The visceral aspect of trauma is further highlighted by Turner's use of sensory imagery. The poem vividly details what happens following an explosion: "The heat and the light, the sound / of it, the way the air itself / becomes a weapon." (ll. 6-8). These lines evoke the extreme sensory overload that comes with horrific events and immerses the reader in the physicality of battle. According to Caruth (1996), moreover, trauma is a deeply embodied phenomenon as well as a psychological one, and Turner's imagery reflects this dichotomy. Long after the incident has passed, the heat, light, and sound of the explosion continue to resonate in the veteran's consciousness, making them interior phenomena as well as exterior ones. Because the past keeps intruding into the veteran's reality, this sensory intrusion prevents them from completely interacting with the present (pp.80-85).

The poem also examines the weight of memory and the subject of witnessing, Turner says: "And you, you are left / with the task of telling it. / The hurt locker waits / for you to open it." (ll. 9-12). Since the veteran is requested to describe their experiences, the act of witnessing now becomes a major theme. This endeavor is challenging, though, because it is impossible to fully open the hurt locker the storehouse of pain without running the risk of becoming harmed again. Because recounting might retraumatize the victim, Caruth (1996) noted that trauma frequently resists narrative integration. The veteran's inability to describe sensations that defy language and understanding makes the wounded locker a metaphor for the inexpressibility of trauma.

stimuli can elicit horrific memories. Because the past keeps bursting into the present, these sensory intrusions interfere with the veteran's efforts to reintegrate into civilian life(p.70).

Trauma-induced temporal disorientation is also reflected in the poem's non-linear form. Trauma breaks the continuity of time, as demonstrated by the sudden changes from the hardware store to the battlefield and from the present to the past. Traumatic events frequently occur outside of linear time, resulting in a cyclical recurrence pattern, according to Caruth (1996). This temporal collapse is emphasized in Turner's work with scenes such as the "dawn" after shelling or the "cash registers open[ing] and slid[ing] shut with a sound of machine guns." (p.77). The past is a live, encroaching force that shapes the present rather than a far-off remembrance. The recurrent character of Bosch, who shows up in full military gear in a civilian context and represents the unavoidable remnants of war, emphasizes the cyclical nature of trauma even more.

Trauma and Explosive Memory in Turner's Uncontainable Past

Turner explores the psychological effects of war in "The Hurt Locker," utilizing the metaphor of the "hurt locker" a military word for a location where trauma and pain are kept to show how the past is uncontrollable and constantly threatens to explode into the present. The poem makes a bold statement at the beginning: "Nothing but hurt left here. / Nothing but bullets and pain." (Turner, 2010, ll. 1-2). This introduction establishes the tone for the poem's examination of trauma as an unavoidable force that is difficult to categorize or forget. As a metaphor, the wounded locker represents the veteran's mind, where wartime memories are kept but never completely confined.

According to Caruth (1996), trauma is "an event that... cannot be placed within the schemes of prior knowledge" (p. 153). This is consistent with that statement. Therefore, the hurt locker is a psychological as well as a physical place where the past is still present and tense. The cyclical cycle of painful memory is reflected in the poem's imagery of containment and eruption.

affects both those who fought and those who saw the conflict. This supports Dori Laub's (1992) argument that trauma produces an "empty circle" a gap that cannot be filled or adequately described leaving witnesses and survivors unable to make sense of what they have experienced (p.102).

The imagery in the poem highlights how troops and people suffer together. Turner writes: "The ghosts of Iraqi women / wander the streets of Balad by night, / searching for their children, their husbands, / their brothers, their sisters." (ll. 5-8). In this example, the ghosts of the American soldiers and Iraqi ladies are similar, drawing a comparison between the losses suffered by the two sides. Laub (1992) claims that trauma is not limited to the individual but rather affects the collective, resulting in a shared feeling of suffering, is reflected in this duality. Beyond national and cultural borders, the women's quest for their loved ones highlights the human cost of conflict. Turner emphasizes the universality of loss and grief during times of war by contrasting the ghosts of soldiers and civilians (p.60).

The consequence aspect of this common trauma is further highlighted by Turner's use of sensory imagery. The spirits are vividly described in the poem: "They are not lost. They are not / forgotten. They are here, / in the streets, in the alleys, / in the houses, in the air." (ll. 9-12). These phrases evoke the ghosts' weight and immediacy, bringing the reader into the physicality of their presence. This visceral detail echoes Laub's (1992) finding that trauma is a profoundly embodied experience rather than only a psychological one. As a tangible presence, the ghosts serve as a metaphor for the environmental trauma that continues to impact both soldiers and civilians long after the conflict has stopped (p.77). The poem's emphasis on the ghosts' pervasiveness in the streets, alleys, homes, and air indicates that tragedy affects every facet of existence in a country that has been devastated by war.

Turner returns to the notion of containment and explosion in the poem's last lines, writing: "Nothing but hurt left here. / Nothing but the hurt locker." (ll. 13-14). The opening lines are repeated, creating a circular form that reflects the recurrent nature of traumatic memory. As a symbol, the hurt locker never changes, implying that the suffering caused by war cannot be completely alleviated or forgotten. Because the survivor is constantly plagued by the past, this cyclicality supports Caruth's (1996) claim that trauma is frequently perceived as a "repetition of the event" (p. 2). Veterans' continuous battle to make sense of their postwar lives and their wartime memories is reflected in the poem's structure, which is repetitive and unresolved.

So, "The Hurt Locker" offers a compelling issue through which to examine memory, trauma, and the interaction between the past and present. The poem effectively conveys the unavoidable nature of trauma and its significant psychological effects on veterans through the use of metaphor, sensory imagery, and cyclical form. As a symbol, the hurt locker becomes a moving illustration of the veteran's battle to keep the anguish of war contained while it looms large over their current reality. By emphasizing these components, Turner creates a chilling monument to the lasting effects of war by illustrating both the personal experience of trauma and its wider ramifications.

Turners explores the shared trauma of war The Arabic word for " Ashbah" is used by Turner in "Ghosts" indicating the trauma and lasting presence of the deceased, as well as the widespread and gothic repercussions of war on both soldiers and civilians. These ghosts are shown in stark form at the beginning of the poem: "The ghosts of American soldiers / wander the streets of Balad by night, / searching for their rifles, their helmets, / their boots, their dog tags." (Turner, 2010, ll. 1-4). The poem's main theme the unavoidable presence of war's legacy, which haunts both the living and the dead—is established right away in this introduction. The soldiers' spirits, who are looking for their misplaced possessions, represent the unresolved pain that still

Conclusion

The poetry of Brian Turner, especially Phantom Noise (2010), provides a deep examination of the psychological and emotional fallout from war, illustrating the fractured, non-linear character of trauma as it affects both soldiers and civilians. Turner skillfully portrays the temporal displacement and quantum memories that characterize the lives of individuals impacted by the Iraq War through his powerful use of imagery, cyclical architecture, and sensory nuances. This study has shed light on how Turner's work depicts the unavoidable presence of war's residue, where the past and present collide and traumatic memories continually intrude onto the present, by combining Dori Laub's thoughts on witnessing with Cathy Caruth's trauma theory. Poems like "At Lowe's Home Improvement," "The Hurt Locker," and "Ashbah" go beyond personal experiences to address the wider cultural and intergenerational effects of war, exposing the deep psychological division and collective misery it causes. Because Turner's poetry conveys easy integration into logical storytelling and resists linear narrative, it highlights the difficulties in conveying trauma. His depiction of citizens and veterans negotiating the confusing landscape of displacement and hybridity emphasizes the ongoing difficulty in bringing wartime memories and postwar reality into harmony. His work's recurrent themes of memory, identity, and temporal collapse highlight how conflict has a lasting impact on people individually and as a society. Additionally, Turner's examination of cultural ideas of masculinity, bravery, and vulnerability in the military setting deepens our comprehension of how trauma affects identity and discourse within the community of aftermath. In the end, this study emphasizes how crucial Turner's poetry is for promoting a more thorough comprehension of the intricacies of combat trauma. Finally, the study emphasized the idea that a world still reeling from the effects of war. Turner's poetry is a potent reminder of the necessity to face the ghosts of the past, recognize the interconnectivity of human suffering, and look for methods to heal. Turner provides a moving meditation on the lasting effects of war and the resiliency of the human spirit by bridging the gap between personal stories and societal ramifications through his artwork.

The incapability of the living is completely understood or expressed the horror they have witnessed which is the main source of tension in the poem. According to Turner: "They are not lost. They are not / forgotten. They are here, / and they are waiting." (ll. 13-15). He mimics the recurrent quality of painful memory by repeating the opening lines, which produces a cyclical pattern. Like trauma, ghosts are a permanent presence in the lives of the living and are difficult to forget or escape. Because survivors and witnesses are constantly plagued by the past, this cyclicality is consistent with Laub's (1992) contention that trauma frequently presents as a "repetition of the event" (p. 69). With its repetition and unresolved ending, the poem's form captures the continuous effort of both troops and civilians to make sense of their experiences during and after the war.

The final lines of the poem emphasize the spirits' enduring existence by returning to the image of them: "They are not lost. They are not / forgotten. They are here, / and they are waiting." (ll. 16-18). The opening sentences are repeated, which brings closure but also emphasizes how unresolved the pain is. As a symbol, the ghosts never go away, implying that the suffering caused by war cannot be completely healed or put to rest. Because recounting can retraumatize the survivor, trauma frequently resists narrative integration, as a result, the ghosts come to represent the inability of both soldiers and civilians to adequately describe experiences that are beyond the realm of words and understanding.

Conclusively, "Ashbah" offers a potent perspective for examining the collective pain experienced by both troops and civilians during battle. By utilizing metaphor, sensory imagery, and a cyclical form, the poem effectively conveys the unavoidable existence of the aftermath of war and its significant influence on both the living and the deceased. As a symbol, the ghosts become a moving depiction of the unresolved trauma that plagues both troops and civilians, resulting in a common suffering experience that cuts over national and cultural lines. The poem's examination of the difficulties of witnessing the horrors of war and the ways that trauma changes the lives of people who experience it is better understood when we incorporate Dori Laub's observations into the "empty circle" of trauma.

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