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**Tropics of Trauma: Affective Representations in War
Narratives, 1917-2006**

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Abstract

Despite the vast scholarship on war writing and trauma, a focused study on the connection between individual and collective war traumatic affect and their representation in literature has not been written. This study close-reads and analyzes war writing between 1916 and 2006 in order to trace the narrative tropes that are recurrent in war narratives of that era. The exposition of these tropes is informed by Hayden White's study *Tropics of Discourse*, Mikhail Bakhtin's account of the 'chronotope' in *The Dialogic Imagination*, Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, and Cathy Caruth's writings on trauma theory. The narratives examined are Stratis Myrivilis's novel *Life in the Tomb* (1923), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-5* (1969), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961), Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981), and Anna Kavan's collection of short stories *I am Lazarus* (1945). The analysis of these seven narratives yields the identification of a range of tropes which underpin the representation of war traumatic affect. The identified tropes include the synecdochical relationships between body and nation, the chronotopic connection between traumatized body and warscape, the traumatized mind and the repetitive narration, as well as the proleptic anticipation of traumatic future. In turn, it will be argued, these tropes form assemblages between the individual and the collective and operate on a textual continuum sustained by the representation of past, present, and future war traumas.

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Declaration of originality

I declare that the thesis does not include work forming part of a thesis presented successfully for another degree.

I declare that the thesis represents my own work except where referenced to others.

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the literary representation of war trauma. The study of war narratives, fictional as well as testimonial, is a major field of contemporary research, which spans, among others, psychoanalytical, philosophical, scientific, social, literary theory, and narratological disciplines. In this thesis I will be analyzing seven literary war narratives that have been written between 1917 and 2006 in order to establish a taxonomy of tropes that pertain to war trauma and are represented in these literary texts. The main tropes that emerge and will be discussed are the tropes of synecdoche, prosopopoeia, defamiliarization, chronotope, repetition, and anticipation. My purpose in identifying and discussing the tropes of war trauma representation is to determine the type of relationship that individual and collective partake of in war literature. My reading of these texts is informed by psychoanalytical and philosophical writings on war, as well as testimonies written by individuals who experienced war trauma.¹ Although testimonies of war traumas feature prominently in the thesis, providing me with key terms that enable a tropological analysis, for reasons of space and consistency, my close reading will focus on selected literary texts. This is because these texts constitute attempts to narrativize historical events whose authors have experienced as war traumas (if not the war traumas whose story they tell, they still tell the story from the perspective of a later trauma, as in the case of Thomas Pynchon, who, in 1973, rewrites the story of Second World War through the experience of the Vietnam War trauma) and thus their stories stand on the boundary between fiction and testimony.

Throughout the thesis I will be relying on the exposition of tropics by Hayden White, while borrowing various definitions that are relevant to my discussion from a range of literary theorists and cultural critics: the definition of war from Michel Foucault; the notion of affect from Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth; the idea of assemblage from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari; the theory of the grotesque and the chronotope from Mikhail Bakhtin; the concept of abjection and of the familiar foreigner from Julia Kristeva; the theory of biomediation from Patricia Clough; anthropomorphism from Paul De Man and Maurice Blanchot; White's defamiliarization; the Freudian uncanny and the concept of repetition compulsion; Cathy Caruth's development of trauma theory; and the concept of anticipation as developed by Eugène Minkowski; all these terms are deployed in the four chapters of this thesis in order to establish the relationship between traumatized individuals and collectives. This thesis will analyze the literary narratives whose representation of war is definably

¹ Later in the Introduction I will examine Freud's, Beckett's, and Sartre's writings on war; in Chapter 2 and 3 I will rely on Antelme's work and Delbo's writings on surviving the extermination camp.

marked by the narration of traumatic affect. The key connection among the narratives selected as literary objects of investigation is that they narrate traumatic affect as a distinctive backdrop against which tensions and plots between individual and collective circumstances are played out in the past, present, and future.

The analysis will start with Stratis Myrivilis's war novel *Life in the Tomb*, which Myrivilis started writing in 1917 in modern Greek on the island of Lesbos where he was born.² The novel was published in serial form between 1923 and 1930, when it appeared in the form of a novel.³ Myrivilis's writings were shaped by his experience in multiple wars, as he volunteered to fight in the First Balkan War of 1912-1913, throughout the Great War as a reservist, and in the military campaign of Anatolia in 1922. He first published *Life in the Tomb* in 1923 after the Greek Great War campaign had essentially failed and his ideals and physical powers had almost been depleted, and as a novel it bears influences and echoes of past and future war traumas. Myrivilis's prose is seen as a turning point in Greek modernist literature, both in terms of language and narrative structure, but also in terms of inscribing political dilemmas of the time within an aesthetic and existentialist framework. Traumatic affect in its individual and collective aspects in *Life in the Tomb* figures prominently as the novel comprises the diary of unsent letters that soldier Andonis Kostoulas writes to his beloved from the Great War trenches on the Macedonian front.

Moving forward in chronological order and towards the West from a geographical point of view, Anna Kavan's collection of short stories *I am Lazarus* was published in 1945 towards the end of the Second World War and is considered to be a creative summation of Kavan's experiences working as a nurse in a military neurosis center in London.⁴ Kavan tells the stories of shell-shocked soldiers and details episodes from their lives in various medical institutions and the effect treatment has on them. Kavan's stories are concerned with traumatized bodies within institutions and the affect of the aftermath of war, however, she relates these collectively expressed affects with the soldiers' personal traumas.⁵

² Stratis Myrivilis, *Life in the Tomb*, trans. by Peter Bien (London: Quartet Books, 1987). Hereafter *LitT*. I will also be referring to the original Greek text in order to substantiate my argumentation. For the complete Greek edition of the novel, see Στράτης Μυριβήλης, *Η Ζωή εν Τάφω: Το Βιβλίο του Πολέμου* (Αθήνα: Βιβλιοπωλείον της Εστίας Ι.Δ. Κολλάρου & Σιας Α.Ε., 2008).

³ Although the serialized version of the novel began in April 1923, a chapter of the novel had already been published in 1917, and overall Myrivilis had been writing the novel since he was an army reserve in the Great War. I have chosen to refer to the time when Myrivilis started writing *Life in the Tomb*, if anything because between this first comprising of the novel and its very latest reworking by Myrivilis in 1932 exist almost two decades of political instability and events which shaped collective and individual affects.

Information on the publications of *Life in the Tomb* can be found in the Greek archived article Η «Ζωή εν Τάφω» χωρίς «βελτιώσεις», *Ελευθεροτυπία*, 26 November 1961

<<http://invenio.lib.auth.gr/record/16868/files/npa-2005-16427.pdf>> [accessed on 19/01/2016]

⁴ Anna Kavan, *I am Lazarus*, London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2013. While not all of Kavan's stories will be treated here in equal depth, the same vein runs through all of the collection.

⁵ Victoria Walker, Foreword, in *I am Lazarus* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2013), pp. 1-6.

Less than ten years after Kavan published her stories, Joseph Heller started writing *Catch-22*, a novel set in an imaginary reworking of the island of Pianosa in Italy during the Second World War.⁶ The protagonist of Heller's story is Yossarian, a defiant American soldier who becomes traumatized after he witnesses his close friend and fellow soldier Snowden die during an airstrike. The novel tells the episodic story of Yossarian's time in an American airbase. Although Heller started writing his novel in 1953 and used as his primary material some of his own experiences from the army, when the novel was finally published in 1961 it contained allusions to both the Second World War and the Vietnam War, as well as the climate of distrust and paranoia of the Cold War era. Heller's treatment of traumatic affect is most markedly depicted in his narration of collective spaces such as the army camp and the bombarded city, while zooming in and out of individual traumatized consciousness.

Equally popular and sharing the similar topic of soldier life zeroing in on a traumatizing incident is Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-5*, published in 1969.⁷ *Slaughterhouse-5* follows Billy Pilgrim's trajectory as a soldier in the north European front of the Second World War. Through a series of prolepses, metalepses, and analepses Billy's story is built up to the focal point of his trauma, which is the bombing of Dresden by the Allied forces towards the end of the war, an experience that Vonnegut himself survived as a soldier. Traumatic affect in Vonnegut's case is narrated through elements of intense metafiction as well as instances of science fiction. The narration of traumatic affect through constant switching of narrative time from the past to the future, the present, and to the past again forms a constellation of traumas within individual and collective temporalities.

Thomas Pynchon's novel *Gravity's Rainbow*, first published in 1973, describes various similar bombings of the Second World War as well as a multitude of other war operations.⁸ The title of the novel denotes the parabolic movement of the V-2 rocket's trajectory that is organically related to the literary tropology of the novel. Like *Slaughterhouse-5*, *Gravity's Rainbow* explicitly maps the individual and collective traumatic affect of the Second World War along the lines of the trauma of the Vietnam War.⁹ Divided into four parts, as an omniscient narrator follows Tyrone Slothrop's adventures around a war-stricken Europe, the novel traces Tyrone's trauma: he has been conditioned to spontaneously co-ordinate his sexual activities with war attacks, to the effect that Slothrop's sexual encounters end up forming an identical topography with the bombings in Europe.

⁶ Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (London: Vintage, 1994). Hereafter *C-22*.

⁷ Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-5* (London: Vintage, 2000). Hereafter *S-5*.

⁸ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006). Hereafter *GR*.

⁹ Christina Jarvis, 'The Vietnamization of World War II in *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Gravity's Rainbow*,' in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Slaughterhouse-5*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), pp. 61-84.

Paranoia, physical and mental trauma, and the role of the institutions, which constitute war as yet another market, feature obliquely among the four hundred characters and the numerous subplots of the novel, some of which are faithful to historical events, some of which are not. Most importantly, at the heart of *Gravity's Rainbow* lies its depiction of tragedy, terror, and traumatic affect as elements of what Steven Weisenburger claims 'stand[...] against that collective loss of memory.'¹⁰

The last part of *Gravity's Rainbow* starts with an allusion to the bombing of Hiroshima, taking the reader to the Japanese side of the war; so does Joy Kogawa with her 1981 novel *Obasan*.¹¹ Kogawa chronicles the evacuation, internment, and persecution of Canadian citizens of Japanese descent which took place following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The narrative oscillates between the trauma of the brutal evacuation of the Nissei, the second generation Japanese-Canadians from various cities of Canada, and the trauma of Naomi Nakane, whose whole family is dispersed. After Naomi visits her obasan (aunt) years after the war events, the narrative is driven by Naomi's reconstruction of her personal trauma. Naomi's personal trauma is originally perceived to be the loss of her mother, but as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that the real trauma is the doctrine of silence which her mother exemplified and passed on. *Obasan* is compiled by various types of texts, like most of the novels under investigation here; an extensive part of the novel is in the form of a diary of letters never sent, and much like the diary effect in *Life in the Tomb*, plays on the fact that *Obasan* is based on the real-life experiences of Kogawa.¹²

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie similarly recreates historical facts of another continent in her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, published in 2006.¹³ Pitting the personal stories of three main characters against the harsh facts of the Biafran war of independence in 1967-1970, Adichie accomplishes the narrative recreation of a set of traumatic affects of war. These affects function as the gears through which the plot moves forwards (and backwards as well, since prolepses and metalepses are not rare in Adichie's novel either), while the individual and collective identities develop more deeply. Drawing on her family's experiences as well

¹⁰ Steven Weisenburger, *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press 1988), p. 9.

¹¹ Joy Kogawa, *Obasan* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1981).

¹² The fictionalization of the historical facts of the internment of Japanese-Canadians at the beginning of the Second World War is extremely close to the objective reality and history, so much so, that *Obasan* was used as evidence in the 1988 trials held in Canada with the purpose of addressing the injustices committed towards the Japanese-Canadian populations according to Helena Grice et al, *Beginning Ethnic American Literatures* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001), p. 182. Kogawa went on to compile a tribute to the redress hearings which did justice to the Japanese-Canadians' fight, and she wrote what is considered to be the sequel to *Obasan*, a novel that follows Naomi into adulthood titled *Itsuka*, which is the Japanese word for 'someday.' Joy Kogawa, *Itsuka* (New York: Viking Press, 1992).

¹³ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006). Hereafter *HoaYS*.

as her life in a family of academics, Adichie sets her novel in the 1960s and talks about the private and public life choices of Odenigbo and Olanna, both young academics; of Olanna's cynical twin sister Kainene who has taken over the family's business; of Kainene's English lover and Biafran defender Richard; and last but not least, of Ugwu, the Igbo houseboy who serves Odenigbo and becomes the embodiment of eagerness to learn and develop. The characters' stories as well as interjections of other stories in the novel produce a network of affected bodies figuring in the representation of individual and collective histories during the Biafran-Nigerian civil war. What speaks to the heart of this research is Adichie's affective representation of trauma through a national prism and the networks of identity that this creates. In essence, Adichie showcases that on which the themes of this thesis converge: that an entire nation is constructed, organized, and upheld by the individual body, and the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the collective.

In the Beginning was War

Michel Foucault defined war as the force that shapes power relations in any given society. For Foucault, war is the mechanism through which the decision of what deserves to die, what deserves to live, and what deserves to be exposed to immeasurable danger is put into effect: 'war is about two things: it is not simply a matter of destroying a political adversary, but of destroying the enemy race, of destroying that [sort] of biological threat that those people over there represent to our race.'¹⁴ This biological threat is played out on the traumatized individual body, becoming a metonymy for the biopower that the state holds sway over, not only the other, foreign body, but also the body belonging to its very own race or order. The power that each state exercises in war, which is to wound, maim, and terminate the existence of an individual body, other or domestic, while simultaneously justifying this wounding by making claims that concern the entire human species is noticed by Foucault, who posits that 'we are [...] in a power that has taken control of both the body and life or that has [...] taken control of life in general—with the body as one pole and the population as the other.'¹⁵ Foucault establishes the metonymic relationship between individual body and social body during wartime, since, in wounding the individual body en masse, the enemy and domestic collective body are both affected.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, '*Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, Vol. 1, trans. by David Macey, ed. by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 1997), p. 257.

¹⁵ Foucault, '*Society Must Be Defended*,' p. 253.

Foucault goes on to argue that the biopower that the modern state exercises over the individual relies on racism, meaning the supposedly necessary expulsion of the abnormal individual, with the ultimate goal of creating a pure society, free from the defiling force of the other: ‘racism makes it possible to establish a relationship between my life and the death of the other that is not military or warlike relationship of confrontation, but a biological-type relationship.’¹⁶ What Foucault refrains from doing, however, is to prescribe or even describe the type of relationship between the individual body and the collective, as it emerges during war. This relationship is crucial since what Foucault calls ‘the classic, archaic mechanism that gave the State the right to life and death over its citizens, and the new mechanism organized around discipline and regulation, or in other words, the new mechanism of biopower’ both rely on the traumatized individual body, or, more accurately, on its capacity to become traumatized.¹⁷ This is the dynamic that will be explored in this thesis: considering that, during war, the existence of the collective is upheld or circumvented through the individual body’s exposure to trauma, it is logical that individuality and collectivity form a complex that is marked indelibly by war trauma.

The role of the individual within the collective has been represented in an infinite number of literary war narratives since the Homeric times, and although trauma could potentially be detected, war and its narrative representation has explicitly been equated with trauma only since the beginning of the twentieth century. As Andreas Mehl writes in relation to post-traumatic stress disorder,

the history of the concept of trauma, both individual and collective, is quite short and it is connected with two wars: the First World War and the American-Vietnamese War have shaped the idea that men belonging to certain groups have been [...] affected severely by the same situation in the same way.¹⁸

Thus, one of the parameters in the exploration of the tropes through which the relationship between traumatized individual and collective in war narratives is expressed, must be the fact that they have been written during or after the Great War.

The existence of a tropology in representing war trauma is of utmost importance and emerges strongly, albeit fragmentarily, in a number of contemporary studies. Critical

¹⁶ Foucault, ‘*Society Must Be Defended*,’ p. 255.

¹⁷ Foucault, ‘*Society Must Be Defended*,’ p. 260.

¹⁸ Andreas Mehl, ‘Individual and Collective Psychiatric Traumas in Ancient Historiographical Literature,’ in *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions: Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond*, Vol 2, ed. by Eve-Marie Becker et al. (Göttingen: Hubert & Co, 2014), pp. 244-61, (p. 250).

scholarship on war writing after the unprecedented mass nature of the Great War trauma has focused on two fields of concern: firstly, the incommensurability between public stories and historical records on the one hand, and private stories and testimonies on the other. As Adam Piette notes, ‘the public stories stressed vital resistance, public heroism, stoic good humour; the private stories are stories about broken minds [and bodies] anaesthetized feelings, deep depression and a loss of any sense of value,’ as well as ‘cock-ups, army indoctrination, fear of the new mechanisms of military technology, satire levelled against the vicious playground of war.’¹⁹ This difference between public and private war writing features not only in terms of content, but also in terms of form, and it becomes evident after the Great War. Randall Stevenson argues that 1916 is the year when textual representation of war is challenged, partly due to new technologies and economies, but primarily because of ‘the wilder, stranger, almost unimaginable world language had to represent—far beyond familiar experience for serving soldiers.’²⁰ This traumatic unfamiliarity of the world found its way into literary narration in the form of certain patterns. In her research on the representation of violence in twentieth century novels, Lidia Yuknavich recognizes these narrative patterns, maintaining that

First and Second World War novels marked not only the end of a certain experience of history, they marked as well the end of certain models of representation. They reflect a deep disturbance in language and meaning characteristic of the modernist novel in general and exemplified by the use of narrative strategies such as double entendres [...] the interruption of narrative with other devices of language such as ellipses, parenthesis, and syntactic fragmentation [...] and the juxtaposition of narrative against other major forms of ‘recording’ life, such as journalism.²¹

In short, war trauma at the beginning of the twentieth century ushered in a new form of literary representation, largely because, as Stevenson suggests, the Great ‘War’s outbreak moved beyond the familiar suddenly enough to pitch the whole population beyond ordinary experience and almost into the domain of myth.’²²

The fact that literary narratives attempt to narrate a war of mythical proportions relates to the second focal point of the critical writing on literary war narratives, namely that,

¹⁹ Adam Piette, *Imagination at War* (London: Macmillan Books, 1995), p. 5.

²⁰ Randall Stevenson, *Literature and the Great War 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013), p. 8.

²¹ Lidia Yuknavich, *Allegories of Violence: Tracing the Writing of War in Late Twentieth-Century Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 16.

²² Stevenson, p. 9.

invariably, language proves to be inadequate for representing war trauma. As Paul Fussell writes, ‘one of the cruxes of the war [...] is the collision between events and the language available—or thought appropriate—to describe them,’ and, in any case, ‘the presumed inadequacy of language itself is one of the motifs of all who wrote about the war.’²³ The inadequacy to narrate a war of epic dimensions such as the Great War (although it needs to be pointed out that every war, no matter how small or large in scale is of epic dimensions for those involved) is discussed by Kate McLoughlin, who argues that ‘the gap between the [traumatic] experience and the representation of conflict can be narrowed but never completely eliminated.’²⁴ According to McLoughlin, attempts to narrow this gap between actual traumatic experience and representation become part of the Homeric narrative trope termed ‘adynaton,’ which is ‘the mother of all diversionary tactics,’ and reveals ‘the presence, in war, of certain qualities of excessiveness and ineffability.’²⁵ For McLoughlin, every time that an author directly or indirectly speaks of the ineffability of trauma, launches ‘a miniature may-day, a distress-flare declaring a representational state of emergency,’ which also becomes ‘a cause of celebration marking the moment when representative possibilities are released,’ figuring as ‘the beginning, as well as the end, of communication.’²⁶ In other words, McLoughlin argues that the trope of the adynaton is a way of writing about war while not-writing about war.²⁷ While it is acknowledged in the present thesis that the premise on which the representation of war trauma relies in the selected narratives is the ineffability of war and the disservice that language pays to the articulation of war trauma, my contention is that, in the literature under discussion, the difficulty to write about war trauma is tackled by deploying various literary tropes that will be discussed in the main body of the thesis.

Stevenson’s claim that the affective experience of the Great War belongs to the domain of myth, and McLoughlin’s definition of the inexpressibility of trauma as both a limitation and a revelation of meaning, bring the representation of war trauma in the realm of the sublime. McLoughlin relates the sublime as developed by Longinus and expanded on by Kant with terror, and argues that the sublime encapsulates the terrifying but also pleasurable effect that understanding itself is a process forever to remain incomplete.²⁸ Alex Houen discusses the sublime in relation to the ‘war on terror’ after September 9/11 and argues that,

²³ Paul Fussell, *Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013), p. 169.

²⁴ Kate McLoughlin, *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), p. 20.

²⁵ McLoughlin, p. 153.

²⁶ McLoughlin, p. 157.

²⁷ McLoughlin, p. 152.

²⁸ McLoughlin, p. 155.

when it comes to war, ‘far from converting terror into pleasure the sublime remains rooted in trauma.’²⁹ Houen relates the sublime to the traumatic experience, stating that, just like the traumatic event, the sublime ‘raises questions about one’s powers of comprehension before one can pose questions about it.’³⁰ This connection is important for this thesis because, as McLoughlin and Houen note, the sublime experience of war trauma, whether the latter belongs to wars of Homeric ages or to the ‘war on terror,’ is conveyed through the use of specific tropes and patterns. For McLoughlin, the ‘adynaton’ is one such trope in literature, and for Houen, such tropes in film representation of the 9/11 attack have included editing and camera techniques. The sublimity of trauma means relinquishing all meaning while at the same time insisting on a relentless quest for it, and in its literary representation, the sublime traumatic experience reveals, as I will show, a tropology of representation.

The paradoxical pair of affective excess and inability to comprehend or convey that excess are exposed by the sublime and correspond to the twofold aspect of the traumatic affect in narrative representation, namely its ubiquity and deferred iterability on the one hand, and the need for a tropology of affective representation that surpasses or circumvents ineffability on the other. From this starting point, the following chapters will explore the type of tropes engendered by the traumatized body in the war narrative, and the repetitive and compulsive narration of war trauma in texts whose narration stretches beyond the specifics of historical events, places, and timeframes.³¹ Contrary to Freud’s one-track movement of repetition compulsion, where the individual repeats or re-enacts the traumatic event, thus producing the same results, this thesis will examine the repetition of war trauma, and of other traumas within it, as a way to make sense of what can be called the ‘originary’ trauma. What is referred to as originary trauma in my thesis, is based on what Freud terms the ‘*urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things* which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces.’³² This state that precedes the dissolution of a wholeness experienced by man can be compared to a pre-traumatic state, and the consistent effort to return to the wholeness may denote the continuous post-traumatic stress. Wyatt Bonikowski explicitly relates war trauma to Freud’s originary trauma:

²⁹ Alex Houen, ‘Sacrifice and the Sublime since 11 September 2001,’ in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-century British and American War Literature*, ed. by Adam Piette and Mark Rawlinson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2012), pp.251-63, (p. 254).

³⁰ Houen, p. 252.

³¹ The Freudian echo here is not intentional: the war trauma narratives seem to be examples of Freud’s repetition compulsion, where an individual relives a traumatic experience over and over again, however, this is only on the surface. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle: Group Psychology and Other Works*, Vol. XVIII, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955).

³² Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, pp. 308-09, emphasis in the original.

Is it possible that war trauma ultimately refers back to an originary trauma of this kind? Could we see the repetition compulsion not simply as a response to a lack of preparedness for anxiety but as an attempt to return to an earlier state of wholeness prior to the traumatic experience? Such a return is made impossible not just because the traumatic event—whether a single event of violence witnessed or undergone or a series of wartime stresses and strains—has already happened, but because it is doubled with an originary trauma that renders illusory all search for innocent ‘earlier states.’³³

In Bonikowski’s reading, war trauma is never singular, but rather refers back to an instinctive originary trauma. In my thesis, I read each war trauma as referring not only to a past originary trauma in the Freudian sense, but also to a future anticipated trauma.³⁴

Trauma as an Affective Experience

Following this reading of trauma, which does not only refer to a single person or a singular timeframe, I view war trauma as a traumatic affect, arguing that the amalgamation of traumatic affects takes the form of an enunciation and gives shape to new assemblages between the individual and the collective with each repetition. Cathy Caruth defines trauma as an event whose

pathology consists [...] solely in the structure of its experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or an event.³⁵

Two strands of trauma and its representation stem from this definition and they are both equally important. The first strand concerns the late and repetitive character of the experience of trauma in terms of time. The second strand brings into play the idea of being possessed, of being not-self, and of trauma turning the individual into something else. Anne Whitehead qualifies Caruth’s definition when she argues that ‘trauma emerges as that which,

³³ Wyatt Bonikowski, *Shell Shock and the Modernist Imagination: The Death Drive in Post-World War I British Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 46.

³⁴ Anticipation for a future trauma is explored in Chapter Four of this thesis.

³⁵ Cathy Caruth, ed., ‘Trauma and Experience: Introduction,’ in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1995), pp. 3-12, (pp. 4-5).

at the very moment of its reception, registers as non-experience, causing conventional epistemologies to falter.³⁶ In a sense, it can be argued that trauma exists outside of any language structure. Whitehead emphasizes this by suggesting that ‘trauma carries the force of a literality which renders it resistant to narrative structures and linear temporalities,’³⁷ and it is this literality that prevents trauma from being narratable.

This literality may be overcome to an extent by employing literary tropes when narrating war trauma, regardless of whether the war trauma narratives come from survivor testimonies or novels recounting traumatic events, written either by survivors or authors suffering from transgenerational trauma. For Kalí Tal, ‘literature of trauma holds at its center the reconstruction and recuperation of the traumatic experience, but it is also actively engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the writings and representations of nontraumatized authors,’ thus forming a network of traumatic representation.³⁸ In terms of trauma narratives written by survivors, Jenny Edkins discusses the need for a different consideration of the format and structure of the narratives, as ‘there is no language to express what the survivor wishes to say.’³⁹ Edkins’s statement reveals the impasse of trauma related narratives, namely that, in order for a trauma narrative to be successful, it cannot contain language as we know it and, in any case, a language suitable to narrate trauma has not necessarily been invented yet. Parallel to Edkins’s point but suggesting a more active approach, Caruth proposes that a new trope must be placed at the center of the discussion of trauma. Caruth makes a strong case that each trauma narrative, be it literary or theoretical, asks the question of how trauma can be narrated through ‘a language that defies, even as it claims, our understanding.’⁴⁰ Caruth’s aligning of theoretical, survivor, and literary texts that narrate trauma is largely the reason why although I will be close-reading literary texts to trace the pattern of the narration of trauma, I will also be relying on testimonies such as Holocaust survivors Robert Antelme’s *The Human Race* and Charlotte Delbo’s *Days and Memory* in order to trace the prevalent tropes of narrating war trauma.⁴¹

³⁶ Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), p. 5.

³⁷ Whitehead, p. 5. Whitehead’s contribution to literary trauma studies is of great value, as she dislodges trauma from the medical and scientific discourse and traces the literary techniques employed in fiction with the purpose of narrating traumatizing unnarratable experiences. Whitehead’s objects of trauma analysis ranges from literature of racism to fiction about immigration and otherness.

³⁸ Kalí Tal, *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), p. 17. Tal deals with the representation of trauma through the discourse of the dominant culture and brings together different types of trauma and trauma narratives from the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, and sexual abuse of women and children, fact which speaks to trauma’s interconnectedness.

³⁹ Edkins, p. 18.

⁴⁰ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2010).

⁴¹ Robert Antelme, *The Human Race*, trans. by Jeffrey Haight and Annie Mahler (Evanston: Marlboro Press, 1992) and Charlotte Delbo, *Days and Memory*, trans. by Rosette Lamont (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2001).

There has been skepticism in recognizing trauma literature as a legitimate part of trauma theory. Edkins points out that discussing trauma within its literary representation is not without dangers and she overall dismisses the literature of trauma on the grounds of being a logocentric framework within which the voice of the traumatized individual is lost in favour of a collective remembrance. Dominick LaCapra supports this view and identifies some of the existing master narratives that represent trauma, while appropriating the notion of traumatropism, from the field of botanology, to define the process of the representation of trauma through a myth of origins: ‘traumatropism includes the founding trauma as myth of origins, but it may also involve other transformations of trauma, often moving in the same “postsecular” orbit as the foundational or originary trauma.’⁴² LaCapra thus problematizes the foundation of narratives of trauma through which the traumatized subjects are narrativized as, for example, ‘martyrs or saints,’ and through which ‘traumatizing activity itself may be experienced by perpetrators as somehow elevating and exhilarating, if not as sublime.’⁴³ This, according to LaCapra, reinforces trauma’s unreadability while at the same time making the question of how trauma can be read and if it is worth being read even more pressing. What is interesting regarding the traumatropisms of which LaCapra speaks, is that he describes the effect that they may have (for example, traumatropisms for LaCapra could be any recurrent symptoms, such as nightmares, that the traumatized may be experiencing) as bonding. Although LaCapra employs the concept of traumatropism to designate various patterns through which trauma is repeated in everyday life, not only as a destructive force but also as a bonding one (and in that sense, my investigation of tropes is similar to traumatropisms), he contends that trauma is mainly incapacitating and forever unnarratable. In other words, whereas for LaCapra repetition with change is highly unlikely, in my reading of war trauma representation in literature, I argue that the repetition of war trauma that takes place is a means to an end and contains elements of change and resolution, not only for the individual, but also for the collectivity.

Even though war trauma verges on the unnarratable, according to Caruth, ‘it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available.’⁴⁴ If the wound has a story, then the story must follow a pattern through which the traumatized individual or collectivity attempt to make their story known and transmit an understanding of the traumatizing event(s). What seems to be recurrent here is the idea that the discussion of bodily trauma (and psychic trauma as well,

⁴² Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2014) p. xiv.

⁴³ LaCapra, p. xiv.

⁴⁴ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 3.

since one cannot really be without the other) cannot be extricated from the search for meaning and representation within personal and political, individual and collective narratives.

This leads me to focus on the affective aspects of trauma. Although trauma is, in the strictest sense, an affect, the implications of the traumatic affect in politics and culture has recently started to be explored in Meera Atkinson's and Michael Richardson's collection of essays titled *Traumatic Affect*.⁴⁵ The connective thread within this collection is demarcated through the definition of traumatic affect:

Traumatic affect can [...] be understood as the mode, substance and dynamics of relation through which trauma is experienced, transmitted, conveyed, and represented. Traumatic affect crosses boundaries, between personal and political, text and body, screen and audience, philosophy and culture.⁴⁶

Instead of starting and ending in the individual's psyche, an affect is called that because it is not situated in any one place, but rather, dynamically fluctuates from one individual to another, and from one timeframe to the next. As Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley put it in their 2007 edition of collected essays on the theory of affect, 'the affective turn [...] expresses a new configuration of bodies, technology, and matter instigating a shift in thought in critical theory.'⁴⁷ This new configuration has had a profound impact on how war traumatic affect is conceived and represented in culture. Even from the outset of affect theory in Freud's 1895 study, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, affect has been defined as a reverberation of a painful experience caused by the surge of psychic and bodily energy that memory brings about. For Freud, a painful affect is triggered when an individual re-experiences a memory: 'If the memory-image of the (hostile) [i.e. the pain-giving] object is in any manner freshly cathected (e.g., by fresh perceptions), a condition arises which is not

⁴⁵ Meera Atkinson and Michael Richardson, eds, *Traumatic Affect* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013). The editors of this collection acknowledge the conception of the traumatic affect as belonging to Shoshana Felman, whose essay 'Benjamin's Silence,' written in 1999, is the first one in the collection and, despite the fact that Felman does not mention the term affect, sets the tone for the realization of traumatic affect as a concept.

⁴⁶ Atkinson and Richardson, p. 12. Atkinson and Richardson acknowledge certain dangers in approaching trauma as an affect, which could be interpreted as the danger of reducing whole wars, cultures, and collectivities to their bodily implications or the danger of describing vague and disembodied affects without a substantial exemplification. The present study will avoid these dangers by firmly grounding both concepts into concrete materializations of war trauma within specific cultural, national, and historical literary contexts, while at the same time using close-reading examples from the trauma narratives to substantiate the arguments.

⁴⁷ Clough, Introduction, p. 2.

pain but has a similarity to pain.’⁴⁸ Freud qualifies this statement by arguing that a memory does not have to be a painful one, but could also be the cause of a wish or desire that extends into the future. Although this theory was supported by Freud through obscure and rather shaky arguments, leading him to disavow it later in his life, it later evolved into Freud’s theory on drives and repetition compulsion, and it is crucial for affect theory and the present thesis in particular, on account of two reasons: firstly, Freud places the organic body in the center of the production of affect, thus giving priority to the corporeal experience, which in turn extends beyond the confines of the individual body; and secondly, he explicitly relates affective response to the reliving of a past memory and a wish for the future, therefore, attributing to affect access to timeframes other than the present.

These two fields of inquiry have preoccupied contemporary research on affect and are the two affective axes on which my thesis revolves. Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth relate their collection of essays to affect as belonging to the individual body and mind as much as it partakes of the past and future world that surrounds the individual:

Affect is integral to a body’s perpetual *becoming* (always becoming otherwise, however subtly, than what it already is), pulled beyond its seeming surface-boundedness by way of its relation to, indeed its composition through, the forces of encounter. With affect, a body is as much outside itself as in itself—webbed in its relations—until ultimately such firm distinctions cease to matter.⁴⁹

Given the dynamic nature of affect, and especially war trauma as a complex of affects, this thesis problematizes what Gregg and Seigworth term affective becoming, and traces the trajectory of this becoming from individuality to collectivity.

Additionally, what Gregg and Seigworth refer to and is also another point of departure when discussing affect, is that through its virtually endless number of emotional manifestations, affect trails with it emerging imaginings of the human body and psyche that transcend specific timeframes: affect ‘cast[s] illumination upon the “not yet” of a body’s doing, casting a line along the hopeful (though also fearful) cusp of an emergent futurity, casting its lot with the infinitely connectable, interpersonal, and contagious belongings to *this* world.’⁵⁰ In other words, the expression of an affect reveals not only the past and present

⁴⁸ Sigmund Freud, ‘Project for a Scientific Psychology,’ in *The origins of psycho-analysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, drafts and notes: 1887-1902*, ed. by Marie Bonaparte et al., trans. by James Strachey et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1954), pp. 347-445, (pp. 381-382).

⁴⁹ Gregg and Seigworth, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, eds., ‘An Inventory of Shimmers,’ in *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke UP, 2010), pp. 1-28, (p. 4), emphasis in the original.

mental, psychological, and bodily state of a being, but is also telling of its future. This is similar to how Ruth Stein deploys the term in her study *Psychoanalytic Theories of Affect*; according to Stein, the term ‘affect’ ‘reckons with two dimensions of affect, a bodily, mainly visceral reaction and a psychic dimension, [...] the former being the condition for the latter.’⁵¹ Stein here lays the foundations of affect as a bodily and psychic response. André Green as well, who has been researching affect from a psychoanalytic point of view for more than three decades, supports the fact that affect and the body have a prominent relationship, stating that ‘affects are psychic phenomena which display their links with the biological organism in a powerfully suggestive way.’⁵² In that sense, the encounter with affect can potentially alter the biological configuration not only of a singular organism, but of an entire collectivity.

Much like the theory of affect, trauma theory is also concerned with the individual’s trajectory within the collectivity. According to Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone, trauma theory is ‘perhaps less a field or a methodology, than a coming together of concerns and disciplines,’⁵³ while ‘issues of trauma theory are characterized by a “knot” tying together representation, the past, the self, the political and suffering.’⁵⁴ Roger Luckhurst, too, describes the rise of the concept of trauma ‘as an exemplary conceptual knot’ made up of ‘imbroglios [...] that seem to emerge somewhere between the natural and the man-made and that tangle up questions of science, law, technology, capitalism, politics, medicine and risk.’⁵⁵ This idea of trauma as the tangling up of several notions is also stressed by Michael Rothberg, who explains that ‘the problem of individual psychic suffering became “tangled up” with an array of the larger problems of modernity, including industrialization, bureaucracy, and war.’⁵⁶ It can therefore be seen that the concept of trauma brings forth an array of affective entanglements of the individual and the collective, forming assemblages between them.

⁵¹ Ruth Stein, *Psychoanalytic Theories of Affect* (London: Karnac Books, 1999), p. 126.

⁵² André Green, *Fabric of Affect in the Psychoanalytic Discourse*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 281.

⁵³ Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone, Introduction, in *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2013) pp. 1-8. (p. 3).

⁵⁴ Buelens, Durrant, and Eaglestone, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London: Routledge, 2013) pp. 14-15.

⁵⁶ Michael Rothberg, ‘Preface: Beyond Tancred and Clorinda—trauma studies for implicated subjects,’ in *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*, ed. by Gert Buelens, Samuel Durrant and Robert Eaglestone (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. xi-xviii, (p. xi).

Troping the Affect

This thesis focuses on these affective assemblages caused by trauma and existing between individual organism and collective body, between past and future, and the representation of these assemblages through a literary tropology. The importance of representing affect through semantic tools has been touched on by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, in their essay on Tomkins's foundational, interdisciplinary study *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (1963), which contained the groundbreaking idea that an affect lies between the reception of any given information and the individual's response. In their essay, Kosofsky Sedgwick and Frank use Tomkins's work as a starting point to deconstruct binaries both about affect and affect theory itself, as well as trace the network of representation that affect theory activates, especially in comparison to other means of representation, such as the supposed objectivity of facts. However, what I would like to focus on, is their discussion of Tomkins's syntax in his work:

A postmodern syntax that seems to vitiate the very possibility of understanding motive by pluralizing it as if mechanically, infinitely, seems with the same gesture to proffer semantic tools so irresistibly usable that they bind one ever more imaginatively and profoundly to the local possibilities of an individual psychology.⁵⁷

Kosofsky Sedgwick and Frank trace a parallel between the plurality of affects and the plural, infinitesimal even, structure of Tomkins's affect theorizing. I take what the authors call 'the local possibilities of an individual psychology' to denote the infinite number of assemblages that an individual's psyche and body can create, assemblages which, in turn, can be represented by semantic tools that the literary text provides, such as metaphor and synecdoche, in order to establish relationships not only between words, but most importantly, between traumatized individuals. Affect then, can be defined for the purposes of this thesis as a relational emotional valence which, far from being limited by the psyche and body of the individual who experiences it, constitutes a link of an inexhaustible chain of other affects, bodies, individuals, assemblages, and collectivities. Based on this definition, the representation of war is viewed in this thesis as a cornucopia of assemblages triggered by the affect of trauma, and represented through various tropes.

⁵⁷ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, 'Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins,' *Critical Inquiry*, 21. 2, (1995) 496-522, (p. 509).

The existence of tropes in literature is inherently related with war trauma narratives. Hayden White writes that, generally, tropes in discourse

generate figures of speech or thought by their variation from what is ‘normally’ expected, and by the associations they establish between concepts normally felt not to be related or to be related in ways different from the suggested in the trope used.⁵⁸

The war narratives that interest me fit into White’s category of what discourse is, since they are not compositions that rely on logic, and at the same time, are not entirely fictitious, but rather narrate historical events.⁵⁹ This is important because White describes the existence of tropes as endemic within discourse, since discourse aims at bringing an experience to the reader’s consciousness or understanding. When it comes to war literature, the intention of these narratives is to make the traumatic affect intelligible and raise it to the reader’s understanding. In short, White maintains that any type of discourse cannot exist without a tropology, and that this tropology manifests more often than not in extra-logical and unfamiliar structures, in order to dislocate a particular premise from its stalemate position.⁶⁰ Following this and remembering Piette, Stevenson, and Yuknavich, this is precisely the connection between narrative tropes and the representation of war trauma at the turn of the twentieth century: to make the ineffable war trauma intelligible, authors writing trauma after the turn of the century employ a set of narrative tropes centering on war trauma’s ubiquity and ineffability.

The study of these narrative tropes and how they evolve in post-Great War literature lies at the core of this thesis, and my argument is twofold: firstly, I argue that, in order to represent war trauma in its mass scale, post-Great War authors employ narrative tropes that center on the traumatized human and animal body; and secondly, that in its tropological representation, the traumatized body becomes a token of the traumatized collectivity. My approach relies on the premise that the traumatic affect does not only concern the traumatized individual, but rather informs, interacts with, and alters collective existence as well. Tomkins argues that the general role of every affect is to communicate information not only to the organism itself, but also to the others.⁶¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari relate individual affect with the collectivity, stating that

⁵⁸ Hayden White, *The Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1985), p. 2

⁵⁹ White, *Tropics*, p. 3.

⁶⁰ White, *Tropics*, p. 3.

⁶¹ Silvan S. Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, LCC, 2008), p. 7.

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join it in composing a more powerful body.⁶²

In the case of war trauma writing, the individual body cannot be represented until its capacity to be affected or destroyed and rebuilt is expressed.⁶³ The affective experience contained in the individual's body, then, transforms not only the individual but also the collectivity. As such, tropical representations of trauma in war literature trigger affective assemblages, in the Deleuzian sense, between individuals and collectivities within space and time, which have not yet been explored.⁶⁴ Following the paradigm of Deleuze and Guattari, assemblages concern the time and space 'territory' where an animal or human acts and re-acts (the notion of repetition is intended).⁶⁵ The assemblage consists of codified fragments of existence which are always fluid and exchanged, while at the same time superseding or defying existing linguistic systems. In the case of war trauma, each traumatized body responds affectively, and this affective response creates a chain of affects that cannot be contained within an individual body, or within a specific timeframe and location.

This reshaping of the collectivity and the assemblages that traumatic affect generates extend into the future. In *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, Marianne Hirsch raises significant questions about the connections created by the testimony of trauma as well as its visual representation between individuals and collectivities from one generation to the next. These questions, Hirsch argues, are topical due to

⁶² Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 2004), p. 300.

⁶³ This notion is termed anthropomorphism by Antelme and is explored in Chapter Two.

⁶⁴ In spite of the plethora of works on war trauma and its impact on individuals and collectivities as depicted in various narrative testimonials, the representation of war trauma as a trope in literature has not been pursued systematically. A few seminal works on the non-fictional narration of war trauma include Nigel C. Hunt, *Memory, War and Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010); Helmut Schmitz and Annette Seidel-Arpaci, eds., *Narratives of Trauma: Discourses of German Wartime Suffering in National and International Perspective* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011); Raymond Monsour Scurfield and Katherine Theresa Platoni, eds., *War Trauma and its Wake: Expanding the Circle of Healing* (New York: Routledge, 2013). Although these works are important analyses of trauma, they strictly refer to historical trauma and its narrative testimony. Conversely, in this thesis, the narrative, fictional representation of war trauma will be explored.

⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 1-27.

the multiplication of genocides and collective catastrophes at the end of the twentieth century and during the first decade of the twenty-first, and their cumulative effects [...] The bodily, psychic, and affective impact of trauma and its aftermath, the ways in which one trauma can recall, or reactivate, the effects of another, exceed the bounds of traditional historical archives and methodologies.⁶⁶

Hirsch goes on to talk about what she terms ‘postmemory,’ meaning the traumatic memories of second generations, passed on to these generations through visual representation and storytelling; while her approach relies mainly on non-fictional Holocaust testimonies, Hirsch unlocks what lies at the core of the present research: the turn to representations of trauma, other than the ones provided by the historical archive, as a means of making sense of the affective assemblages that the trope of trauma creates, in terms of collective experience, landscape, and time, is worth exploring.

My reading of the literary representation of the traumatic affect of war focuses on two axes. The horizontal axis of this representation bears its individual and collective aspect, while the vertical axis spans the timeframe from past to future. By providing a typology of the representation of traumatic affect in war narratives, it will become evident that the traumatized individual body works metonymically to denote the collective war trauma as that is manifested in the collective identity, the collective scape, the collective mind, and the collective timeframe. These four components will be exposed in four chapters, using narratives as case studies to construct the typology of the trope of the traumatized body. The narratives that have been selected share a number of key features: they have all been written after the turn of the twentieth century, thus embodying the narrative shift discussed by Yuknavich; they narrate fictional individual stories set in historically accurate contexts; and although they are diverse both in origin, as they have been written by different ethnicities and narrate different wars, as well as in mode of narration and storytelling techniques, they all deploy the trope of the traumatized body and collective to narrate the events of war.

I have based my choice of narratives that will be explored on their depiction of traumatic affect as a means of negotiating the individual’s position(s) within national identity, collective spaces, history, and ultimately within the space-time continuum. Every fictional narration of war trauma, and every narration of traumatized characters and places, is not just an isolated articulation of trauma, but rather an allusion to a series of real war

⁶⁶ Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia UP, 2012), p. 2.

traumas that span hundreds of years, where bodies, spaces, minds, and timeframes acquire specific symbolisms regardless of the different circumstances under which each war broke out. It is important to note that the constructed typology of this thesis is not only relevant for the selected narratives discussed here, but could be applied to every literary text written after the beginning of the twentieth century and professing (directly or indirectly) the inarticulability of trauma. For every such text, a set of questions is yielded: what is the relationship between trauma and national identity? What kind of human and animal bodies and minds does trauma produce? What kind of narrative does the affective representation of trauma engender? How is the space of trauma represented? In what ways does the traumatized body correlate to the traumatized mind? How does the trope of the traumatized body enable the articulation of past and future collective catastrophes?

The Persistence of Affect

Affective response to war is ever-present in psychological, testimonial, and philosophical writings of wartime. Three singular test cases offer poignant illustration of this persistence: in Freud's, Samuel Beckett's, and Jean Paul Sartre's writings on the Great War and the Second World War, the affected individual becomes a means of articulating a collective response to war trauma. When Freud strolled in the Dolomitan countryside with poet Rainer Maria Rilke and psychoanalyst Lou Andreas-Salomé one summer afternoon in 1913, the Great War was about to break. For Freud and his companions, the war was to be a trauma of epic proportions, the anticipation of which unearthed everything beautiful, familiar, and aspirational; for twenty-first century contemporaries, the Great War is the memory of a trauma incessantly repeated in the never-ending knowledge of war traumas and catastrophes bombarding us by the minute. But Freud could not have predicted this. Instead, the conversation among Freud, his 'silent friend,' and the 'well-known poet' took a melancholic turn, not on account of the impending war alone, but on account of the realization that the beauty of the Dolomites and all beauty and artistry of that time, were to be annihilated, if not by war, then by time itself.⁶⁷

Whether accurate in its detail or not, this event inspired Freud to write his essay 'On Transience' right before the war reached his hometown, Vienna, in 1915.⁶⁸ The subject of

⁶⁷ Sigmund Freud, 'On Transience,' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 305-307. For an insightful discussion of Freud's essay, see Matthew von Unwerth, *Freud's Requiem: Mourning, Memory, and the Invisible History of a Summer Walk* (London: Continuum, 2006)

⁶⁸ As evidenced by von Unwerth, it is very likely that the meeting among the three friends did not take place under the circumstances which Freud describes. Von Unwerth, p. 4.

Freud's short essay is his friends' shock at the realization of their works' transience, as well as their own and their surrounding world's. Freud documents their reaction:

No, it cannot be that all these wonders of nature and art, of our emotional world and the world outside, should dissolve into nothing. It would be too senseless and too wicked to believe it. Such beauty must be able to go on existing in some way, far from all destructive influences.⁶⁹

This reaction becomes the subject of analysis for Freud in his essay, and as he touches on three aspects of life that were profoundly affected by the war (art falling into ruin, philosophy misunderstood, and geography altered), Freud contemplates the effect of transience itself as that which makes beauty all the more valuable and which impresses it in our psyche enduringly throughout time.⁷⁰

This train of thought, irresistibly logical for Freud, leads him to form two beliefs. Firstly, that his friends' reaction of dismay at the potential decay of all nature and culture is but 'a strong affective element disturbing their judgement,' an element which Freud immediately recognizes as 'the foretaste of grief over [...] destruction.'⁷¹ In other words, Freud assesses the affective impact of the impending catastrophe on Rilke's and Salomé's response and calls it an affect of premature grief. The second belief that Freud forms is that no matter how one wishes to hold on to their objects of desire, be they literal or metaphorical, after these objects of desire are destroyed, substitute objects of desire will always be readily available; the fact that one will simply not let go of their objects of desire even though they may be gone is what Freud calls mourning.

The second part of Freud's essay changes pace. Freud is now a witness to the unbridled trauma and the subsequent mourning that the war has brought, however, he is wilfully optimistic in saying that

mourning, however painful it may be, comes to an end of its own accord. Once it has renounced everything that is lost, it has also consumed itself [...] so that, as long as we are still young and active, [we] are able to replace the lost objects with objects that are, where possible, equally precious, or with still more precious new ones.⁷²

⁶⁹ Freud, 'On Transience,' p. 305.

⁷⁰ Freud, 'On Transience,' p. 198.

⁷¹ Freud, 'On Transience,' p. 198.

⁷² Freud, 'On Transience,' p. 199.

Freud here appears to be considering the affective response of mourning as a necessary step, not only for the individual, but also for the collective (signified by his use of the pronoun ‘we’), an affect which will eventually support the rebuilding of all that is lost within the violent whirlwind of war. The affect of mourning then, becomes necessary for articulating (‘renouncing,’ Freud says) the trauma of war: ‘we will once again build up everything that the war has destroyed, perhaps on firmer foundations and more lastingly than before.’⁷³ Freud was certain that the mourning for the Great War would eventually be overcome, but, alas, mourning had only just started as this war was followed by traumas which only exceeded their predecessors in horror. What is striking in Freud’s essay, is his conviction that the rebuilding will indeed take place and that transience, is itself transient, as beauty is sure to blossom once again. Freud, therefore, is convinced that the affect of mourning that heals is an automatic response to the trauma of war.

A good thirty years later, at the end of another war, even more destructive and disheartening than the previous one, an Irishman writes about his participation in the rebuilding of the historic French city of Saint-Lô after allied bombing short of obliterated it. The reference is to Beckett’s 1946 essay ‘The Capital of the Ruins,’ which he wrote after taking part in the Irish Red Cross’s sustained effort to revive and rebuild the city.⁷⁴

On what a year ago was a grass slope, lying in the angle that the Vire and Bayeux roads make as they unite at the entrance of the town, opposite what remains of the second most important stud-farm in France, a general hospital now stands. It is the Hospital of the Irish Red Cross in Saint-Lô, or, as the Laudiniens themselves say, the Irish Hospital.⁷⁵

Beckett’s essay was originally conceived as part of a radio broadcast that never materialized and, despite its very short length, speaks to the aftermath of war trauma quite poignantly, listing one by one the steps taken by the Irish Red Cross to raise a much needed hospital from the ground:

The buildings consist of some 25 prefabricated wooden huts [...] Their finish, as well without as within, is the best that priority can command.

⁷³ Freud, ‘On Transience,’ p. 307.

⁷⁴ Samuel Beckett, “‘The Capital of the Ruins,’” in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Short Prose, 1929-1989*, S.E. Gontarski (New York: Grove Press, 1995), pp. 153-54.

⁷⁵ Beckett, p. 153.

They are lined with glass-wool and panelled in isorel, a strange substance of which only very limited supplies are available. There is real glass in the windows. [...] The floors, where the exigencies of hygiene are greatest, are covered with linoleum.⁷⁶

This detailed account of the materials used to equip the hospital goes on at considerable length, perhaps to draw the reader's attention to the point that follows this list. As much as Beckett is interested in recording his experience of the Irish hospital in detail, he soon admits that the healing that was taking place in the hospital was in fact of lesser importance; what was more impactful in the case of the rebuilding of the traumatized city of Saint-Lô, was, in Beckett's words,

the occasional glimpse obtained, by us in them and, who knows, by them in us [...] of that smile at the human conditions as little to be extinguished by bombs as to be broadened by the elixirs of Burroughes and Welcome,—the smile deriding, among other things, the having and the not having, the giving and the taking, sickness and health.⁷⁷

The smile, then, an affective response to trauma, is at the heart of Beckett's account of the rebuilding of Saint-Lô. This smile has been the focus of Darren Gribben's exploration of Beckett's essay. Gribben highlights the smile as that which 'brings together memory and our perception of the present in which we find or contact our lost selves,'⁷⁸ and further notes that, in Beckett's essay, 'the "smile" is not attributed to any individual.'⁷⁹ What Gribben showcases through this statement, apart from Beckett's regular practice of turning the common unnamed man and woman into protagonist material, is, quite crucially, Beckett's recognition of the smile as a collective affective response, a response, which, according to Gribben, shows the 'refusal to give in to the destruction.'⁸⁰

By the same token, the affective response of the smile in Beckett is a collective affect organically emerging from the assemblage of individual affects in Saint-Lô. The dilapidated town, the hopeful volunteers, and the wounded victims form an affective assemblage that results in the smile. As relationships change within the affective assemblages, a wounded

⁷⁶ Beckett, p. 153.

⁷⁷ Beckett, p. 153.

⁷⁸ Darren Gribben, 'Beckett's Other Revelation: The Capital of the Ruins,' *Irish University Review*, 38.2, (2008), pp. 263-73, (p. 264).

⁷⁹ Gribben, p. 267.

⁸⁰ Gribben, p. 266.

soldier's body has suddenly more in common with the bombarded landscape rather than with another, non-wounded soldier's body. In fact, in White's definition of the trope, one recognizes a fundamental aspect of traumatic affect: 'a trope can be seen as the linguistic equivalent of a psychological mechanism of defense [...] it is always not only a deviation *from* one possible, proper meaning, but also a deviation *towards* another meaning, conception or ideal.'⁸¹ In the destruction of the individual traumatized body, the collectivity is reshaped through the Beckettian smile, and the individual body is recreated and healed by the collectivity.

It is a similar refusal of the individual to be destroyed that emerges in Sartre's writings on the Second World War. Sartre documents the 'phoney war' in his 1939 *War Diaries*.⁸² 'Phoney war' is the name that has been given to the period of the first months of the Second World War for France and Britain, as between September 1939 and March 1940 there was no conflict between the western front of Britain and France and the Axis forces. It is at the beginning of this period that Sartre is mobilized to serve in the meteorological section at the Alsatian front and it is during these endless days and nights of waiting for the war to happen that he writes his diaries. Sartre's account is full of descriptions of his affects and responses to the dreary state in which he found himself, which he sometimes puts in words through letters that he receives: 'one is no longer surprised by the mud; one is no longer too cold; one finds it quite natural to sleep on straw, and it's the idea of washing oneself that appears abnormal.'⁸³ The most arresting, however, of all of Sartre's observations is one made in a rather optimistic vein, namely that the war creates assemblages in which Sartre himself had been inevitably, and perhaps, luckily, caught up:

One fine day in September 1939 I received a call-up paper, and was obliged to go off to the barracks at Nancy to meet fellows I didn't know who'd been called up like me. That's what introduced the social into my life [...] At the same time, the war revealed to me certain aspects of myself and the world [...] You might say that in it I passed from the individualism, the pure individual, of before the war to the social and to socialism. That was the real turning point of my life.⁸⁴

⁸¹ White, *Tropics*, p. 2, emphases in the original.

⁸² Jean-Paul Sartre, *War Diaries: Notebooks from a Phoney War, November 1939-March 1940*, ed. and trans. by Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1999).

⁸³ Sartre, p. 160. This description is in fact part of a letter from his friend Bost whom Sartre is quoting in his diary, stating after the letter is finished that "all that he says is true" about the army experience (p. 162).

⁸⁴ Sartre, 'Self-Portrait at Seventy,' qtd in Quintin Hoare, trans. and ed., Translator's Introduction, in *War Diaries: Notebooks from a Phoney War, November 1939-March 1940* (London: Verso, 1999), pp. vii-xix, (pp viii-ix).

In prefacing Sartre's *War Diaries*, Quintin Hoare points out that Sartre celebrates his new-found belonging to the social by extensively creating: indeed, the turning point in Sartre's life is one of the most prolific periods of his creative life. In fact, it can be argued that Sartre's response to the traumatizing 'negation of [his] own freedom,' as he describes his mobilization,⁸⁵ is the insistent and consistent rebuilding of his world, corporeal, psychic, and intellectual, through his diaries. Much like Freud and Beckett, for Sartre, trauma must necessarily become an affective experience for the individual and the collectivity to overcome it.

What connects Freud's conviction that the natural and cultural world will be rebuilt after the necessary affect of mourning, Beckett's underlining of the importance of the smile in the rebuilding of Saint-Lô, and Sartre's discovery that the links made available to him through the war were a prerequisite for the rebuilding of his world, is the recognition that affective responses are necessary for making sense of the war trauma, and for overcoming it. The persistence that Freud, Beckett, and Sartre attribute to collective affect contains very strong undertones of what Gribben terms (in relation to Beckett's smile) 'perseverance.'⁸⁶ I take this term, 'perseverance,' so accurately describing the undercurrent of the writings I mention here, to mean more than the willed hopefulness of the writers to acknowledge that war trauma will come to an end. Instead, I take perseverance to signify an involuntary reflex triggered by trauma and taking essentially an affective inflection in order to make sense of that trauma. Beckett's smile, Gribben says, is a clear sign of Beckett's intention to communicate a response to trauma that not only bypasses the aporias of language, but is also shared between the individual and the collective, and between the past and the present, like an affective trace which is indestructible. Attempting to make sense of the trauma of war, Beckett's smile heralds an affective adventure, one whose starting point is a singular individual affective response leading the way to the collectivizing of that affect, while crossing the border between past and future. Beckett concludes his essay with the phrase 'these will have been in France'⁸⁷ thus joining the remembrance of the trauma in the future with its past occurrence. Similarly, Freud's analysis of individual mourning as longing for a lost past, culminating into a collective ability to rebuild the future, and Sartre's journey from a past individuality to a future communality within war, all constitute an inductive kind of thinking leading to the realization that the representation of traumatic affect within time-

⁸⁵ Sartre, 'Self-Portrait at Seventy,' qtd in Hoare, p. viii.

⁸⁶ Gribben, p. 265.

⁸⁷ Beckett, p. 154.

space and within the move from individuality to collectivity can be successful through the deployment of a trope, such as Beckett's smile.

Bearing all of the above in mind, this thesis challenges the notion that the war trauma experienced in a particular location is a solitary and isolated event. Conversely, the main argument of my thesis is that in its every representation, war trauma as an affect transgresses individual bodies, locations, minds, and temporalities and becomes an organizational and formative influence on collectivities, that is in turn represented across specific literary tropes. This argument will be engaged and supported through four chapters: Bodyscape, Warscape, Mindscape, and Timescape. The first chapter, Bodyscape, will focus on the type of body that emerges when individual and collective traumatic affect are merged; the second chapter, Warscape, will explore the ways through which the urban scape is influenced by traumatized bodies; the third chapter, Mindscape, grapples with the repetition of trauma and the consequences of this repetition on the individual and the collective; the fourth and final chapter, Timescape, is concerned with the trajectory of the individual and collective trauma from the past to the future.

Chapter One: Bodyscape

‘This emotion—of misery—saturated me to the core, infused its penetrating and obnoxious damp to the depths of my body, to the very marrow of my aching bones’

-Stratis Myrivilis,
Life in the Tomb

‘An annular wound’

The epigraph above, taken from Stratis Myrivilis’s novel *Life in the Tomb* (1923), exemplifies a specific pattern of the narration of the traumatic affect caused by war, as a collective affect that slowly but surely penetrates the individual human body and psyche. This particular excerpt is taken from a chapter in *Life in the Tomb* titled ‘Marching,’ describing a rank of soldiers marching towards the Balkan front of the Great War.¹ Before the soldier, as well as protagonist and writer of the letters which compile the novel, Andonis Kostoulas, reveals the misery that dominates his body, he exposes the circumstances under which the soldier’s body marches:

Exhaustion [...] spreads to each and every part...except the engines which drive your legs. These keep running—hep-two-three-four—as though by magic. All thinking has long since terminated. Both mind and body are carried along now, together with your weapons and gear by legs which operate of and by themselves: by self-governing and self-sufficient extremities which accept no directives any longer from the brain or nerves, or from anywhere except the Order of the Day [...] Others are going in front of you, and others are following behind: your own volition is there, in these others [...] Perspiration smarts the eyes, tickles the nose, insinuates its saltiness between the lips [...] Your sweaty flesh is everywhere pinched between buckles and straps which seem like pliers methodically flaying you strip by strip [...] My soul was oozing drop by drop through my pores together with the dirty sweat.²

In this lengthy quote, the traumatized body of the soldier starts taking narrative form and four important qualities emerge. Firstly, that a part of the body features prominently, almost taking over the rest of the body, in this instance the legs and the flesh; secondly, that

¹ *LitT*, p. 26.

² *LitT*, p. 27.

individual bodily will is merged with, or even substituted by that of a collective group, in this case the soldierly rank; thirdly, that emphasis is placed on the orifices of the body, where the bodily and psychological strain is designated by various oozing substances; and lastly, that the traumatized soldier's body is described by a continuous flaying of the skin, which is deconstruction on two levels, both in the sense of the wounded body, but also in the sense of the narration's focus shifting from the exterior environment to the interior of the human body. This representation of the human and animal body is recurrent in the narratives I have selected to explore and therefore becomes a trope of narrating war trauma. In this chapter, I begin by exploring the relationship of individual and collective war wound through Myrivilis's extract, as it constitutes a perfect example of the tropological levels analyzed in this chapter. I will then examine how the war wound that manifests on the individual body becomes a token of collectivity and how this tropology is further represented in Myrivilis's, Adichie's, and Pynchon's narratives.

In regards to the exploration of the first quality that the body acquires, namely the literary exaggeration of a particular body part which appears to be taking over the rest of the body, the Russian philosopher, literary critic, and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin proffers the useful methodological field of the grotesque.³ Bakhtin develops his theory of the grotesque by reading the literature of François Rabelais, and his analysis energizes the dialogue between individual and collective body. Bakhtin's argument is that, in Rabelais' literary work, 'the human body [is presented in] all its parts and members, all its organs and functions, in their anatomical, physiological [...] aspects,' in order to

uncover a new meaning, a new place for human corporeality in the real spatial-temporal world. In the process of accommodating this concrete human corporeality, the entire remaining world also takes on new meaning and concrete reality, a new materiality; it enters into a contact with human beings that is no longer symbolic but material.⁴

This materiality of the body, which symbolizes the convergence between individuality and collectivity, anatomization and interconnectivity, as well as, quite simply, death and rebirth, is deeply resonant with a vast number of literary works narrating war trauma, and it is these works that are of interest in this chapter and, more generally, this thesis.

³ Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London: Routledge, 2003), p 15.

⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. by Michael Holquist (Austin: Texas UP, 2004) p. 170.

Bakhtin's taxonomy of the Rabelaisian presentation of the human body forms a large part of his development of the theory of chronotopes, but the fundamental building block of this theory is the grotesque body.⁵ Bakhtin writes that the grotesque

is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world.⁶

In Myrivilis's description of the soldierly body, the soldier's legs become the body part that keeps the soldier connected to the group of soldiers, literally entering their collectivity. Hence, the 'engines' that drive each individual soldier's legs are situated in the collectivity, synecdochically protruding from the body. Such grotesque bodily protrusions, or extensions, of the individual body towards the collectivity are a trope in the war trauma narratives under consideration in this thesis and will be explored separately for each narrative in this chapter.

Bakhtin goes on to describe the grotesque as characterized by 'exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness,' elements which are not only suggestive of individual negation and abjection as in the case of the soldierly body, but also put forward notions of an almost celebratory and persistent, if tortured and satirical, bodily existence.⁷ Through his exhaustive genealogy of the grotesque, literary critic Michael Holquist distinguishes between the Romantic grotesque in which 'all that is ordinary, commonplace, belonging to everyday life, and recognized by all suddenly becomes meaningless, dubious and hostile [and o]ur own world becomes an alien world' and the Renaissance grotesque, where the regenerative powers of laughter and gaiety peak.⁸ In Myrivilis's example, the legs of the soldierly body become larger than individual life in the sense that they are the elements on which the entire military campaign relies on, and although their grotesque and mechanized description has the primary purpose of demonstrating the suffering of the traumatized soldierly body, the

⁵ Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope is extensively discussed in Chapter 2 of the present thesis.

⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984) p. 303.

⁷ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p. 303. As we will see in this chapter, the grotesque tropology is linked with satirical and bathetic representation of traumatized bodies, particularly in Pynchon's novel.

⁸ Michael Holquist, Introduction, in *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984), pp. 1-58, (p. 39). Bakhtinian theorist Michael Holquist genealogically traces the history of the grotesque from the classical period to the age of Renaissance to Romanticism and follows the grotesque's expulsion from the dominant 'high' literature. Holquist argues that theorists such as Carl Friedrich Floegel located the grotesque strictly in the carnival and comic aspects of art. Moving on to Romanticism, the grotesque as articulated through the works of Friedrich Schlegel and Jean Paul was transformed into an 'expression of subjective, individualistic world outlook very different from the carnival folk concept of previous ages, although still containing some carnival elements.' Holquist, Introduction, p. 36

exaggeration of this body part speaks to the persistence, and ultimately, survival, of the individual body within the collective. This representation of the individual body is a trope in the narratives under consideration in this thesis, and extends well beyond the confines of military life.

If for Bakhtin the grotesque body epitomizes the transgressed relationship between individual and collective and inside and outside, Myrivilis also speaks of the soldierly body as that which is shaped by the ‘Order of the Day.’ For Kostoulas, this Order rearranges the individual body, reordering its parts for collective purposes, thus producing what French poststructuralist historian Michel Foucault terms ‘docile bodies.’⁹ Foucault discusses how the disciplinarian code of the army, particularly as it was shaped in the eighteenth century and onwards, reorganizes parts of the body in order for that to be nothing but constantly able and efficient:

The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power,’ was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience).¹⁰

As a ‘docile body,’ disciplined by external forces, Kostoulas’s soldierly body is invested with great power, but is devoid of the ability to exercise this power and must always channel it according to the Order of the Day. By extrapolation, each traumatized individual yielding to the totality of system, be that the army or the war, becomes a body redesigned to fit a collective purpose. This suggestion is obvious in Myrivilis’s novel through the soldierly body of Kostoulas, but also, as we shall see, in Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*, where the bodies of Nigerian citizens are ideologically, physically, and morally reorganized for a collective cause. In that sense, war traumatized bodies become Foucauldian docile bodies.

With its grotesque protrusions, its reorganized body parts, and its strong but, embedded in the collective, presence, the individual traumatized soldierly body is shaped

⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), p. 135.

¹⁰ Foucault, p. 135.

before the reader's eyes, and in its creation, expels various substances from its orifices: in Kostoulas's description, perspiration oozes from the orifices of the face and body, creating an abject image of the marching soldier. The term 'abject,' as developed by linguist and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva in 1982, denotes the waste that has been cast out by a given community, and becomes a name for the jettisoned individuals themselves. According to Kristeva, the abject is the 'in-between, the ambiguous, the composite,' which 'disturbs identity, system, order.'¹¹ The abject unsurprisingly surfaces within the totality of war, since the boundaries between human and machine (as in the case of the soldierly body), alive and dead, and waste and food become blurred. As Maud Ellmann puts it, the Kristevan abject 'emerges when exclusions fail, in the sickening collapse of limits.'¹² For Kostoulas, the perspiration is not only a sign of his indescribable fatigue, but above all an indicator of the branding of war trauma on his body: 'You shift your rifle [...] its loop excavates a new foxhole in your flesh [...] a severe inflammation resembling an annular wound.'¹³ This abjectly indefinable wound becomes the imprinting of abjection on the individual, an imprinting standing for the individual whose exclusion is simultaneously necessary and meaningless: necessary, because a war requires traumatized individuals, and meaningless, because individual trauma or death loses its significance in the mass toll of those traumatized by war.

In Kristeva's work on abjection, the main quest is to find out why '*corporeal waste*, menstrual blood and excrement, or everything that is assimilated to them, from nail-parings to decay, represent [...] the objective frailty of symbolic order.'¹⁴ It is important to point out

¹¹ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (Columbia: Columbia UP, 1982), p. 4 and p. 9. It is not surprising that the grotesque body has been frequently discussed in conjunction with abjection. The most striking parallel between grotesque and abject is drawn by Sue Vice who tells of her surprise upon rereading *Rabelais and His World* 'by what appeared to be a second body ghosting the grotesque one.' Vice speaks of the abject body and its similarities with the grotesque, as she clearly articulates the two main points of their interlocation: 'in one, the abject is simply the psychoanalytic view of the grotesque, its sibling but not necessarily its successor;' the second point that Vice makes is that 'the grotesque has been superseded by the abject.' Sue Vice, "Bakhtin and Kristeva: Grotesque Body, Abject Self," in *Face to Face: Bakhtin in Russia and the West* eds. Carol Adlam, Rachel Falconer, Vitalii Makhlin, and Alastair Renfrew (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 1997), pp. 160-174, (p. 161). Kristeva wrote her first article on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin.

¹² Maud Ellmann, *The Poetics of Impersonality: T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound* (Brighton: Harvester Press Limited, 1987), p. 94.

¹³ *LitT*, p. 27.

¹⁴ Kristeva, p. 70, emphasis in the original. Kristeva associates the symbolic order with the all-encompassing power of a system resembling maternal love. In the present research, the power of the state is such a system and in the narratives analyzed here this power represents the symbolic order within which the abject bodies perform a split and form a separate national identity. While Kristeva associates the abject body with the maternal body, and this resonates with Myrivilis as well, who speaks for the beginning of the war as being 'engendered' by a 'womb' (*LitT*, p. 168), it is nevertheless crucial to place abjection in a wider social framework, and trace the ways through which the abject body is a key figure of trauma literature. For a book which treats abjection as a contemporary social phenomenon in the formation of national identities, see Imogen Tyler, *Revolted Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain* (London: Zed Books LTD, 2013).

that for Kristeva, the abject lies more in the threat of death rather than the event of death itself. Exposure to filth, such as rotten food or decaying corpses are parts of what Kristeva terms ‘the utmost of abjection,’ as they are the points where life and death converge and become indistinguishable from one another. These types of filth constitute an immensely important aspect of the tropology of trauma and its abject representation of the body, since the circumstances which influence filth and food in a given society change drastically within war. Emphasis then is placed on the boundaries of the human body, the orifices, which connect and divide the individual from the rest of the society and on bodily filth and defilement as the setting of boundaries rather than qualities in themselves: the absolute terror for the traumatized bodies arrives when, in the face of corpses, they are unsure of whether they are alive or have been reduced to a corpse. Kristeva specifies that ‘food becomes abject only if it is a border between two distinct entities or territories [...] between nature and culture, between the human and the non-human,’ or even between cultures.¹⁵ Filth therefore, whether in the form of expelled human substance or decayed food, operates as yet another boundary between individual and collective, and becomes an element that could be interpreted, as Kristeva states, both in terms of ‘pollution’ and in terms of ‘potential.’¹⁶

Because abjection surfaces from the lack of boundaries, it is an inherently boundary-forming mechanism. The literary representation of abject shell-shocked soldiers whose approach to food and filth is similar is key to the formation of their own collective existence in all three narratives discussed in this chapter: the boundaries between food and filth are virtually inexistent in wartime (for civilians because extreme hunger may force them to eat that which is not food, and for soldiers because army food resembles filth in most cases) and so are the boundaries between life and death. Hunger in particular, becomes an equalizing factor for military and civilian life during wartime, and therefore individuality is lost, while collective existence, however crippled by famine, prevails. This is symptomatic of civil war, but in fact occurs in any war: in the destruction of the other, be it another race as in Myrivilis, or be it a part of our own self as in Adichie and to a certain extent Pynchon, there is a collective rejoicing.¹⁷ The jettisoned subjects form a collectivity of their own where the individual affect is mirrored in the traumatic affects of the abject collectivity. Jeffrey Murer touches on abjection as an identity forming force when he discusses Kristeva’s theory

¹⁵ Kristeva, p. 75.

¹⁶ Kristeva, p. 76.

¹⁷ One of the narratives that has influenced Adichie’s writing of the Nigerian-Biafran civil war is a novel by Cyprian Ekwensi with the telling title *Divided We Stand* (Oxford: African Books Collective, 1980). Ekwensi is an Igbo writer who has written on the Nigerian Civil War also from a Biafran point of view and his novel explicitly deals with the strength of unity in abjection, a theme that Adichie fully explores in its every nuance in her novel. This is the reason why I have chosen to analyze Adichie’s narrative.

alongside political and social trauma. Murer asserts that, when it comes to sociopolitical change or war, individual trauma alters collective identities. Murer also explains that although on the one hand traumatic abjection splits the individual identity, it establishes boundaries between different collective identities: ‘through debasement, the self is reassured of essential difference,’ he maintains, and therefore abjection becomes a necessary mechanism used to separate oneself from the feared enemy, imagined or actual.¹⁸ Abject food then, and abject elements in general for that matter, are employed in the selected war narratives as delineations of individual versus national body. Murer’s explication of abjection as necessary takes us back to the representation of trauma as a compulsive repetitive performance, a representation whose almost ritualistic repetitiveness of abjection enables the enunciation of traumatic affect and the formation of collectivities. In other words, and as shall be seen from this chapter, the narration of war trauma and its formation of abject and grotesque bodies becomes part of a reiterated method of narration, carrying trauma from an abject individual sphere to a national, and to a certain extent celebrated, memory of trauma.

The last quality that the traumatized body acquires as it is represented in the excerpt from *Life in the Tomb* is that it becomes deconstructed. Kostoulas feels his body being flayed ‘strip by strip,’ only to reveal another kind of body, a body that is an amalgamation of collective forces and is unrecognizable to Kostoulas.¹⁹ This reformed body, at once grotesque, abject, and docile, becomes the recurrent symbol of Beckettian perseverance, demonstrating just how much the body can take before it dissolves into nothingness. If according to Clough, any affect indicates ‘bodily capacities to affect and be affected, or the augmentation or diminution of a body’s capacities to act, to engage, to connect,’²⁰ grotesque and abject bodies may be incorporated into the repertoire of the affective turn, contributing equally to what Clough calls ‘the forging of a new body, [...] the biomediated body.’²¹ Clough builds her exposition of the biomediated body on the Foucauldian concept that the body is regulated by historical, political, economic, as well as biological discourses and

¹⁸ Jeffrey Murer, *Violence and Politics: Globalization’s Paradox*, ed. by Kenton Worcester, Sally Avery Bermanzohn et al (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 209-225, (pp. 215-216).

¹⁹ *LitT*, p. 27.

²⁰ Patricia T. Clough, Introduction, in *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, ed. by Patricia T. Clough and Jean Halley (Durham: Duke UP, 2007), pp. 1-33, (p. 2).

²¹ Patricia T. Clough, ‘The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedica, and Bodies,’ in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (Durham: Duke UP, 2010), pp. 206-26, (p. 207). Luciana Parisi uses the term biodigital to refer to the kind of pattern that the convergence of the biological and the techno-social creates. Kate O’Riordan speaks of the biodigital body as well arguing that the ‘biodigital identity is a mode of identity construction that at once acknowledges the phenomena that produce biopolitical relations, whilst offering an adjacent and perhaps interstitial space.’ Kate O’Riordan, *The Genome Incorporated: Constructing Biodigital Identity* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010) p. 19.

powers, and she constructs her argumentation by discussing instruments which probe into the body, flaying, as it were, its skin, and creating a new body that has sustained this exposure. What I am taking from Clough's description of the procedures under which the body becomes biomediated (such as surveillance or face recognition), is the measuring of the body for collective purposes. Approaching it from this angle, the notion of the biomediated body borrows from Foucault's biopolitics, to lead to Bakhtin's grotesque, if we recall that for Bakhtin, the grotesque is 'the human body [which] becomes a concrete measuring rod for the world, the measurer of the world's weight and of its value for the individual.'²² As the body is deconstructed, it expands against its own physical limits and it literally embodies the point of encounter between the individuality of the body and its collective aspect. Clough stresses 'matter's capacity for self-organization in being informational';²³ put simply, matter is inherently organizational, therefore the body purely as matter conveying traumatic affective messages becomes and sets everything around it information. Through its deconstruction, the body organizes space, time, and affects around it. Ultimately, all of the collective affects (social, national, political, spatial) are not only mapped, projected, and inscribed onto the traumatized body, but most crucially, they are organized and put into affective categories by the biomediated body.

Considering the above, it is my intention to propose in this chapter that within the representation of different settings of war, trauma as an affect becomes the master narrative trope in all its belated manifestation and its mode of repetition. Most importantly, traumatic affect is that which connects rather than separates the somatic and the social, the individual and the collectivity. As the traumatic affect impacts on individual and collective bodies, a change takes place: the bodies are depicted through a grotesque and abject lense. The trope of traumatic affect pushes the bodies to a condition of liminality and constant becoming and creates an assemblage of grotesque, abject, and biomediated bodies. Ultimately, despite the traumatized body's liminal condition, or perhaps because of it, the image of the traumatized body becomes the major unit of inscription of information for the war narrative. The narratives that I have chosen to exemplify this trope of narrating the traumatized body are Myrivilis's *Life in the Tomb*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973). The selected narratives are littered with images of war-stricken bodies into which collective trauma has seeped and which ultimately end up forming a narrative configuration of their own. These particular narratives tell the stories of individual bodies who have not only been traumatized and re-traumatized by war,

²² Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 170-171.

²³ Clough, 'Political Economy,' p. 207.

but, more crucially, of bodies whose trauma (primarily physical but also psychological) has streamlined the turning of their integral organizational parts into parts of the collective. Myrivilis's consistent construction of a synecdochic relationship between the soldier's body and the collective body; Adichie's narration of bodily traumatic abjection as collective empowerment; and Pynchon's telling of the uses of the biomediated body by governmental power, point out that the traumatized body does not exist in isolation, but rather forms affective relationships with the collectivity. An important feature that these three novels share (and is in fact a major trope in all the narratives under investigation in this thesis) is the narration of bodily trauma with anatomical detail. In other words, there appears to be a literary obsession with extremely detailed descriptions of traumatized bodies, descriptions that expose the bodies literally to their bare bones.

Trauma as Social and Somatic Affect: *Life in the Tomb*

Pete Ayrton argues that at the beginning of the twentieth century and for certain European countries, the idea of 'the nation-State was more recent and/or more contested and [the individual] had a much more fragile commitment to nationhood and empire.'²⁴ This is particularly true of Greece at the beginning of the twentieth century: Dimitris Tziouvas stresses that Greek literature of the early twentieth century differs significantly from its European counterparts, in that the former 'insisted on viewing literature through the prism of Greekness in an attempt to aestheticize the politics of national identity.'²⁵ This aestheticization of Greek nationhood, especially as the latter seems to be in an antagonistic relationship with the formation of the Greek state, a state fashioned by the Great Powers from the very beginning of the Greek independence in the late 1820s, takes on the form of bodily affect.²⁶ This manifestation may have been sporadic and may have gone relatively unnoticed, but the presence of bodily affect in Greece amidst national dichotomies jeopardizing Greek identity is unmistakable. Ion Dragoumis, a writer, diplomat, and politician, argued in the 1900s that 'the state is a shirt which a nation, worthy of political independence, can wear and which sometimes doesn't completely cover it. Parts frequently

²⁴ Pete Ayrton, ed., Introduction, in *No Man's Land: Writings from a World at War* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2014), n.p.

²⁵ Dimitris Tziouvas, ed., Introduction, in *Greek Modernism and Beyond: Essays in Honor of Peter Bien* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), pp. 2-8, (p. 2).

²⁶ Robert Peckam puts it succinctly when he states that 'the Greek state was conceptualized during the nineteenth century as an insalubrious imposition that deformed the natural, capacious physique of the nation, forcing its limbs out of joint.' Robert Shannan Peckham, *National Histories, Natural States: Nationalism and the Politics of Place in Greece* (London: I.B Tauris, 2001), p. 44.

remain uncovered by the shirt. Perhaps the politicians of the state want to cut off those parts?’²⁷

The intensity with which the rhetoric of the traumatized body is associated with the traumatized Greek land is noticed by Robert Peckham, who recounts Greek literary and national texts where ‘the trauma of national dismemberment and the painful wrenching of body parts’ become tropes of narrating national politics.²⁸ In his study, Peckham examines how mutilation in literature has been a common trope, not only of twentieth century Greece, but also of turbulent times before that, and has helped put national traumas and their recuperation into words: for example, Peckham discusses that, particularly since the Greek Independence War, ‘Greek writers [such as Adamantios Korais and Iakovos Rizos Neroulos] articulated Romantic concerns for language as the expression of a distinct national character, which was organically attached to a particular place,’ and as a defining paragon in forming Greek character and body as well.²⁹ For Peckham, this organic link between the Greek landscape and its politics on the one hand, and the Greek body and psyche on the other, is synecdochically represented in Greek writings, predominantly in the narration of national traumas. The reason why this visceral representation of national trauma is of relevance for this thesis is because, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Greekness as an identity starts forming in tandem with the trauma of the body and the trauma of political consciousness. As a result, the rhetoric of Greek identity is paired up with imagery pertaining to bodily affect: Myrivilis’s novels *Life in the Tomb* and *Vasilis Arvanitis* (1939) both contain strong physical links between the traumatized body of their respected protagonists and the Greek nation which these protagonists are called to defend;³⁰ Ilias Venezis’s *Number 31328*,³¹ a captivity memoir from the Asia Minor campaign narrates the author’s bodily ordeal and survival within a Turkish concentration camp and is referred to by the author as ‘an old wound;’³² and, according to Evi Voyatzaki, modern Greek writers employ the body and its affects ‘as part of the exploration of the culturally constructed inward processes of the modern [Greek] individual.’³³

²⁷ Ion Dragoumis, qtd in Robert Shannan Peckham, *National Histories, Natural States: Nationalism and the Politics of Place in Greece* (London: I.B Tauris, 2001), p. 43.

²⁸ Peckham, p. 43.

²⁹ Peckham, pp. 9-10.

³⁰ Stratis Myrivilis, *Vasilis Arvanitis*, trans. by Pavlos Andronikos (Armidale: University of New England Publishing Unit, 1983)

³¹ Ēlias Venezēs, *To noumero 31328 : to vivlio tēs sklavias* (Athēna: Vivliopōleion tēs Hestias, 1978)

³² Cited in Thalia Pandiri, ‘Driven out of Eden: Voices from the Asia Minor Catastrophe,’ in *The Dispossessed: An Anatomy of Exile*, ed. by Peter Isaac Rose (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press), pp. 44-69, (p. 68).

³³ Evi Voyatzaki, *The Body in the Text: James Joyce’s Ulysses and the Modern Greek Novel*, Lexington Books, 2002, 16.

In order to examine the relationship between body and nation, or more accurately, the ways through which traumatic bodily affect is harnessed for the sake of Greek identity formation, traumatic affect as a trope in *Life in the Tomb*, provides an ideal case study, since it is ‘the single most successful and most widely read serious novel in Greece in the period since the Great War, having sold 80,000 copies—an astonishing figure for that small country,’ according to Peter Bien.³⁴ The novel was officially serialized in Myrivilis’s newspaper *Kampana* from April 1923 to January 1924 and its structure in vignettes somewhat follows the transitional journey of the Greek identity of the time.³⁵ *Life in the Tomb* is essentially a series of fifty-seven fictional episodes in the form of Andonis Kostoulas’s letters to his beloved, written from the Great War trenches and supposedly recovered years later by Myrivilis himself, who states in the prologue that he decides to publish them in the form of the novel. Myrivilis narrates the traumatized body through the reproduction and commemoration of Sergeant Kostoulas’s letters and manuscripts. The episodes follow Kostoulas’s time in the trenches, start in medias res with Kostoulas’s narration and finish when Kostoulas’s letters finish, after his death. As the first part of a trilogy discussing traumatic affect within and after war, the novel traces the individual’s predicament of defending nationhood while slowly marching towards death; the other parts of the trilogy are *The School Mistress with the Golden Eyes* (1933)³⁶ and *Mermaid Madonna* (1955).³⁷

Life in the Tomb is historically framed by national trauma from the outset. The Greek male and female subject of the twentieth century entered the Great War in 1917 already traumatized and with a polarized political consciousness: divided between belonging to the Greek nation and advancing individual ventures; unstable within the false dilemma of modernity versus tradition and torn asunder by civil strife which erupted in 1915. The National Schism, as it was dubbed, brought about already existing cracks in the national identity and by 1917 the country was divided in two sides: on the one hand, Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos with his decision to join the First World War in 1917 on the side of the Allies in order to expand the Greek border and on the other hand, King Constantine the

³⁴ Peter Bien, qtd in John Taylor, *Into the Heart of European Poetry* (London: Transaction Publishers, 2010), p. 148.

³⁵ A series of important national events took place throughout the publication of *Life in the Tomb*. Most importantly, after the sound defeat of Greece in the Asia Minor Campaign, the first clear attempts of establishing a Greek republic instead of a kingdom are noted, attempts which culminate in the creation of the first Hellenic Republic in April 1924 (Ahmet Ersoy, Maciej Górny, Vangelis Kechriotis, eds., ‘Alexandros Papanastasiou: The Republican Manifesto,’ in *Modernism: The Creation of Nation-States: Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945: Texts and Commentaries, Volume III/1*, Budapest: Central European UP, 2010), pp. 167-175, (p. 169-170).

³⁶ Stratis Myrivilis, *The School Mistress with the Golden Eyes* (Athens: Efstadiathis Group, 1992).

³⁷ Stratis Myrivilis, *Mermaid Madonna*, Athens (Efstadiathis Group, 1992).

First with his urge to keep a neutral position so as not to lose the support of German and Austrian powers.³⁸

The National Schism ended with the rejection, mostly by the Greek youth, of the sovereignty of King Constantine. The event is internalized in *Life in the Tomb* and Kostoulas narrates a bodily response: ‘an equally peculiar sensation had invaded us. Something was disintegrating; something had vanished in our hearts, leaving a sudden and disagreeable vacuum. Was it the [...] pedestal whose age-old idol we had toppled with the first vigorous kick?’³⁹ Myrivilis here puts forth the affective experience of the body as a link between past and future national identities, between kingdom and republic. It may be argued that Myrivilis attempts to bridge the chasms of national identity by narrating war trauma as an affect both somatic and sociopolitical.⁴⁰ Through the trajectory of the soldierly body, Myrivilis reconstructs the Greek subject’s state of trauma as an affective fluctuation between the purely physical and the purely social aspect of the body. Put simply, trauma for the modern Greek subject is the affect that connects the unit with the whole, echoing traumatized bodies of histories past and signaling the beginning of many a national trauma for twentieth century Greece.

In a letter containing one of the many instances describing the waiting of war, Kostoulas writes that in the trenches, ‘one’s whole body waits at every moment, waits and waits, its every limb, nerve and fiber remaining ever-vigilant, ceaselessly waiting.’⁴¹ The waiting starts from Kostoulas’s body but takes on national proportions: there is a series of sociopolitical traumas that are predicted, almost premeditated in *Life in the Tomb*. During a conversation that Kostoulas has with the colonel, he expresses his fear that

a few years from now [...] perhaps others would be killing each other for anti-nationalistic ideals. Then they would laugh at our own killings just as we had laughed at those of the Byzantines [...] Warfare under the entirely fresh banners would be just as disgraceful as always.⁴²

These wars were indeed fought in Greece later on: the Second World War (1940-1944), the Greek Civil War between British and American sponsored right wing government and the

³⁸ Richard Clogg writes that the Great War functioned as a pretext for the chasm between the Venizelists and the Royalists and that the underlying cleavage was ‘between a modernizing capitalist middle class, the driving force behind Venizelism,’ and the reaction against bourgeois revolution. In *Parties and Elections in Greece: The Search for Legitimacy* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1987), p. 8.

³⁹ *LitT*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ Somatic from the Greek word for body, *sōma*.

⁴¹ *LitT*, p. 111.

⁴² *LitT*, p. 137.

leftist partisan movement supported indirectly by the Soviet Union (1946-1949), and even the more recent military dictatorship of 1967-1974, added to the national trauma. What Myrivilis hints at is a soldierly body with a national collective mind where, as James Berger has discussed in relation to genocide,

each national catastrophe invokes and transforms memories of other catastrophes, so that history becomes a complex entanglement of crimes inflicted and suffered, with each catastrophe understood—that is misunderstood—in the context of repressed memories or previous ones.⁴³

In this case, Myrivilis does not only refer to past wars but also directly hints at the impending Asia Minor catastrophe, which was fought between Greeks and Turks during the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire after the Great War. Kostoulas embodies the traumatized subject who lives in the shadow of both past and future national traumas, a subject for whom the sequence of traumas is of formative importance, more so than the specific trauma he is currently undergoing.

The passing from tradition and sovereign power to the constitution of a republic and fresh political circumstances, while a series of wars are fought, focus on an embodied affect of change. Kostoulas compares the atmosphere of the era to a common individual experience:

perhaps something comparable happens when a person keeps an all-night vigil over a corpse. He knows full well that the cadaver cannot budge, cannot do him the slightest harm [...] Yet despite all this, he dares not touch it, not even with his foot [...] The new situation is something he cannot grow accustomed to.⁴⁴

The ‘new situation’ is embodied by a subject caught up between past and future and clearly signifies what was at stake in modern Greece according to Ersoy, Górný, and Kechriotis: ‘Venizelos, whose party, in his view, represented the “New Greece” [...] accused his opponents of representing the old political world and of not daring to cope with the

⁴³ James Berger, *After the End: Representations of Post-apocalypse* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 23.

⁴⁴ *LitT*, p. 14. It is worth mentioning that in the Greek version of the novel, instead of the pronoun ‘he’ Myrivilis uses the pronoun ‘you,’ a customary colloquial way in modern Greek to emphasize the collective aspect of the actions described.

complexities of the new conditions.’⁴⁵ The old and the new are constantly juxtaposed and this juxtaposition is embodied, in Myrivilis’s writing, within the corporeality of the scene, where Myrivilis harnesses an individual affective experience and uses it as a metaphor to depict a collective state of anxiety. This is what happens, according to Kostoulas ‘when an entire people becomes a gigantic, robust beast with a single soul and a single head, when every person’s actions seem to arise from drives as deep and obscure as instinct itself, when all breasts amalgamate into a single great breast.’⁴⁶ Myrivilis here plainly articulates the truth of traumatic affect: that the individual body is its incubator and that within the collectivity traumatic affect becomes the motive for the formation of national identity.

The rhetoric of the somatic oscillation between past and future persists as Kostoulas describes scenes from soldier life. When narrating the soldiers’ embarking on a ship from the island of Mytilene to the Macedonian front, Kostoulas talks about the soldiers putting their life vests on: ‘These are a kind of vest made from white canvas and stuffed with cork. Placing ourselves between the two humps, we sensed how greatly distorted our young bodies had become.’⁴⁷ The two humps can be interpreted as the old circumstances of kingdom and the new situation of an expansive republic, the past and the future; more important, however, is what Bien misses in his translation. In the Greek version of the episode, Kostoulas laments for the loss of a communal albeit singular body, as he uses the expression *our young body* instead of *our young bodies* [Νιώθουμε το νιο κορμί μας να παραμορφώνεται σαν ραχητικό ανάμεσα σε τούτες τις δυο καμπούρες]: the singular traumatized body becomes a means of collectivity and socialization. Trauma then, becomes the superlative bonding affect that enables the creation of sociopolitical assemblages amongst the Greek bodies.⁴⁸ Additionally, what Bien refrains from translating, is the simile used by Myrivilis in the original: the phrase *σαν ραχητικό* literally means as if suffering from arthritis and it is a sign of Myrivilis’s synecdochical narration of traumatized body and traumatized nation.

This connection does not come as a shock to the reader considering Kostoulas’s conviction that the institution of the army is meant to do just that, meaning to dislocate the individual from the shell of the self and relocate him affectively so that he can serve the broader national vision. After the first march, Kostoulas narrates his emotions:

⁴⁵ Ersoy, Górný, and Kechriotis, p. 261.

⁴⁶ *LitT*, p. 13.

⁴⁷ *LitT*, p. 21.

⁴⁸ Στράτης Μυριβήλης, *Η Ζωή εν Τάφω: Το Βιβλίο του Πολέμου* (Αθήνα: Βιβλιοπωλείον της Εστίας Ι.Δ. Κολλάρου & Σιας Α.Ε., 2008), p. 34.

My prevailing emotion was misery, a misery as huge and ineluctable as the sea. Yet at the same time that I felt this, I was able to view myself as someone else. Overcome by sadness and tender solicitude for this ‘other’ wretch who was being jostled like a walnut shell on the turbulent waves of misfortune, I felt like sitting down and weeping for him—like bewailing his misery. This emotion—of misery—saturated me to the core, infused its penetrating and obnoxious damp to the depths of my body, to the very marrow of my aching bones.⁴⁹

The metaphor running through this passage is one of sea and water and Kostoulas’s body seems to be turning into water itself, the element which he misses most of all. Later on in the novel Kostoulas admits: ‘I’ve been sitting here and asking myself how I have been able to live without the Greek sea for such an extended period. Longing for the Aegean: that is the sweet illness which is consuming me.’⁵⁰ Unwittingly perhaps, Kostoulas is embracing self-denunciation and the belonging to the national purpose. Form and content converge at this point, as Myrivilis connects the two by using elevated prose to describe abject events of the traumatized body; the body is admired but fallen, wholesome and then mutilated, but language always creates poignancy, sometimes formally, sometimes idiomatically, with a persevering journalistic simplicity and detachment on the one hand, but always brimming with affective responses to trauma on the other. For a subject forever divided by the sociopolitical antinomies of the time, the trauma of the Greek soldierly body serves as a rite of passage from selfhood to a sense of belonging. If we follow Protevi’s definition of affect as that which ‘indicates [...] what the bodies can and cannot do in a particular situation,’⁵¹ then we can see that the soldierly body connects the somatic and political aspects precisely by breaching this sense of ability. In other words, the soldierly body defies the somatic affect (suffering, pain, exhaustion) and submits to the sociopolitical affect (discipline by a national institution, fraternity, i.e. army).

Filth and Defiling in the Trenches

In the many moving incidents from the trenches that are narrated in *Life in the Tomb*, filth and excrement are the protagonists, being the partition that separates collective from

⁴⁹ *LitT*, p. 28.

⁵⁰ *LitT*, p. 188.

⁵¹ Protevi, p. 48.

individual interpretations of death. Kostoulas writes at length about defilement in the trenches, be it literal filth (dust, sweat, lice), or corpses that defile the living. The chapter where abject filth is described in the most detail is the chapter titled ‘Carrion,’ fittingly expressing the mass of decaying bodies that the soldiers become.⁵² Kostoulas writes:

At first I thought I would grow accustomed to my unwashed condition; as the days go by, my uncleanliness bothers me more and more. I am constantly aware of gritty dust on my eyelids [...] If you saw us in our present state, covered from head to foot with dust, you would think that our hair had suddenly turned gray. It’s a real torment, one whose intensity I could have never imagined previously. My scalp is full of sand and dirt; my pores are congested. No matter what you grasp, it is dusty. A shudder of revulsion passes through my fingertips at every contact.⁵³

In this passage, the soldiers’ ageing seems to be accelerated until they are wholly swallowed by filth and decay. This decay is not caused by the passing of time, however, but rather by the soldier’s position in the war, as an individual fighting for a collective, if abstract, cause: ‘we go on killing and disemboweling for the “The Freedom of All Peoples,”’ writes Kostoulas in one of his letters, and mocks those ‘who, once upon a time, honestly and truly believed that all of God’s superb works and actions took place solely for their own dear sakes.’⁵⁴ Individual identity is clearly disturbed here as Kostoulas suddenly switches from the description of his body to the predicament of the bodies of the army division. The progression of filth, slowly exposing an already dead and decayed soldierly body, runs parallel with the realization that the individual must be sacrificed for the collective. On a primary level, filth amputates the soldierly body from his identity, but a further reading shows that the individual goes through a process of becoming estranged from his own self in order to enter a community. In this sense, filth becomes the stuff out of which community is created.

This representation of the soldierly body has a twofold, almost paradoxical effect: on the one hand the importance of the individual soldierly body is diminished as it is regarded a sacrificial material for the collectivity, but on the other hand, Myrivilis’s narration is profoundly self-reflexive, as wounded, disemboweled, crazed, mutilated, and generally traumatized bodies litter the pages of the novel and become models of reading the war. Each

⁵² *LitT*, p. 65.

⁵³ *LitT*, p. 66.

⁵⁴ *LitT*, p. 192.

soldier's trauma is a symptom of soldier life and the war itself: the malnutrition stands for the barrenness of the bombarded landscape; the lack of satisfaction of individual desires signal the collective predicament; and the individual open wounds and mutilations speak to the country's discord. This profound presence of the soldier's wounded body is for Scarry a problem of representation:

To have no body is to have no limits on one's extension out into the world; conversely, to have a body made emphatic by being continually altered through various forms of creation [...] and wounding, is to have one's sphere of extension contracted down to the small circle of one's immediate physical presence. Consequently, to be intensely embodied is the equivalent of being unrepresented and is almost always the condition of those without power.⁵⁵

This means that the soldier's existence is narrowed down to his body. After Kostoulas badly injures his leg, he writes: 'I toil to place bodily pain outside my soul so that I may observe such pain at a distance; I toil to separate thought from flesh, brain from nerves, soul from corporeal waste.'⁵⁶ All that indicates that the person's individuality is elided in the representation of the soldierly body, thus attesting to the idea that this body can only be represented through its wound, insofar as this wound is the connector between individual body and collectivity.

Along a similar path, Yuknavitch sketches the male soldier's wounded body during the Vietnam War through its representation in literature, and argues that, since the beginning of the twentieth century, the position of the war hero is orphaned, never to be filled again;⁵⁷ no longer is the soldier's story told as a heroic tale, but rather, the soldierly body is narrated primarily through the occurrence of bodily trauma. As a body ready to be wounded, maimed, and ultimately killed for a given collective, the soldierly body is unrepresented and exists only to be jettisoned from that collective, both in the case of the soldier's death and in the case of the soldier's return as a veteran. The underlying assumption here is that in either case, the soldier's body is polluted, either because it becomes a corpse, or because it comes in contact with unprecedented filth, as well as decay in the form of other corpses. It is not surprising therefore, that the monument of the Unknown Soldier, signifying the collective sacrifice and found at the heart of the majority of memorials around the world, is indeed a

⁵⁵ Scarry, p. 207.

⁵⁶ *LiTT*, p. 217.

⁵⁷ Yuknavitch, p. 22.

cenotaph: the actual presence of the dead and decaying soldier cannot possibly represent the collective. This occurs because, to the extent that memorialization is required to empower the collectivity and transport the viewer of the memorial to another space and time, the soldier's corpse would fail to fulfil that role due to its embodied, present, and limited state of existing as matter.⁵⁸

Myrivilis's discussion of the corpse is a prevalent trope in the novel, problematizing the national identity of the soldierly body, but also the role of the corpse as connector between individuality and collectivity. For Myrivilis, in its every manifestation, filth confirms Yuknavitch's assumption that 'the soldier's body, once a sign for a country's power and morality, is dislocated from the myths it used to sustain, [...] jettisoned from its signifying realm:' the corpse or the filthy soldierly body becomes that which must be necessarily expelled for the collectivity to exist.⁵⁹ In that sense, Kostoulas contemplates the fundamental building element that the dead body is: 'I reflected on the extraordinary unhappiness that may be hiding beneath a corpse-sheet in a military hospital' (217). In this sentence, bodily, social, institutional and state affects are merged, thus making the dead body the point of convergence between the purely individual and the totally collective. The question that Myrivilis, through Kostoulas's character, seems to be asking, fearfully, lest it is true, is this: are the collective ideas of national identity which are mapped onto the soldierly body strengthened after this body experiences a fatal trauma?

When one of the soldiers of the army division in which Kostoulas serves disappears and then is found dead, his family is about to receive one of the 'lovely letters' sent to dead soldiers' families, praising soldier Zafeiriou for his bravery and heroism (221); however, the truth is that Zafeiriou accidentally walks into the division's old and falsely cemented excrement pit and is asphyxiated. Kostoulas finds out about this incident through his fellow soldier Dimitratos, who relates the story: 'Zafeiriou the "Hellene" gets up one night to take a piss [...] he makes a bee-line for [the latrine] with that regulation marching-step he used [...] and braaaaf! down he goes [...] Your fine hero gave up the ghost gorged with shit' (220). The metaphor here is that while the soldiers' collective image is one of heroism and valor, the individual truth is one of squalor and sarcasm. As Dimitratos narrates the event, he mocks the letter that is sent to Zafeiriou's family by saying that it failed to include the fact that "Zafeiriou died gallantly wrestling with allied Franco-hellenic shit" (221). At this point, Myrivilis juxtaposes Zafeiriou's shameful and abject death with his national identity, that of a heroic 'Hellene,' as if to deconstruct the idea of heroism. Filth therefore, is used here by

⁵⁸ Memorialization crossreferencing

⁵⁹ Yuknavitch, p. 26.

Myrivilis along with the trope of metaphor, to reveal the fact that the myth of nationhood abandons the corpse.

Quite the opposite takes place when Kostoulas narrates soldier Apostolou's death:
 ...I meditated on the extraordinary ease and simplicity with which one becomes a corpse. Take Apostolou for example. A tiny bit of steel no bigger than a pea, and youth, ideas, ardor, strength, dreams, motion had all run out, tssrrrr, through the teeniest little hole, a hole like the eye of a darning needle, just an insignificant fissure in the skin. (274)

This unravelling of creation brings together the impact of war on the body and problematizes how much of the individual's affect actually belongs to the body. Kostoulas then carries his thoughts on, as he says, 'in a peculiar vein' (274), and concludes that within Apostolou's corpse 'The Whole of Greece is contained [...] such is the greatness of the human heart' (274).⁶⁰ Myrivilis here reconnects the body with the nation through somatic trauma. However contested the relationship between the body and the national self may be, Myrivilis seems to be hinting at the fact that these two selves, the somatic and the social are indeed distinct, and that the abject corpse is revealed below the social self: 'beneath the hide of each of us lies a corpse. It sits there patiently in diligent silence, awaiting the opportunity' (274). In this sense, the corpse does not belong to the nation: the individual is jettisoned from the collective national identity as soon as he becomes a corpse.

The rhetoric of abject filth, namely the dirty or dead soldierly body, is accentuated by the structure of the novel itself. Myrivilis's placement of an editorial prologue at the beginning of the novel, titled 'In Front of an Old Chest (By Way of Prologue),' contains a few sentences at the end, what Myrivilis in the Greek version titles 'Aposoma' [Απόσωμα], and Bien translates as 'P.S.' (4). Aposoma primarily means remainder, remnant, and ill-developed or sickly person; Myrivilis's uses the aposoma not only to pinpoint the shortcomings of the story in terms of form, but also to showcase the futility of war and the futility of remembering war. This becomes evident upon reading what the aposoma is actually about: it is the author informing us that he has applied his own titles to Kostoulas's letters, that he has structured the manuscripts of his own accord and that he has added the title of the book and the titles of the chapters himself:

⁶⁰ Capitals in the original.

P.S. The title of the book itself has of course been supplied by me, as have the headings for the individual chapters. They are meant to help the reader orient himself, since the original manuscript contains nothing but the pagination of the copybooks.

Bu[t] why do I sit here delving into such things? What difference do they make, any of them? (4)

Aposoma in this light can be seen as a metafictional literary device that makes Kostoulas's manuscripts appear more real. To come back to the somatic affect that is correlative with social affect, however, the aposoma works as a key for the novel to be read and understood. The aposoma then, is what remains after everything else has been said, it is what the skeleton is to the body, both containing and framing the affect, a leftover of somatic trauma that persists and exists both as prologue and as epilogue to the sociopolitical trauma: a textual corpse, meant to join form and content inseparably. The fact that this afterthought, as Bien has translated, or leftover, as the etymology of the Greek term suggests, is placed at the very beginning of the novel, seeks to preempt any climactic moment within the war story.⁶¹ In a sense, this narrative corpse is placed there to allude to the human corpse: just as the aposoma is useful in its redundancy, so is the soldier's body.

In the vignette titled 'The Hour Glass,' Kostoulas fantasizes about his own and his brother's death, imagining his mother receiving letters of his and his brother's demise. In this instance, Kostoulas imagines his mother despairing over her sons' death and at the same time is traumatized by the visualization of his own dead body: 'As for us, we would be a pulpy mass of pounded, chewed-up meat packaged in a canvas sack submerged in blood, our hair plastered over this boulder, our fingers—...I looked questioningly, affectionately, at my hand' (106). Here, the imagery of the defiling corpse is transformed into an image of revolting food, and by the end of the novel, the definition of the corpse is provided along the same lines: 'what is a corpse? Just a lump of mindless dough which has already begun to turn gluey. Yes, just so much rancid jelly' (106). Akin to filth, the substance of food that has been defiled or is in itself defiling (rotten, dirty, or not food at all, but rather a substance that is uncomfortably reminiscent of food), is extensively used to denote the abject limit between life and death, digestion and gagging, like Kristeva's skin on the surface of the milk. In particular, there are a number of incidents where skin of a person on the verge of death, or already dead, is identified with food substance. Kostoulas's encounter with another soldier from the enemy line of the Bulgarian front, ends in Kostoulas killing him:

⁶¹ Anticlimax as a narrative technique is explored in Anna Kavan's writings in Chapter 3.

At this point I was nothing but an intricate super-sensitive ear planted in the mud like a colossal mushroom—an ear listening in fright, a heart thrusting punches into my chest, a hand clenching the naked steel of my bayonet. ‘He’ was directly next to me now. As he slid along, the edge of his trench-coat grazed my boot for an instant [...] The moment ‘he’ recoiled from the touch of my boot, in that same moment I drove the point of my bayonet into his dark bulk [...] until I heard a raucous gurgle, as from muddy water sluicing from a narrow gate and seething with foam. You can never imagine how easily a bayonet enters human flesh; it might just as well be piercing a sackful of yogurt. (258)

Kostoulas here performs a ‘killing without hating,’ as he says, meaning a killing without sense or logic (64). What takes place in this episode, however, is more than a routine military incident: Kostoulas crosses the line of individuality and sees himself change into a component of a larger cause. His body responds, as it were, beside himself, and he changes entirely from an individual body with equal body parts to a single body part serving the body of the army, and ultimately of the nation. Unsparingly, each body part attacks his individual self: the ear is paralleled to an abject fungus, the heart is attacking the chest, and the same hand that protects the nation bleeds on the bayonet. The abject imagery signposts the destruction of the individual and his inscription into serving the collective purpose, along with the ritualistic celebration that takes place after Kostoulas’s killing: ‘[...] the recommendation went in for me to receive a sergeant’s chevron and the War Cross. The company’s Order of the Day described me as “a model of cool-headed valor and the very pattern, so rarely found, of heroic leadership”’ (259).

A similar transition from the individual to the collective takes place in the chapter titled ‘Carrion,’ where the soldiers form a collective consciousness through the distribution of the army food: eating for the soldiers is a tortuous ritual that bears more similarities to hunger than sustenance. Kostoulas describes his eating experience in a ritualistic way:

We eat once in every twenty-four hours, the distribution taking place at nightfall. The food is plentiful enough, but always the same, large slabs of meat with noodles or pilaf, so we have already lost all appetite for it [...] The food is delivered to us from a distance of three miles; by the time it arrives, it is cold, bespattered with mud and full of pebbles—in short disgusting. (65)

Kostoulas narrates how he trades his portion for cigarettes with another soldier, Mitreli,

an emaciated malformed private with a sallow complexion who never tires of eating and never puts on an ounce of weight. It seems that all the victuals he swallows go straight to his hump; this must be his stomach, because it's the only part of him that is nourished (it's been filling out lately). (65)

Mitreli's hump is the grotesque equivalent of a full belly, the reverse side of a full stomach. In fact, this reversal is symptomatic of the bodily state of the soldier: the act of eating as means of sustenance of the individual body has been reversed, with the meaning shifting to the collectivity of the eating experience. The bodies are malnourished and ultimately starved in order to access the collective soldierly experience.

Kostoulas's end is disclosed with abject detail, and the early appearance of his death at the beginning of the novel speaks to the intense soldierly representation, so powerful in its focus on body as finite matter, that it resists monumentalization: 'We found him burned to death, his face completely devoured by the flames, the entire front portion of his head a black and red mutilation [...] a row of teeth between tightly-clenched jaws entirely stripped of flesh' (2). Kostoulas's body, emphatically present in his death, wrote its own story through letters addressed to his beloved, and that story is a narrative within whose letters 'is a tormented soul forming part of the cosmic Oversoul' (3). Through 'the magic of that word which sends sudden spasms through a person's vitals' (39), namely his nation, Greece, Myrivilis's discourse reveals an inextricable link between nation and body, to the extent that the war trauma becomes necessary for the transition from solitary to social and from local to national to take place. Over and over again, Myrivilis asserts that the soul and the spirit are 'corporeal;' 'Only when the body enjoys good health is the world beautiful [...] The whole of creation exists only through the flesh; bodily equilibrium determines universal equilibrium' (135), and therefore, for Myrivilis, the social exists through the somatic.

The Body of the Nation: *Half of a Yellow Sun*

So far we have seen Myrivilis's attempt to establish the sociopolitical identity of the body through the narration of individual and collective traumatic affect. If in Myrivilis's case the grotesque and abject body becomes the unit onto which sociopolitical identity is inscribed, in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* the narrated abject body works in a similar manner, as it speaks for and becomes a constitutive element of the contested national identity and the

trauma of the civil war. As each individual abject body is ejected from the dominant nation, its bodily trauma is celebrated by becoming a bonding material for an emerging collectivity.

The Biafran War, otherwise known as the Nigerian Civil War, erupted in 1967 with the oil-rich eastern region of Nigeria wanting to secede from the rest of Nigeria because of religious, cultural, economic, and racial tensions that had been broiling in the country since its 1962 census.⁶² The tensions, with coups d'état and counter coups having started as early as the beginning of 1966, resulted in the declaration of the Biafran Republic, the nation-state of the Igbo people, and one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa.⁶³ Albeit fragmented politically and without a state of their own before the secession, the Igbo people's national identity is taken up quite forcefully by Adichie, who places the Igbo revolution amid national but also international change and turmoil. After an exhausting war with huge losses in human and animal lives as well as resources, the Biafrans lost their short-lived independence in 1970 and the half of a yellow sun, which proudly showed on the Biafran flag, never really rose.

In the narration of a war of genocidal proportions that resulted in more than two million civilian and military casualties, the human body in its demise figures prominently.⁶⁴ What interests me in the narration of the abject body by Adichie is that the human body that is created becomes national through abjection, in other words, that abjection is narrated as necessary for the creation of the Biafran national body. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a fruitful example of the fact that whenever the nation-state is contested or in peril, abjection comes forth as necessary to demarcate the national boundaries on the boundaries of the human body, while simultaneously the imprint of national identity is injected on the human body like an ineffective antidote to the trauma it is undergoing.

Traumatic affect is primarily narrated by Adichie through its inscription on the body. The trauma that is caused by the secession of Biafra and the subsequent secession of individual and collective identity, as the citizens become Biafrans instead of Nigerians, is narrated through extensive imagery pertaining to refuse and food. Through *Half of a Yellow*

⁶² The tensions in Nigeria were intensified with the census, but were naturally the result of British rule which was enforced as a continuation of British imperialism in Africa in 1903. Following this and bearing in mind the very latest events in the 170,000 citizen Nigeria in 2014 with Boko Haram's mobilization, Nigerian trauma becomes part of a fluctuation, and future and past traumas are continually anticipated in Nigerian history. For a short account which especially discusses Boko Haram as part of the religious tension spectrum in Nigeria, see Murray Last, 'The Pattern of Dissent: Boko Haram in Nigeria 2009,' *Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, 10 (2009), 7-11.

⁶³ For a recent and concise history of the Biafran war of independence with testimonies and pictorial material, see Peter Baxter, *Biafra: The Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970* (Solihull, UK: Helion and Company, 2014).

⁶⁴ The Biafran war for independence is still a hotly contested topic. As many of the facts which denote exact territorial boundaries or numbers of casualties are debated for accuracy, in the present research I rely on Peter Baxter's historical text cited above for reasons of clarity.

Sun it is shown that the narration of the abject is employed by Adichie in order to create a clearly delineated Biafran identity. The discussion of food and refuse as defiling and abject elements surround the corpus and force it, by their existing on the corpus's limits, to essentially choose an identity; this provides the reader of *Half of a Yellow Sun* with an in-depth understanding of the Biafran national identity as it developed during its formative years, and the limits of the corpus expose Biafra's collective ambition but also predicament.

Bodies of Hunger

Food as a substance but also as cultural reference is of major importance for Adichie's narration. Allegorical images of the traumatized and starved body recur throughout *Half of a Yellow Sun* and become increasingly charged as actual food and water progressively diminish in the narrative. The hungry body is presented by Adichie as the epitome of abjection, and the many characters of the novel as associated with the hunger that was used as a weapon by the Nigerian forces. As the third-person narration jumps in and out the characters' consciousness, the hungry bodies provide the backdrop for this narration. The fragmented and episodic nature of the novel, with numerous prolepses and analepses, which will be discussed in detail in this section of my thesis, focuses on traumatized bodies to compile the warscape in its entirety.

Contrary to the majority of war narratives, it is often the case in *Half of a Yellow Sun* that the focus of the narration is a female body. A telling incident of this narrative focus and its implications for the contested nation of Biafra is when one of the Igbo starved villagers, Urenwa, is witnessed by one of the protagonists of the novel, Kainene. In this incident, Urenwa's maternal body is briefly confused with a hungry body: 'Urenwa's belly began to grow and Kainene was not sure if it was kwashiorkor [malnutrition] or pregnancy.'⁶⁵ The limits of Urenwa's body have been altered so that her body could be either shrinking by disease or expanding because of a pregnancy. The two extremes of being deprived of life and of creating life are manifested through the altering of the boundaries of the female form. In this sense, Urenwa's body becomes a maternal body, which, according to Kristeva is the site of abjection, ambiguously carrying life or death.⁶⁶ Urenwa's body is therefore an abject body par excellence, since it both attracts desire and repulses it, making Kainene spellbound on its liminal status between death and life. Malnutrition, or as it is known in the Igbo language, *kwashiorkor*, has a fundamental relationship with the abjection of the maternal

⁶⁵ *HoYS*, p. 390.

⁶⁶ Kristeva, *Powers*, p. 54.

body. It may be associated with the war in Nigeria, but kwashiorkor's first and foremost cause is the malnourishment and consequent deterioration of health that follows a child's weaning from breast-feeding and the replacement of his or her diet with an unbalanced one.⁶⁷ Kwashiorkor then, is for Biafra of the late 1960s the typical result of the separation between mother and child and the induction of the child in the collectivity. As such, it becomes the fundamental metaphor of Biafra's secession from the motherland.

Adichie uses the relationship between separation from the mother and kwashiorkor, employing a brilliantly subtle metaphor, to speak for the individual abjection as related to the assumption of a national identity. Towards the end of the novel Ugwu notices the children of the neighborhood, ironically playing a game they call war, and he realizes that they are no longer five, but four; he then remembers that the other children teased the missing one by calling him 'Breadfruit Belly.'⁶⁸ The missing boy was severely malnourished. His family is remembered by Ugwu as overall out of synch with the collectivity of the refugee camp: 'one of those families who did not believe their town would fall, and so his mother looked defiant.'⁶⁹ When the refugee camp is attacked by air, Ugwu remembers that during the air raid the child's mother froze and stood in the plain with the boy in her arms and without taking cover. Ugwu then 'reached out and pulled the child from the woman's embrace and ran,' separating mother and child but metaphorically removing the child from a state of singular defiance to the state of collective abjection: 'it was in the bunker, while playing with the damp soil that crawled with crickets and ants, that the child had told Ugwu his name.'⁷⁰ This unorthodox baptizing takes place in the name of the Biafran identity.

The abjection caused by the lack of food and resources is woven into the cause for Biafra's independence. Olanna tells her daughter Baby off when she sees her playing with scattered shrapnel from previous air raids: 'she hated to think that Baby was playing with the cold leftovers of things that killed.'⁷¹ Throughout the novel, Olanna refuses to surrender to the abject way of life that has been brought upon the Igbo community: she keeps souvenirs from her previous life, she is seen wearing her wig at all times until she must sell it for food, and she does not let Baby eat lizards like the other children, even though the lack of food is detrimental. Olanna is doubtful about the Biafran effort to win the war, and relies on her

⁶⁷ Philip E.S. Palmer, Maurice M. Reeder, *The imaging of tropical diseases: with epidemiological, pathological, and clinical correlation*, Vol. 2 (Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 2000), p. 139. More specifically, kwashiorkor is caused by a diet low in protein and high in starches. Adichie's narration points to the fact that even when food was enough in terms of quantity, kwashiorkor could not always be avoided, as the Biafrans' diet at the time according to Adichie consisted mostly of yams and cassava beans.

⁶⁸ *HoAYS*, p. 400.

⁶⁹ *HoAYS*, p. 400.

⁷⁰ *HoAYS*, p. 400.

⁷¹ *HoAYS*, p. 388.

sister for confirmation: ““The world will turn around soon, and Nigeria will stop this,” Kainene said quietly. “We’ll win.” Olanna believed it more because Kainene said it.”⁷² By contrast, Olanna’s openly dynamic sister Kainene, who wholeheartedly believes in the Biafran cause, fully embraces abjection as a necessary practice before the Biafran victory: ‘Kainene gave Baby a can to store the shrapnel [...] Kainene let Baby hold the dagger of the emaciated man who paraded the compound, muttering, [...] “let the vandals come” [...] Kainene let Baby eat a lizard leg.’⁷³ At this point, Adichie places the abjection of the war trauma at the heart of the identification with the newfound Biafran nation and reinforces the idea of the novelistic representation of traumatic abjection as a compulsive, performative mechanism, performed by the author but also by the characters in the novel, a mechanism that inescapably leads to the recuperation of trauma.

This rhetoric of abjection caused by food or the lack of it, is carried on throughout *Half of a Yellow Sun* and it coincides with moral and class degradation, though ultimately working in favor of the Biafran identity. Andrew Warnes discusses hunger as portrayed in African American slave narratives, and argues that African American novels of the twentieth century ‘draw a profound connection between cooking and writing, insisting on the capacity of both processes to replenish two disabling voids—hunger and illiteracy—that external forces have invested with special prominence.’⁷⁴ In Adichie’s writing, too, cooking and, therefore, having food to cook as opposed to not knowing how to cook, or not having enough food, are correlative with class and national politics. When young Ugwu moves to Odenigbo’s middle class home to be his servant, he tries to compensate for what he does not know by cooking well: after he cooks his Master’s, Odenigbo’s, first meal, ‘he stood by the kitchen door, watching as Master took a first forkful of rice and stew, took another, and then called out, “Excellent, my good man”’ (17). As a low class villager, Ugwu’s existence is validated through cooking, and throughout the novel, he is the only character who constantly handles food, and the only character who becomes the writer of his nation’s story.

Lack of food for the Igbo as connected to the demise of the Nigerian nation and the expansion of Biafra is narrated by Adichie through Ugwu’s voice. It is gradually disclosed to the reader that Ugwu writes a book about the Biafran struggle titled *The World Was Silent When We Died*. Through snippets of his book, Ugwu narrates that

⁷² *HoAYS*, p. 390.

⁷³ *HoAYS*, p. 388.

⁷⁴ Andrew Warnes, *Hunger Overcome?: Food and Resistance in Twentieth-century African American Literature* (Athens: Georgia UP, 2004), p. 2.

Starvation was a Nigerian weapon of war. Starvation broke Biafra and brought Biafra fame and made Biafra last as long as it did. Starvation made the people of the world take notice and sparked protests and demonstrations in London and Moscow and Czechoslovakia. Starvation made Zambia and Tanzania and Ivory Coast and Gabon recognize Biafra, starvation brought Africa into Nixon's American campaign and made parents all over the world tell their children to eat up.⁷⁵

In this excerpt, the many aspects of starvation are recounted, and it becomes clear that the hungry bodies are not just malnourished bodies, but also bodies that appropriate this hunger and turn it into protest. The abject and starved body as described by Ugwu then, may be jettisoned from the dominant nation, namely Nigeria, who considered Igbo people to be contaminated, in a sense, by their community, but, because of its abjection, the hungry body expands beyond national boundaries.

This point is similar to Warnes's discussion about hunger in literature. Warnes notes that several African American novels, either slave narratives, or narratives focusing on racism in the United States, employ literal hunger metaphorically to refer to a generalized hunger that was not confined to the individual body.⁷⁶ Similarly, in Adichie's novel we see many instances in which bodies are broken by starvation; it appears, however, that the abjection surrounding these bodies is what builds and expands the reputation of Biafra's revolutionary fight, standing for all that the Biafran nation lacks. More clearly, individual bodily abjection caused by lack of food works as a basis for a collective spreading of word of mouth: fame, protests and demonstrations, world recognition, and parental directions all relate to the act of speech. The substance (food) that should be going in through the orifice of the mouth but is not, becomes the content of the substance (speech) that exits the mouth: in that respect, abject starvation is turned into the logos of the nation, thus strengthening national identity.

Abjection caused by famine is not the only case where food delineates national identity in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Food also expresses oscillation between two different ideas of nationhood. More specifically, the local clashes with the national and sets its ambiguous overtones through the important bodily limit that the food is, when Ugwu visits his village home after having moved to the more cosmopolitan Nsukka. It appears that Ugwu's body reacts in a negative way to his visiting: 'His visit home suddenly seemed much longer than

⁷⁵ *Hoays*, p. 237.

⁷⁶ Warnes, pp. 84-87.

a week, perhaps because of the endless gassy churning in his stomach [...] his mother's food was unpalatable [...] he could not wait to get back to Nsukka and finally eat a real meal.⁷⁷ Ugwu's body reacts to the maternal ways, in the same way that Biafra rejects the false maternity of Nigeria. At the same time that Ugwu's body experiences a chasm between the local plain eating habits and the national more affluent way of cooking, the Biafran coup d'état takes place, that according to Ugwu, 'had changed the order of things and throbbed with possibility, with newness.'⁷⁸ The two worlds are mapped onto Ugwu's bodily existence, as the 'reality' of the identity that he acquires when living in Nsukka is juxtaposed with the 'unpalatability' of his village identity. This unpalatability acquires an abject character, as it refers to a substance that can neither be ingested by the body and therefore become part of it, nor be expelled from it, but rather sits in between inside and outside, shaping Ugwu's identity as liminal. It is this abject unpalatability with which the Igbo people identify and use as part of their story as Adichie tells it, their identity being forced towards integration within a disparate Nigeria, while simultaneously being ejected by the motherland.

From Kwashiorkor to the Uses of Defilement

The imagery of refuse is not a rare occasion in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, and it is, like food, part of an abject imagery that articulates nationhood. After the secession when Biafra is pronounced an independent nation, celebrations take place in the university city of Nsukka. For Olanna, Odenigbo's assertion that Biafra exists as a nation is instantly reminiscent of bodies in abjection: 'Olanna thought how awkwardly twisted Auntie Ifeka's arm had looked [...] how her blood had pooled so thick that it looked like glue, not red but close to black.'⁷⁹ Olanna is not the only one connecting Biafra's birth with memories of defilement; during the celebrations, Nigeria as a nation is metaphorically turned into a dead body and is given a ceremonious funeral which unites all of the participants:

some young men were carrying a coffin with NIGERIA written on it in white chalk; they raised it up, mock solemnity on their faces [...] when they lowered the coffin into the hole, a cheer rose in the crowd and spread, ripplelike, until it was one cheer, until Olanna felt that everybody there had become one.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *HoAYS*, p. 118.

⁷⁸ *HoAYS*, p. 126.

⁷⁹ *HoAYS*, p. 163.

⁸⁰ *HoAYS*, p. 163.

After the funeral, Odenigbo addresses the students shouting “‘Biafra is born! We will lead Black Africa!’”⁸¹ Biafra’s birth is complemented with a polluting experience, since Nigeria is depicted as a corpse. What Olanna observes is that all bodies had become one, through the abject experience of a mock funeral with a mock corpse. In this sense, the experience of a defiling act, metaphorically and literally, transfuses the Igbo people with the Biafran nationhood.

Another aspect of defiling abjection related to the Biafran state is recorded by Adichie when she narrates the event of Colonel Ekechi’s abduction and assassination. Colonel Ekechi is Adichie’s fictional character and in the narrative he is part of the first coup whose purpose was to establish a Biafran state;⁸² Englishman Richard and his partner, Olanna’s sister, Kainene receive news of his death after the second coup. Colonel Ekechi is one of the least agreeable characters of the novel (he is described as ‘loud, drunken, [with] duplicity dripping from his pores’),⁸³ however, his death by torture comes as an abject surprise to the reader and is combined with the overturning of Igbo power in the north of Nigeria:

Northern soldiers put him in a cell in the barracks and fed him his own shit. He ate his own shit [...] Then they beat him senseless and tied him to an iron cross and threw him back in his cell. He died tied to an iron cross. He died on a cross.⁸⁴

The repetition of the same sentence but with a different structure is a sign of the linguistic disruption that the abject idea of eating excrement and being tortured causes. Consistent with Adichie’s treatment of logos when pitted against abjection, linguistic repetition makes up for the lack of meaning that lies at the heart of this abject and traumatizing act. The most shocking part of the statement above, however, is the fact that Colonel Ekechi ate ‘his own’ excrement. Excrement as the substance which should be ejected so that the body can survive, returns as an oral object and Ekechi’s defiled body ultimately becomes part of his Igbo

⁸¹ *HoAYS*, p. 163.

⁸² Colonel Ekechi appears to be a fictional member of the government led by Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi, a leader whose government was accused of nepotism towards the Igbo and the Eastern regions of Nigeria and of racism against the Northern peoples of the country. Although this is regarded to be a misunderstanding by some, Ironsi was indeed arrested during the second coup, or counter-coup of July 1966, and killed. Adichie places Colonel Ekechi’s gruesome death during this event. For a brief account of how Ironsi government was perceived, see Isidore Diala, ‘History, Memoir & a Soldier’s Conscience: Philip Efiog’s *Nigeria & Biafra: My Story*,’ in *War in African Literature Today: A Review*, ed. by Ernest Emenyonu (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2008), pp. 112-127, (pp. 114-117).

⁸³ *HoAYS*, p. 138.

⁸⁴ *HoAYS*, p. 138.

identity. His demise is a metaphor for the demise of the Igbo population in the North while his Igbo identity is excreted and ingested by him in a violent and abject tautology. As a matter of fact, after the second coup, the Northern tribes perform a series of anti-Igbo pogroms throughout which the Igbo soldiers' bodies are described as always already defiled and in a sense killing their own selves: the Northern soldiers 'examined the feet of each man, and any Igbo man whose feet were clean and uncracked by harmattan, they took away and shot. They also examined their foreheads for signs of their skin being lighter from wearing a soldier's beret.'⁸⁵ The Northern soldiers assume that cleanliness signifies feet which are normally covered by soldiers' boots. The bodies of the Igbo soldiers betray their national identity and in a sense are used against themselves.

The Biafran body, defiled by the collective cause and attacking its own identity, is central to Adichie's narrative. The Biafran soldiers' bodies are defiled in the name of the newfound state and their identity changes from individual to national, and with it the affects which accompany each identity. The most characteristic example of this in the novel is Ugwu's military service. Ugwu is conscripted to the Biafran army by a group of boy-soldiers towards the end of the war. Although his soldierly experience in the novel takes up a meagre ten pages, the imagery is powerfully physical. Much like soldier Kostoulas in Myrivilis's novel, Ugwu's identity is split between his mind and his body which is seen as national property, since his conscription is compulsory and he is abducted by the Biafran army: 'he unwrapped his mind from his body, separated the two, while he lay in the trench [...] He read pages of his book over and over. He touched his own skin and thought of its decay.'⁸⁶ Again, Ugwu seems to be oscillating between two identities, especially since on the one hand he is authoring the events of war and on the other he is merely a body who acts for the win-the-war effort.

Perhaps an even clearer inscription of the individual bodily affect onto the unity of national identity through defiling is Ugwu's act of rape when he becomes a soldier. This incident in Adichie's novel has been much discussed by critics and is viewed in part as consistent with male-dominated war stories where the male affects are unfailingly inscribed onto female bodies, as well as inescapably mirroring the stereotypical notion of a violent and oversexualized black continent.⁸⁷ Although these are concerns which cannot be overlooked,

⁸⁵ *HoAYS*, p. 140. The harmattan is a northeasterly wind bringing blowing from the Sahara Desert.

⁸⁶ *HoAYS*, pp. 365-366.

⁸⁷ Cooper and Rushton are among the critics who argue that the incident of the rape is overall a sensationalist image which reinforces the ill-begotten stereotype of ultraviolence in Africa. Brenda Cooper, *A New Generation of African Writers: Migration, Material Culture & Language* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), p. 141 and Amy S. Rushton, "'A History of Darkness': Exoticising Strategies and the Nigerian Civil War in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,' in *Exoticizing the Past in Contemporary Neo-Historical Fiction*, ed. by Elodie Rousselot (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

the significance of teenage Ugwu performing the atrocious act that rape is, has to be related to a certain extent with the succumbing of his individual affect to the soldierly sentiment. The incident occurs when, after a successful battle, Ugwu's division visits a bar to celebrate and Ugwu is dared by his fellow soldiers to rape a teenage girl who works there, after they have gang raped her. Ugwu's masculinity is rather prosaically tested with 'aren't you a man?' to which Ugwu responds bodily: 'Ugwu pulled his trousers down, surprised at the swiftness of his erection [...] and felt his own climax, the rush of fluids to the tips of himself: a self-loathing release.'⁸⁸ Throughout this incident Ugwu's identity seems to be split. Ugwu chooses to rape the girl in order to validate his participation within his army division; he appears to do so being literally *beside* himself, as if his body has succumbed to the collective affect by attacking his up to that point non-violent identity.

If one tries to move past the brutality of the scene, what may be read in the description of Ugwu's affects is the defilement of his own body through the defilement of the teenage girl. The point here is that a lot more is tested by the other soldiers in this incident than Ugwu's masculinity: the real doubt that surfaces is whether Ugwu is an Igbo soldier and will therefore behave accordingly. This is made clear by the fact that the question 'aren't you a man' is repeated in the Igbo dialect, (*I bukwa nwoke?*) no doubt added there by Adichie to stress precisely this parameter of flaunting Biafran nationhood which plays into the defiling rape.⁸⁹ Ugwu specifically experiences the rape as that which changes him into a liminal person, a person being reduced to the 'tips of himself,' his boundaries being defiled by his own self. In this light, the girl helps deliver the recognition of this defilement: the rape of the teenage girl is not primarily a narrative trick in the novel so that Ugwu's guilt and consequent desire to make amends for his wrongdoings can lead him to write his book on the war.⁹⁰ Instead, Ugwu is actively and affectively mirrored by the girl's character. Throughout the rape, Ugwu avoids looking at her: 'he did not look at her face [...] Finally he looked at the girl. She stared back at him with a calm hate.'⁹¹ Although the obvious and irrevocable trauma is suffered by the bar girl (who remains unnamed), both hers and Ugwu's bodies are attacked and defiled by this rape: the hate that floats between them is a shared affect directed at Ugwu. Not only does the girl's hateful stare assign another, monstrous identity to Ugwu, but most importantly, the girl's stare functions as a mirror through which Ugwu recognizes the split of his self, a split which stays with him as does the girl's stare

⁸⁸ *HoAYS*, p. 365.

⁸⁹ *HoAYS*, p. 365, emphasis in the original.

⁹⁰ This is the primary reading of Ugwu's rape in John Marx, *Geopolitics and the Anglophone Novel, 1890-2011* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), p. 75.

⁹¹ *HoAYS*, p. 365.

further on in the narrative.⁹² Ugwu has attacked his own bodily identity in order to become a Biafran and a part of the collective cause. Within the precarious Biafran identity, hunger and especially defilement surround the human and animal body, and everything physical, while, from the ashes of this abject physicality rises the Biafran national identity. The destructible individual body synecdochically stands for the precarious national identity, and abjection becomes the interface onto which individual and collective trauma tautologically merge.

The Body Must Be Read: Biomediation in *Gravity's Rainbow*

We have seen so far that the abject body is tropologically used to denote collectivity by Myrivilis and Adichie, however, nowhere is the abject bodily interface more clearly used as a metaphor to denote a collective state of trauma, than in *Gravity's Rainbow*. In a collection of essays on *Gravity's Rainbow*, Maureen Quilligan focuses on the various uses of text in Thomas Pynchon's novel.⁹³ Quilligan deciphers Pynchon's uses of scientific, historical, psychoanalytical, and linguistic systems, positing that all these texts are placed in the context of the novel in order to be read and produce meaning within an allegorical system of linguistic values. Steven Weisenburger is also concerned with Pynchon's use of linguistic elements and different types of text in general. In his companion to *Gravity's Rainbow*, he notes that alongside formal types of language such as encyclopaedic or historical narration, Pynchon employs 'the unofficial side of ordinary language [which] supplies the novel with a welter of ready-made folkloric genres: puns, rhyming speech, jokes and ditties, popular lyrics, children's games, and pantomimes [...] integrated into the novel's satirical project.'⁹⁴ The plethora of formal and informal, literary and extraliterary text used in *Gravity's Rainbow* is attuned to the traumatized characters' quest for meaning. Indeed, the protagonists of the novel move aimlessly in a Europe ravaged by the Second World War, struggling to understand their own and the world's trauma, while

⁹² 'The bar girl and her return gaze, through its visceral hatred, [...] shatters Ugwu's carefully constructed and nurtured self, fixing him as the monster he becomes' is argued in Madu Krishnan, *Contemporary African Literature in English: Global Locations, Postcolonial Identifications* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). In terms of Ugwu's personality as a constructed and cohesive narration, it may well be argued that the shattering of his personality is foreshadowed when one of the other teenage soldiers tears off the first page of the narrative that Ugwu relies on, Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave: Written by Himself* (HoAYS, p. 360). As the rape takes place right after this incident, it seems that both the narrative and Ugwu's personality start to come apart at that point.

⁹³ Maureen Quilligan, 'Twentieth-Century American Allegory,' in *Thomas Pynchon*, ed. and intro. by Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003), pp. 93-108.

⁹⁴ Weisenburger, 'Gravity's Rainbow,' p. 6.

kicking endlessly among the plastic trivia, finding in each Deeper Significance and trying to string them all together [...] hoping to zero in on the tremendous and secret Function whose name, like the permuted names of God, cannot be spoken [...] to make sense out of, to find the meanest sharp sliver of truth in so much replication, so much waste.⁹⁵

Replication of meaning features prominently in *Gravity's Rainbow*, and the labyrinthine structure of meaning itself appears to be inarticulable. For Pynchon's characters, meaning and significance are godlike concepts, constantly lost and found within the terror of war, never fully articulated. One of the identifiable strands of meaning and elements of the novel's syntax of communication is the grotesque and abject human and animal body as a synecdoche for soldierly and national communities. I will demonstrate here how the traumatized body in its grotesque and abject state is essentially a trope meant to be read in *Gravity's Rainbow* both in terms of separate body parts working as a synecdoche for the whole traumatized body, but even more so as a synecdoche for the entire collectivity. In this sense, the human and animal body in Pynchon's novel becomes a biomediated body par excellence, in the sense that each body is measured so that the collectivity may benefit from the information that this body will produce. The trope of the biomediated body is explicitly used not only to make sense, but also to construct a logical set of information and practices that affect the traumatized community.

We have seen so far in Myrivilis and Adichie that what is of utmost importance in the grotesque and abject narrated body is the ambiguous relationship between the inside and the outside. In Pynchon's novel, too, abjection for the countless bodies of the characters is the interface between individuality and collectivity, in the sense that abjection is metaphorically employed to demonstrate the transgression of the collective that seeps into the individual. Pynchon narrates an episode where the 'sullen civilians' who are conscripted by the Allied army are attending church on Christmas Eve and sing the gospels. These are bodies on whose physical boundaries a collective identity is played out: they are

fattening despite their hunger, flatulent because of it, pre-ulcerous, hoarse, runny-nosed, red-eyed, sore-throated, piss-swollen men suffering [...] giv[ing] you this evensong, climaxing now with its rising fragment of

⁹⁵ Weisenburger, 'Gravity's Rainbow,' p. 528.

some ancient scale, voices overlapping [...] echoing, filling the entire hollow of the church.⁹⁶

The individuals here draw from their trauma and join their voices into one collective prayer. This aspect of the bodies connects them with the rest of the world and at the same time isolates them from it as they experience an affect which originates in the body but produces signals and meaning for a given collectivity.

We have already seen that the traumatized bodies are at once isolated in their own trauma, but at the same time connect with one another, as, for example, when Kostoulas marches with his fellow soldiers, or when the starved Igbo rejoice in celebration of newborn Biafra. John Masterson supports the view that the variety of character narrations in *Half of a Yellow Sun* contradicts the apparent distinction among separate bodies, arguing that ‘seemingly distinct bodies, characters and geo-political spaces remain intimately intertwined.’⁹⁷ Following Masterson’s argument, the traumatized bodies form assemblages with their environment, thus influencing the geological and technological landscape. In *Gravity’s Rainbow*, the narrative plot is reliant on the assemblages among grotesque and abject bodies, as in *Life in the Tomb* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*; furthermore, though, the elements of the grotesque and abject in Pynchon’s novel provide information for the continuation of the collectivity and are categorized as biodata. In this sense, the abject and grotesque body in *Gravity’s Rainbow* falls into the category of the biomediated body as described by Clough. For Clough, biomediation is the capacity of new technologies to ‘attach to and expand the informational substrate of bodily matter and matter generally,’ in order to generate new information, often digitalized.⁹⁸ The biomediated body in *Gravity’s Rainbow* is the traumatized body: it embodies and materialises information and ultimately becomes information in the face of the accelerating technology. Pynchon’s narrated bodies are biomediated bodies par excellence in the sense that they are measured, are vitally connected to one another and there is a flow of information between them and their surroundings.

In the novel, Roger Mexico is a statistician who, under the guidance of Edward Pointsman, a Pavlovian psychiatrist at the institution of the White Visitation, tests and measures each animal and human body, ‘chart for it drops of saliva, body weights, voltages, sound levels, metronome frequencies, bromide dosages, number of afferent nerves cut,

⁹⁶ *GR*, p. 138.

⁹⁷ John Masterson, ‘Posing, Exposing, Opposing: Accounting for Contested (Corpo)Realities in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*,’ *Expressions of the Body: Representations in African Text and Image*, ed. by Charlotte Baker (Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing House, 2009), pp. 137- 140, (p. 140).

⁹⁸ Clough, ‘Biomediation,’ p. 208.

percentages of brain tissue removed, dates and hours of numbing, deafening, blinding, castration.’⁹⁹ The body becomes the testing ground for collective processes and the advancement of science.¹⁰⁰ Tyrone Slothrop’s body is also subjected to extensive affective probing, testing, and modifying by various technologies as an employee of the technical intelligence unit ACHTUNG:

ACHTUNG is Allied Clearing House, Technical Units, Northern Germany. It’s a stalesmoke paper warren, at the moment nearly deserted, its black typewriters tall as grave markers [...] Things have fallen roughly into layers, over a base of bureaucratic smegma that sifts steadily to the bottom, made up of millions of tiny red and brown curls of rubber eraser, pencil shavings, dried tea or coffee stains, traces of sugar and Household Milk, much cigarette ash, very fine black debris picked and flung from typewriter ribbons, decomposing library paste, broken aspirins ground to powder.¹⁰¹

ACHTUNG’s special configuration is narrated through double entendres which might as well refer to abject body secretions: ‘smegma,’ ‘curls,’ ‘shavings,’ and ‘stains,’ this speaking to the inherent relationship between the bureaucratic aspect of war and its physical aspect. Slothrop’s job is to investigate and record the sites of aftermath of bombings: ‘in his travels among places of death’ he is ‘looking for fragments of German hardware’ that remain from each fallen rocket.¹⁰² His office is a den of bureaucratic and capitalistic processes where the tactics of recording what he finds at the sites of trauma are devised. The typewriters are rightfully exposed as grave markers, since they are used to record the circumstances of sites of death, and the entire office resembles a bureaucratic morgue with its decay, decomposition, and desiccation.

⁹⁹ *GR*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁰ Marianne Liljeström provides a useful interpretation of Clough’s definition of the biomediated body. Liljeström clarifies that Clough examines capitalistic acceleration and its practices by providing ‘a list of procedures, operationalized as surveillance techniques, to test and monitor the capacities of affective or bio-mediated bodies, such as DNA testing, brain fingerprinting, neural imaging, body-heat detection, and iris or hand recognition’ (Marianne Liljeström, ‘Affect,’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, ed. by Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015), pp. 16-38, (p. 28).

¹⁰¹ *GR*, p. 18.

¹⁰² *GR*, p. 19 and p. 24.

But Slothrop has a trauma of his own, whose intimate nature is soon revealed. Beside his desk hangs a map of London with stars and female names pinned on it where the exact trauma shines through:

The stars pasted up on Slothrop's map cover the available spectrum, beginning with silver (labeled 'Darlene') [...] a cluster near Tower Hill, a violet density about Covent Garden, a nebular streaming on into Mayfair, Soho, and out to Wembley and up to Hampstead Heath—in every direction goes this glossy, multicolored, here and there peeling firmament, Carolines, Marias, Annes, Susans, Elizabeths.¹⁰³

This is the beginning of the narration of Slothrop's affective relationship between his sexual encounters and the bombing of London by V-2 rockets. It appears that each of Slothrop's erections and sexual encounters at specific places precedes the drop of a rocket at the exact same places by a number of days. Later in the novel it is revealed that Slothrop's body has been conditioned by Pavlovian scientist Laszlo Jamf to have an erection when exposed to a specific stimulus, which is thought to be the fictional material Imipolex G, 'the material of the future.'¹⁰⁴ Apart from the conspiratorial aspect of the plot, where it is suggested that the war is merely a façade for technological experimentation on humans and capitalistic progress, what is crucial for this thesis is that the rocket connects Slothrop literally with everyone else, and that his personal trauma is implicated in the trauma of entire nations.

That the human and animal body is a unit meant to produce and organize a set of information becomes evident from the beginning of the story: Slothrop's body is the recording instrument through which the map of future bombings is informed. His body is constantly probed into by Pointsman, who, along with a team of scientists attempts to trace the cause of this peculiar coincidence. In the White Visitation, a former mental hospital located in the Pynchonian town of Ick Regis on the coast of southern England, experiments are performed on human and animal bodies and all the research is 'devoted to psychological warfare.'¹⁰⁵ Pointsman is looking for information that will develop psychological warfare tactics and experiments on bodies like Slothrop's, who has been conditioned to react to a specific stimulus since childhood, on animal bodies, such as dogs and foxes, and on

¹⁰³ *GR*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁴ *GR*, p. 469. One possible interpretation of Slothrop's erections at the future bomb sites is that the Imipolex G is the material out of which the rockets are constructed, and therefore affect Slothrop's body. The role of the material in the novel is hard to decipher and the same stands for the characters of the story. Indeed, several of the characters' quests revolve around trying to track down Imipolex G, which is the material that will be worn by sadomasochist Gottfried in the shape of a suit when he takes a final ride on the Rocket 00000.

¹⁰⁵ *GR*, p. 35.

children's bodies, ones that are homeless or orphans. For Pointsman, each 'patient's' body, be it animal or human, bears information that must be deleted so that it can become a tabula rasa. Pointsman is eager to inscribe new information onto each body by forcing each subject to relive their trauma until all the bodies are empty vessels ready to convey new information through their being experimented on: 'out of each catharsis rise new children, painless, egoless [...] tablet erased, new writing about to begin, hand and chalk poised in winter gloom over these poor human palimpsests shivering under their government blankets.'¹⁰⁶ The image of the bodies that shiver under the government blankets is reminiscent of Myrivilis's placement of affect in the military hospital that I discussed before; in this case too this imagery signals the synecdochical role that the body acquires for the entirety of traumatized bodies, anticipated by their characterization as egoless, meaning explicitly that their ego is sacrificed for the collective cause of winning the war. At the sight of these bodies their purpose becomes evident: Roger Mexico, the statistician in Pointsman's team, confirms the children's role for the war effort: he feels 'selfless, sexless...' when he sees the children who arrive at the hospital to be experimented on, his own ego disappearing and becoming part of the collectivity.¹⁰⁷

The image that is worth noting in this description of how Pointsman views the children's bodies, is the new writing which is about to begin and the conceptualization of the children's bodies as palimpsests. In order for Pointsman's new writing to take place, the old writing must be erased and the old trauma must be in a sense alleviated. The children's bodies are chosen because of their trauma, since 'these children have run away [...] and [...] there is no one to meet them.'¹⁰⁸ At the same time, however, traumatic affect in their case functions as a kind of sedative that enables the institutionalized captivity which they are about to experience and the experiments they will undergo for the collective good. Not only does the view of the body as palimpsest, as a manuscript ready to be re-written, invite the description of the body in terms of its readability, but more crucially, this readability of the traumatized body becomes the connector between individual and collective trauma. The bodies lose their individual identity, or better yet, are forced to sacrifice it: under Pointsman's guidance they become the units to produce information that will be useful for the organization of the Allied war.

The animal body in *Gravity's Rainbow* calls for a similar reading. As Pointsman and his team cannot always recruit human bodies for their Pavlovian experiments, the most

¹⁰⁶ *GR*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁷ *GR*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁸ *GR*, p. 51.

common bodies in the laboratory of the White Visitation are those of animals. Pointsman and Mexico recruit shell-shocked dogs mostly, but also foxes and even octopi. One of the dogs on which Pointsman performs his Pavlovian experiments is Dog Vanya (Vanya is also the name of one of the human characters to be encountered later in the novel; Pynchon also speaks of the Nazi hound named Reichssieger von Thanatz Alpdrucken, while in part three of the novel Slothrop encounters a character named Thanatz aboard the ship *Anubis*, echoing the Egyptian god with a form of a dog, and in the Pynchonian universe there is no reason to assume that this is coincidental). After sessions of overwhelming experimentation with external stimuli, Dog Vanya stops responding in accordance with the intensity of the stimuli: ‘it no longer matters now how loudly the metronome ticks. A stronger stimulus no longer gets a stronger response.’¹⁰⁹

Interfaces of Grotesque

What is of interest here is the phase that Dog Vanya’s body enters. The narrator explains that ‘a membrane, hardly noticeable, stretches between Dog Vanya and the outside.’¹¹⁰ Instead of dividing the inside and outside, for Dog Vanya, this abject membrane functions as the glue which makes inside and outside inseparable. This change takes place in Dog Vanya’s cortex: the Rabelaisian grotesque may once have manifested at the boundary of the nose or the mouth, but the location of the Pynchonian grotesque is the cortex, that part of the brain which works as the limit between external stimuli and the reception of information, referred to in the novel as an ‘interface.’¹¹¹ For *Gravity’s Rainbow*, the interface is the part of the body that records information coming from the outside so that the individual can respond to it, but it is also the place where, as in Dog Vanya’s case, the changes recorded constitute valuable information for an entire institution and a collective purpose: by experimenting on Dog Vanya’s cortex, Pointsman is hoping to understand what makes Slothrop tick, so that he can use this knowledge to develop psychological weapons.

As an interface, the cortex of an animal or human body is described in Pynchon’s novel by Kevin Spectro, one of the scientists in Pointsman’s team, as ‘between Outside and Inside [...] mediating between the two, *but part of them both*.’¹¹² Spectro goes so far as to ask ‘how can we, any of us, be separate?’¹¹³ Slothrop seems to answer this question with his

¹⁰⁹ *GR*, p. 80.

¹¹⁰ *GR*, p. 80.

¹¹¹ *GR*, p. 80.

¹¹² *GR*, p. 144, emphasis in the original.

¹¹³ *GR*, p. 144.

biomediated body: he is the clearest instance where an individual body forms assemblages with a collectivity of traumatized bodies by literally becoming a body of information: his body holds the piece of information that will affect a specific site in the near future. Slothrop shares the same predicament with the citizens of London where the rockets fall, however, he is either in a position to control where the next bomb site will be, or he is part of a deterministic plan by which the rockets' targets are long preordained. Either way, Slothrop's existence is tied up with the existence of the rocket and his experience is singular in the sense that it is an individual affect, but also communal in that it connects him with the traumatized bodies of the future: Slothrop's body becomes an interface uniting the individual and the collective traumatic affect.

This synecdoche of Slothrop's biomediated body standing for collective trauma is consistently deployed in the novel. In fact, Slothrop explicitly recognizes his connection to the rocket and therefore to the individuals that the rocket affects. Slothrop is in Berlin during its last bombing by the Allied forces, and he acknowledges that

what's kept him moving the whole night, him and the others, the solitary Berliners who come out only in these evacuated hours, belonging and going noplacé, is Their unexplained need to keep some marginal population in these wan and preterite places, certainly for economic though, who knows, maybe emotional reasons too. (444)

Whether it is a paranoid speculation or not, Slothrop identifies with the enemy nation, as he realizes that both his and their bodies have been prescribed to occupy a certain marginal role in the war, that serves specific purposes, long preordained by Them. Moreover, the narrator observes that Slothrop's 'stiff cock in his pants sprung fine as a dowser's wand trying to point up at what was hanging there for everybody' (498). Slothrop's penis is referred to as a dowser: this particular organ of his body performs a search that has collective implications, and it is an organ which, in its investment with binary code attributes, presents a mocking, Rabelaisian synecdoche for the collectivity: the code erection or no erection is transcribed to dead or alive for the collectivity. Another example is Slothrop's body becoming part of his surroundings. Slothrop is sleeping with one of the girls who will later become a star on his map, when, right after the blast of a rocket, 'Slothrop's penis has sprung erect, aching. To Darlene, suddenly awake, heart pounding very fast, palms and fingers in fear's pain, this hardon has seemed reasonably part of the white light, the loud blast' (122). Slothrop's body becomes part of the rocket and the traumatic aftermath it creates.

Slothrop's conditioning by Lazslo Jamf leaves him feeling disjointed and with a newfound obligation: as his mentor and being the man who taught Slothrop everything he knows about the V-2 rocket, Sir Stephen Dodson-Truck (in an instance of obvious irony, if one notices his name) tells Slothrop that they are both 'mechanical men,' and that Slothrop's job is to 'learn the rocket, inch by inch' (219). Sir Stephen later goes on to reveal to Slothrop the truth about his body in a limerick as suddenly and inexplicably present as Slothrop's erection itself. The limerick is titled 'The Penis He Thought Was His Own' (219), and it explains how Slothrop's organ is meant to impart the knowledge it accumulates, blast after blast: 'his erection hums from a certain distance, like an instrument installed, wired by Them into his body [...] representing Their white Metropolis far away' (290). Slothrop's penis is the grotesque interface that connects him with the rest of the world, and, similarly to Myrivilis's and Adichie's traumatized characters, this brings to the reader's attention that despite the technologized conflict that the Second World War was, the terrain of the actual war was once more the human body. True to the grotesque form, hyperbole and bathos are used to explicitly connect the technology of the war to the mechanics of the individual body.

As he realizes that he is not the owner of his physical destiny, Slothrop begins to unravel the mystery of the connection between his erections and the blasts, but he manages to do more than that: Slothrop re-organizes the organs of his body in order to shake Their foundations. Slothrop's sexual encounter with Trudi halfway through the novel is symptomatic of his effort to give his own meaning to his body. During his sexual act with Trudi, Slothrop feels that instead of his penis

his *nose* actually seems to be erecting, the mucus beginning to flow yes a nasal hardon here and Trudi has certainly noticed all right, how could she help but... as she slides her lips over the throbbing snoot [...] she penetrates even farther [...] to accommodate her head, then shoulders, and... well, she's halfway in, might as well—pulling up her knees, crawling [...] she is able to stand at last inside the great red hall which is quite pleasantly lit.¹¹⁴

When Slothrop arrives at Trudi's abode he has already been one with his surroundings: 'his joints are aching with rain and city wandering, he's half blitzed, Trudi is kissing him into an amazing comfort, it's an open house here, no favored senses or organs.'¹¹⁵ As Slothrop's

¹¹⁴ *GR*, p. 446.

¹¹⁵ *GR*, p. 446.

conditioning allows him to focus on one organ only, Trudi's open house, where all of his organs have meaning, sharply contrasts with the White Visitation. Contrary to the other sexual experiences that Slothrop has in the novel, at this point his sexual partner, Trudi, seems to be the one to enter him, quite literally. For Slothrop, the fact that his body is read as a binary of erection/no erection is his prison and he seeks to change within the existing discursive social system. The grotesque tropology breaches the walls between individual and collective and the strong bathetic element connects trauma with celebration. The incident with Slothrop's nasal hardon showcases, as Jarvis points out, 'Slothrop's ability to reinscribe the site of his pleasures and desires from his penis to his nose [which in turn] offers an important instance of agency in the novel.'¹¹⁶ Following this idea through, in this instance Slothrop rewrites his own body so as to find meaning in the circumstances he is experiencing and the agency that underlies this rewriting is of authorial bearing. With the help of Trudi, Slothrop briefly reverses his predicament and in allowing this to happen forms a unique, celebratory connection with another body. In that sense, the grotesque protrusions and abject orifices on Slothrop's body are not created and exploited by the army of the state, but, similarly to Adichie's kwashiorkor, form an integral part not only of his individuality and his connectivity with another person.

This incident of Slothrop's and Trudi's intercourse discussed above is framed like Deleuze and Guattari's depiction of love-making: 'whenever someone makes love, really makes love, that person constitutes a body without organs' or rather, a body which has broken the dictatorship of the pre-assigned roles of each body member, and has managed to re-organize.¹¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari argue that 'you never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit.'¹¹⁸ Similar to the abject and the grotesque therefore, but performing a different reading of *Gravity's Rainbow* and Slothrop's body, the Body without Organs breaks the ultimate barrier between bodies. For Deleuze and Guattari, a body is defined as such by the organization and collaboration of its organs, should the organs be displaced however, this body becomes unrecognizable as the body of an individual. Slothrop's authorial redistribution of his organs is almost of anarchist nature: since his body has become a national, technological, and ultimately, war investment, his only choice is to deconstruct his body, thus weakening the power that is held over him.

¹¹⁶ Jarvis, p. 79.

¹¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 34. Although this theory by Deleuze and Guattari is a powerful tool to interpret the body's condition, it does not necessarily promote the discussion on traumatized bodies of war and will not be further taken up in this project.

¹¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 174.

What reinforces the interpretation of the traumatic affect as a key force in the body that must be read, is the fact that Slothrop's re-inscription of information on his traumatized body is narrated in the most literal sense possible. Slothrop's nasal erection becomes a symbol of his desire to overthrow the current binary system and to be entered by new information. This entering in literal terms performed by Trudi, is exaggerated on the one hand as in this fantastical intercourse she wholly enters Slothrop through his nose, but on a more crucial level is speaking to the fact that there is a literal representation of Slothrop's agency. On a less complicated level perhaps, Slothrop's attempt to make sense of his trauma and potentially reverse it takes place through the literal interpretation of him being entered.

Because Slothrop's potency is directly related with war (his penis is associated with the rocket), and therefore with the control exercised by 'Them,' his penis fails him at the beginning of the intercourse: 'for possibly the first time in his life Slothrop does not feel obliged to have a hardon, which is just as well, because it does not seem to be happening with his penis.'¹¹⁹ Already the expansion of Slothrop's nostrils to fit Trudi is unexpected compared to the Bakhtinian grotesque in that, in the incident, it is not a protrusion of the expected male bodily member that takes place, namely the penis, but rather, what is expanded, is Trudi's female 'torrid tongue.'¹²⁰ What lies at the root of this grotesque incident, is Slothrop's unexpected impotence, causing him to connect with Trudi in a way that is outside 'Their' remit: the only way for Slothrop to reclaim his body is to perform sexual intercourse without using the instrument that belongs to 'Them.' What is impotence for Slothrop, is what helps him reclaim his body and connect with Trudy, therefore, the celebration of his individuality is also an affirmation of an alternative connectivity. After Slothrop and Trudi perform the unusual consummation of their passion, the final bombing of Berlin takes place, while another character, who is in Slothrop's and Trudi's company, starts discussing the work of the composer Gioachino Rossini: 'isolation is overcome, and like or not, that is the one great centripetal movement of the World. Through the machineries of greed, pettiness, and the abuse of power, *love occurs* [...] The walls are breached [...] The World is rushing together.'¹²¹ Apart from the fact that the grotesque tropology is strengthened by the use of the melodramatic register following Slothrop's nasal hardon, the discussion on Rossini serves as a mirror of Pynchonian writing, since Rossini himself relied on pastiche as a creator.¹²² In this sense, more than one set of walls is breached.

¹¹⁹ *GR*, p. 446.

¹²⁰ *GR*, p. 446.

¹²¹ *GR*, p. 447, emphasis in the original.

¹²² Richard Osborne, *Rossini* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).

Slothrop's impotence in this incident constitutes a visceral rejection of the ruling power that has turned his body into a biomediated instrument, and, in the light of the novel, it constitutes a celebration of bodily rewriting, a collapsing of walls that separate the traumatized individuals, as well as a metaphorical birth-giving. Interestingly, impotence is a powerful theme in Pynchon: there are a number of characters in the novel who are traumatized and suffer from metaphorical or literal impotence, for example, the SS Captain Weissmann, who indulges in coprophilia to find sexual release. A similar bodily re-inscription takes place for character Franz Pökler, a German engineer who works on the construction of the most powerful rocket that will have ever existed, the Schwartzgerät 00000. Pökler looks for his daughter, Ilse, who has been taken prisoner in the concentration camp Dora, situated in Nordhausen, Germany, because of her mother's political activity. Pökler's impotence is metaphorical in the novel, hinting at his mechanized sexuality, his intellectualized existence, but also his inability to help his daughter. Although he has incestuous sex with Ilse when she is younger, his sexual life for the most part of the war is invested in constructing rockets. Towards the end of the war, Pökler is asked by Weissmann (the sadistic, impotent, coprophiliac superior of the SS), to construct a component for the propulsion section of the Schwartzgerät, but before this 'special destiny' of his fulfilled, the war comes to an end.¹²³

Once again, Pynchon breaks the wall between author and reader by placing incestuous Ilse in a camp named Dora: Dora is the pseudonym assigned by Freud to one of his patients, whom he was treating for hysteria, and who, according to Freud suffered from an unresolved Oedipal complex.¹²⁴ By making this connection, Pynchon implicitly connects personal with collective trauma. On the last day of the war, Pökler finally attempts to overcome this impotence and goes to Dora to look for Ilse:

He was not prepared. He did not know. Had the data, yes, but did not know, with senses, or heart....

The odors of shit, death, sweat, sickness, mildew, piss, the breathing of Dora, wrapped him as he crept in staring at the naked corpses [...] each face so perfect, so individual [...] While he lived, and drew marks on paper, this invisible kingdom had kept on, in the darkness outside [...] Pökler vomited. He cried some [...] at this finding, on every pallet, in every cell, that the faces are ones he knows after all, and hold dear as himself, and cannot, then let them return to that silence [...] How can

¹²³ *GR*, p. 441.

¹²⁴ Sigmund Freud, *A Case of Hysteria: (Dora)* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013).

he ever keep them? Impotence, mirror-rotation of sorrow, works him terribly as runaway heartbeating.¹²⁵

After Pökler viscerally experiences the trauma of the concentration camp inmates by recognizing himself in the dead or nearly-dead faces, he finds a way to overcome his impotence by metaphorically wedding a woman he sees in the camp, who is on the brink of death: ‘He sat for half an hour holding her bone had. She was breathing. Before he left, he took of his gold wedding ring and put it on the woman’s thin finger, curling her hand to keep it from sliding off.’¹²⁶ Much like Slothrop, Pökler overcomes his impotence by performing a grotesque connection with another individual.

In Pynchon’s novel, trauma and the grotesque bodily transformation it creates, connect the individual body with the collectivity. In this sense, there is no such thing as an individual trauma here, as the individual body through its biomediation becomes an organizational category for the collectivity. Ultimately, individuality and collectivity are merged out of the specific body parts of each traumatized abject body. As in Myrivilis’s and Adichie’s writing, too, the demise of the body is directly linked with the formation of national identity, so much so, that the individual’s bodily traumatic affect simultaneously refers to the national affect. Food and defilement as placed by Myrivilis and Adichie at the limits of the individual body, speak to the formation of national and collective identity, while in Pynchon, the narration of the individual body as a collection of bio-signs can be interpreted to serve collective purposes within war. The biomediated bodies discussed in this chapter share a grotesque interface with the collectivity, which is their point of convergence. Finally, what is perceived from the representation of bodily trauma in these narratives is that the metaphorical or literal mutilation, decay, and grotesque re-construction of bodies ultimately become a form of empowerment for the individuals to survive trauma and form collectivities.

¹²⁵ *GR*, pp. 439-440.

¹²⁶ *GR*, p. 440.

Chapter Two: Warscape

‘At Gandersheim there was no gas chamber, no crematorium. The horror there was darkness, absolute lack of any kind of landmark, solitude, unending oppression, slow annihilation. The motivation underlying our struggle could only have been a furious desire, itself almost always experienced in solitude; a furious desire to remain men, down to the very end’

-Robert Antelme,
The Human Race

The Art of Anthropomorphism

The affect of trauma in its textual representation is inextricably connected to the space that surrounds it. The primary spaces that have been identified so far in this thesis as most typically containing the affect of war trauma, are the bombarded city, which could be part of a politically contested state or not, and the refugee camp. In Chapter One, I explored how the traumatized human and animal body function synecdochically for the collectivity; the focus of this chapter is the relationship between the traumatized individual body and the landscape that is affected by war, as well as the literary representation of this relationship through the tropes of prosopopoeia, defamiliarization, and the Bakhtinian chronotope. In the novels by Myriavilis, Adichie, and Pynchon, the traumatized individual roams a deconstructed (and almost always reconstructed to fit the purposes of war) landscape, be it the Macedonian Front during the Great War, the contested territory of Biafra during the Nigerian-Biafran civil war, or the war-stricken Europe of the Second World War. The landscape of war in this chapter will be referred to as warscape in the sense that Benedikt Korf employs the term. Korf describes warscapes as ‘(re-) territorialized “scapes,”’ battlefields, terrain, territories, borders, which produce risk, uncertainty and fear.¹ The term

¹ Benedikt Korf, ‘The Certainty of Uncertainty: Topographies of Risk and Landscapes of Fear in Sri Lanka’s Civil War,’ in *The Spatial Dimension of Risk: How Geography Shapes the Emergence of Riskscapes*, ed. by Detlef Müller-Mahn (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 68-81, (p. 68). The term ‘war-scape’ originates from anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom’s research, when she described the fluidity of the landscape of war (1997), although perhaps the fundamental contribution to this term is Arjun Appadurai’s term ‘scape’ which she used to identify different types of fluid, communicated landscapes (1996). Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997) and Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1996).

warscape is not only the locus of active and bloody battle, but includes any spatial territory afflicted by the conditions of war: the urban landscape, the landscape of the newly-founded or contested state, and the internment or army camp. The novels that will be discussed as case studies are Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) set in Second World War, on the island of Pianosa, Italy, which has been reconstructed in the narrative to accommodate certain events, and Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981) set in post-Second World War Canada. *Catch-22* features an exemplary description of dilapidated Rome after it was bombed by the Allies in 1943; *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Obasan* both represent the deconstruction and reconstruction of the city within a contested state. In all cases, the warscapes are discussed here through the prism of the abject and the grotesque as components of affective expression and it is these connections that establish the landscape of war as narrative form. In his study, Benedikt Korf explores the ways through which warscape influences the dominant affect; in addition to this aspect, in this chapter I will also be looking at how individual traumatic affect influences the representation of collective spaces during wartime.

In one of the many scenes that describe the evacuation of Japanese-Canadians from various locations in Canada, after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbour, Kogawa narrates an evacuation from the Canadian city of Slokan through the eyes of the young protagonist of the novel, Naomi:

On certain days when I go to town I see the trucks. They are full of children, mothers, fathers, boxes, old people, suitcases, furoshiki—all the people standing because there is no room to sit. The day we leave, the train station is a forest of legs and bodies waiting as the train jerks and inches back and forth, its black hulk hissing with steam and smelling of black oil drops that drip onto the cinders.

We are all standing still, as thick and full of rushing as trees in a forest storm, waiting for the giant woodsman with his mighty axe.

[...] We move away from Slokan Lake and Rough Lock Bill's cabin, past the sea of upturned faces and waving hands and along the edge of the town, then into the trees and up along the thin ridges into a tunnel and we are on our way again.²

There are two points to be made about this description of the traumatic evacuation. First of all, when narrating the traumatic affect of war, it is impossible to separate the traumatized individual from his or her, equally traumatized, surroundings, be they natural or artificial: in

² *Obasan*, p. 179.

the above excerpt, people (mothers, fathers, children), man-made objects (boxes and *furoshiki*, the traditional Japanese wrapping cloth), and natural landscape (forest) are all inventoried interchangeably, waiting in Slocan for the evacuation to take place. Secondly, within the constant disorientation, dislocation, and relocation of war trauma, the human traces, limbs, and affects become landmarks through which the individual navigates the warscape: for Naomi, the landmark of Slocan Lake is of equal importance to ‘the sea of upturned faces and waving hands.’

These connections between affected landscape and affected physical body are broadly anthropomorphic. Paul J. Smith notes that ‘in Renaissance literature the anthropomorphization of space in its diverse dimensions and perspectives [...] often adopts the form of a trope, more specifically a comparison (simile) or a metaphor.’³ Smith delineates four types of anthropomorphization with regard to the body and landscape relationship of the Early Modern period;⁴ his most important contribution to the complex of body-space, however, is the double bind of the space affected body and the body-affected space. As Smith argues, in the Early Modern period,

the relationship between space (especially landscape) and body is not always metaphorical. Landscape can be a result of *anthropisation*—i.e., a man-shaped landscape—not only in the usual, ‘euphoric’ form of a cultivated or built-over landscape, but also in the ‘dysphoric’ form of a landscape *misshaped*, ‘wounded,’ or otherwise affected by man.⁵

This type of landscape personification is pertinent for my discussion of warscape, as the warscape itself comprises the ‘euphoric’ human influence, visible against the ‘dysphoric’ affect of the landscape. The most important aspect of anthropomorphism is that, as a trope, or set of tropes, it stands for the profound influence of space on the human body. In Smith’s words, ‘just as the anthropomorphised space has its counterpart in the spatialisation of the body, anthropisation also has an inverse counterpart: not only can space be passively affected by man, it can also actively affect man.’⁶ The tropology of anthropomorphism can serve as

³ Paul J. Smith, ‘Chapter Three: Landscape and Body in Rabelais’s Gargantua and Pantagruel,’ in *The Anthropomorphic Lens: Anthropomorphism, Microcosmism and Analogy in Early Modern Thought and Visual Arts*, ed. by Walter Melion, Bret Rothstein, Michel Weemans (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 67-92, (p. 67).

⁴ Smith distinguishes among the following four manifestations of the trope of anthropomorphism in Early Modern literature: spatial anthropomorphism, bodily spatialisation, anthropisation, and environmental determinism. Although what Smith terms spatial anthropomorphism is more at the core of this chapter, my discussion of warscape as related to individual affect can, by extrapolation, be relevant to his other categories of the space-body complex.

⁵ Smith, p. 71, emphasis in the original.

⁶ Smith, p. 72.

a point of departure to depict the form that is immanent within the relationship between traumatized body and landscape. It is this particular representation of warscapes and the abject and grotesque bodies that inhabit these sites that is of interest.

Bakhtin relates the grotesque body to the landscape in his study on Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and he emphasizes the function of the human body as a cross-over between individuality and collectivity.⁷ In his treatise, Bakhtin posits that through Pantagruel's remarks in the eponymous narrative, 'the grotesque image of walls turned into flesh is introduced. It is prepared by the conceit that the strongest walls are made of the bones of soldiers. The human body becomes a building material.'⁸ Although the context is naturally different, the principle is analogous: the bodies of the individuals work metonymically for the building of the entire city. This metaphor is noted by Bertrand Taithe in relation to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870; in his study, he argues that the battlefield is turned into a scene, which in turn is represented tropologically: During the war, Taithe argues,

the bulk of the general literature tried to combine [...] perspectives: a battle became a scene, an anecdote that varied in symbolic importance. It could either be a strategically insignificant skirmish in the suburbs of besieged Paris, a scene composed of individual bravery, a primitive struggle for territory, or a metaphor for the conflict between the two nations.⁹

Taithe connects the battleground with a scene that can take on tropological meaning according to the agenda of representation. Similarly, albeit from a psychoanalytical point of view, Ellmann makes a convincing case of the body as building material of the traumatized landscape when she argues that 'trauma consists in the violent irruption of the scene itself, rather than its cast of characters [...] trauma is a matter of "making scenes," in all the senses of the phrase, but what these scenes stage is the unrepresentable.'¹⁰ Crucially, because the traumatic scene is unrepresentable, anthropomorphism as a trope works to articulate and make sense of the traumatic scene.

The trope of anthropomorphism is critical for the poetics of war trauma and making sense of the warscape. The traditional trope of anthropomorphism refers to what Smith terms

⁷ François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. by Sir Thomas Urquhart and Pierre Le Motteux (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005).

⁸ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p. 313.

⁹ Bertrand Taithe, *Defeated Flesh: Welfare, Warfare and the Making of Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999), p. 5.

¹⁰ Maud Ellmann, *The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Sigmund Freud*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), p. 65.

‘the age-old anthropomorphisation of space, according to which [...] a landscape is represented as a human body.’¹¹ Paul De Man takes the definition of anthropomorphism further, as he argues that it is not a trope, but rather a defining force underlying the existence of tropes themselves:

But ‘anthropomorphism’ is not just a trope but an identification on the level of substance. It takes one entity for another and thus implies the constitution of specific entities prior to their confusion, the *taking* of something for something else that can then be assumed to be *given*. Anthropomorphism freezes the infinite chain of tropological transformations and propositions into one single assertion or essence, which, as such, excludes all others.¹²

De Man’s definition of anthropomorphism speaks volumes for the anthropomorphism present in the representation of warscape in the war trauma literature explored here. Following de Man, anthropomorphism is an affirmation employed to make sense of the site of trauma by generating a specific tropological chain comprising prosopopoeia, defamiliarization, and the chronotope. The key here is what De Man identifies as taking place through anthropomorphism, namely the establishing of the two elements that are identified with one another through the use of anthropomorphism, as having existed separately.

Robert Antelme’s compelling memoir of his struggle to survive in the Buchenwald and Gandersheim concentration camps redefined anthropomorphism. Antelme’s only book titled *The Human Race* (1957), also speaks of an identification on a substance level. *The Human Race* tells a Holocaust story not of being treated like a non-human, but of being acknowledged as a human and yet being condemned to infinite suffering: although, Antelme writes, ‘we exist on the level of some other species, which will never be ours [...] yet there is no ambiguity: we’re still men, and we shall not end otherwise than as men.’¹³ Maurice Blanchot calls attention to Antelme’s testimony, which he calls ‘anthropomorphism,’ by arguing that it is the traumatized individual’s last option:

When through oppression and terror man falls as though outside himself, there where he loses every perspective, every point of reference, and every difference and is thus

¹¹ Smith, p. 67.

¹² Paul de Man, ‘Anthropomorphism and Trope in Lyric,’ in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia, 1984) p. 241.

¹³ Antelme, p. 219.

handed over to a time without respite that he endures as the perpetuity of an indifferent present, he has one last possibility. At this moment when he becomes the unknown and the foreign, when, that is, he becomes a fate for himself, his last recourse is to know that he has been struck not by the elements, but by men, and to give the name *man* to everything that assails him.¹⁴

For Blanchot, Antelme's anthropomorphism is a result of a disorientation in terms of space and time. In other words, Antelme has to give the name 'man' to the traumatizing forces, as a means of anchoring his trauma in a particular space and time.

The Human Race has been discussed as an example of anthropomorphism by Holocaust scholar Sara Guyer, who posits that, in his book, 'Antelme recognizes this destruction as the proof of the human, the endurance of the human in destruction.'¹⁵ For Guyer, anthropomorphism is very close to the compulsive perseverance discussed in relation to Freud and Beckett earlier on in this thesis: after everything has been destroyed, the only thing that remains is the affirmation that the human does indeed exist.¹⁶ In fact, not only is the human affirmed by its destruction, but at that moment it becomes undiminishable, inextinguishable, and ever-present. Guyer goes on to argue that 'Antelme's testimony not only relies upon lyric anthropomorphism in order to offer an account of the camps [...] but it also identifies lyric anthropomorphism ("giving the name man") as an ethical act,' and ultimately, 'the anthropomorphism of the human emerges [...] as an infinite capacity for being destroyed.'¹⁷ In the narrative representation of warscape in Heller, Adichie, and Kogawa, along with the trope of personification, Antelme's anthropomorphism is discernible as well: within the descriptions of dilapidated, desecrated, and vandalized landscapes resembling mutilated bodies, the traumatized human body emerges almost triumphant, since the narration of warscape constantly refers back to it. Moreover, in the 'ethical act' to which Guyer refers, lies the connection between individual and collectivity, since, by giving the name man to the traumatizing forces, the individual realizes that the trauma is a shared condition. In that sense, Antelme places emphasis on the human side of the camp in order to navigate a place where physical landmarks are inexistent and solitude reigns. Anthropomorphization of landscape in the literary representation of warscape works

¹⁴ Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. by Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1993), p. 131, emphasis in the original.

¹⁵ Sara Emilie Guyer, *Romanticism after Auschwitz* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2007), p. 137.

¹⁶ Discussed in the section titled The Persistence of Affect.

¹⁷ Guyer, p. 137 and p. 140.

both to enable the individual navigate a place of absolute wreckage, and to affirm the human existence, which is present despite its near-annihilation.

Antelme's anthropomorphism is used in this chapter as a conceptual background in order to flesh out the relationship between individual and collective trauma and landscape, however, since his account is not a literary text, but rather a testimony, as well as his only book, it will not be engaged with as a case study. Instead, I am using Antelme's text for its philosophical contribution to the representation of war trauma. The connection between Antelme's writing and the anthropomorphism of the warscape treated here is visible: the protagonists of war trauma narratives often wander among ruins, filtering the warscape through their own selves, registering inarticulable imagery. Within *Half of a Yellow Sun*, *Catch-22*, and *Obasan*, the individual space seeps into the collective by means of the representation of the warscape through anthropomorphic narrative techniques such as the grotesque and the abject body and by means of a vocabulary of affectivity. What is meant by vocabulary of affectivity is a set of terms that, as opposed to the one-way trajectory of emotions being communicated from the inside to the outside, are able to form assemblages and to transform the representation of geography, time, and history itself.

The argument of this chapter is that, by anthropomorphizing the warscape, the unrepresentable trauma finds a means of representation, while at the same time, in the traumatic scene that is created, the human survives even after destruction. This survival is a necessarily a collective one, since an individual man or woman may not survive, but their condition as human does. Ultimately, the anthropomorphic elements in warscape representation may show that individual endurance against trauma and durability of that trauma are in fact made of the same stuff. In that sense, anthropomorphism as a trope of representing warscape can be seen as attesting to the death of the individual but the birth of the collective.¹⁸

Defamiliarized Scenes: Kano, Nigeria

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the construction of affective landscapes is key for the war narrative. Adichie narrates many attacks of the Nigerian army on civilian population which took place

¹⁸ The term affective urbanism has been used in relation to the creation of collective spaces in cityscapes; its most poignant description has been given by Anderson and Holden when they argue that the term affective compliments the type of urbanism which is 'animated by a conceptual vocabulary specific to the logics of affect and emotion' and they qualify this definition by adding that within affective urbanism cities are 'made up of multiple, differentiated affects, feelings, and emotions [which] foster an everyday urbanism attentive to the *taking place* of affects.' Ben Anderson and Adam Holden, 'Affective Urbanism and the Event of Hope,' *Space and Culture*, 11:2 (2008), 142-159 (Durham: Sage Publications, 2008) p. 142 and p. 145.

particularly in the North of Nigeria during the late 1960s.¹⁹ In the four-part novel, part two is entitled ‘The Late Sixties’ and it revolves around the Biafran coup d’état that took place in 1966. Right before a major outburst of violence in that same year, the protagonist Olanna goes to visit her pregnant cousin Arize who lives in Kano, the second largest city of Nigeria after Lagos. When the Nigerian army decide to launch a genocidal attack against the Igbo people starting with the city of Kano, Olanna is still there. Right before she sees her aunt and uncle dead in their house in Kano, she perceives the surroundings as

strange, unfamiliar; the compound gate was broken, the metal flattened on the ground [...] she began to run towards the house. She stopped when she saw the bodies. Uncle Mbaezi lay facedown in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamy-white oozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Auntie Ifeka lay on the veranda. The cuts on her naked body were smaller, dotting her arms and legs like slightly parted red lips.²⁰

The unfamiliarity of the house; Uncle Mbaezi’s ‘ungainly twist;’ the unrecognizable ‘creamy-white’ substance; and Auntie Ifeka’s kiss-like wounds, are elements that compose an almost surrealistic image of carnage, placing the emphasis on the unfamiliarity of the scene for Olanna. Since it is evident from the narration that it takes Olanna some time to realize what has taken place, the perception of the event itself is prolonged as much as possible in the novel. For Olanna, the landscape that was once familiar becomes strange, unrecognizable, and defamiliarized after the traumatic event occurs. The trope of defamiliarization of a scene stems from the Early Formalists’ argumentation on art and literariness, which, according to Viktor Shklovsky, have the purpose of imparting feeling:

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar’, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.²¹

¹⁹ The city of Kano in North Nigeria was brutally attacked on September 29, 1966 beginning a series of anti-Igbo pogroms. The Igbo population was settled in the North of Nigeria and suffered through many attacks since the beginning of the 1950s.

²⁰ *HoAYS*, p. 147.

²¹ Viktor Shklovsky, *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (University of Nebraska Press, 1965) p. 12.

In the case of Adichie's, Kogawa's, and Heller's narratives, the warscape is represented in affective ways which, as in the case of Olanna's witnessing her family's massacre, emphasize the defamiliarized perception rather than geographical knowledge of the given spaces or historical accuracy of the facts, thus making the affective perception the focus of the narration.

The news of the massacre in Kano reach Olanna's partner Odenigbo and their servant Ugwu in the city of Nsukka through their friend, Obiozo:

'What is happening in Kano?' Master asked.

'It started in Kano,' the man said.

Obiozo was speaking, saying something about vultures and dead bodies outside the city walls, but Ugwu no longer listened [...] a solemn voice on ENBC radio Enugu recounted eyewitness accounts from the North: teachers hacked down in Zaria, a full Catholic church in Sokoto set on fire, a pregnant woman split open in Kano.²²

At this point, the vocabulary of bodily affectivity works metonymically with the geography of traumatized Nigeria. The names of cities function as landmarks as much as the traumatized bodies do, or in fact, more, since the names of the cities mean nothing without the naming of the atrocities that took place there. There is then a sense of identification between traumatized body and warscape: the space is reported to be affected through the traumatized bodies. The connection between city walls and bodies that Bakhtin makes is revisited here, only this time it speaks to the synecdochic relationship between the body which is not just dead, but hacked, burned, split open, and the affected city.

After Olanna sees her family murdered, she is forced to board the next train to Nsukka. When she returns, she is psychologically traumatized and, as a result of her post-traumatic stress, she cannot walk, therefore being completely dependent on Odenigbo and Ugwu. In the meantime, the massacre has sparked discussions of secession amongst the intellectuals in Nsukka, who debate the possibility in Olanna's and Odenigbo's house: Olanna's 'bedroom door was open, and she could hear the rise and fall of voices from the living room [...] people were talking about secession and a new country, which would be named after the bay, the Bight of Biafra.'²³ Because Odenigbo is involved in the discussion, Olanna is reluctant to ask him to help her stand up, so she tries to do so on her own. At this

²² *HoAYS*, p. 144.

²³ *HoAYS*, p. 158.

point, Adichie narrates Olanna's effort to stand up in parallel with the debate on whether there should be secession:

Then she heard [their friend] Okeoma say 'Aburi.' It sounded lovely, the name of that Ghanaian town, and she imagined a sleepy cluster of homes on stretches of sweet-scented grasslands [...] Odenigbo would proclaim, 'On Aburi we stand' [...] Olanna stoop up and placed one leg forwards, then the other [...] She was walking.²⁴

The next day, the secession takes place. Adichie here deploys anthropomorphism in order to narrate a historical event from the perspective of a traumatized individual and so, to make it new: Olanna's struggle to walk is a metaphor for Biafra's false start, and at the same time works to defamiliarize the historical event of Biafra's secession, by narrating through individual affect.

Defamiliarized Scenes: Bologna, Italy

A comparable warscape narration albeit relating to affect in a different manner is the chapter titled 'Bologna' in *Catch-22*.²⁵ In Heller's novel too, the warscape is represented through affective landmarks rather than geographical ones. As the soldiers of the American army fighting against the Nazis are camped on the island of Pianosa in Italy, getting ready to depart for a death mission to reclaim Bologna from the Nazi troops, the name of the city becomes connected with the soldiers' affects. The men await for the rain to stop in Bologna so that they can go on the mission, and all they do is

stare woodenly at the bomb line on the map under the awning of the intelligence tent and ruminate hypnotically on the fact that there was no escape. The evidence was there vividly in the narrow red ribbon tacked across the mainland: the ground forces in Italy were pinned down forty-two insurmountable miles south of the target and could not possibly capture the city in time. Nothing could save the men in Pianosa from the mission to Bologna. They were trapped. (126)

The bomb line on the map under the intelligence tent designates 'the forwardmost position of the Allied ground forces in every sector of the Italian mainland,' but the line does not

²⁴ *HoAYS*, p. 159.

²⁵ *Catch-22*, p. 136.

include the city of Bologna, which means that the mission has to go ahead (137); the soldiers look at the map and start to hate

the infantry-men on the mainland because they had failed to capture Bologna. Then they began to hate the bomb line itself. For hours they stared relentlessly at the scarlet ribbon on the map and hated it because it would not move high enough to encompass the city. (137)

If the map of the Italian mainland is a copy of the way that the warscape is changed, then this map constitutes a simulacrum of the warscape. As ‘the resentments incubating in each man hatch[...] into hatred,’ the map of Italy is transformed from a representation of soldierly missions to a representation of soldierly affects (137). The men are starting to believe that if they move the bomb line so as to include Bologna, the mission will be cancelled; despite Clevinger’s objections when he tells Yossarian that this thought process constitutes ‘a complete reversion to primitive superstition,’ Yossarian decides to get up in the middle of the night and move the bomb line (137). As a result of this, the mission is indeed cancelled the next day as it is believed that the Allies have captured Bologna overnight.

The reading of this incident yields two interpretations: the first one is that the simulacrum of the warscape becomes more real than the original warscape; the second is that the soldierly affects create actual reality out of the simulacrum of the landscape when Yossarian moves the bomb line on the map. In his work *Simulacra and Simulation*, Jean Baudrillard speaks of an era of hyperreality, as

a generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory—*precession of simulacra*—that engenders the territory, and [...] today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. *The desert of the real itself*.²⁶

²⁶ *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Michigan: Michigan UP, 1994), p. 1, emphasis in the original. The idea of the simulacrum has been touched upon by numerous theorists; starting with Plato’s idea that the artistic simulacrum distorts the truth and evolving into Friedrich Nietzsche’s theory wherein the distorted copy of reality is constructed by language, the simulacrum has been considered as negative. For a concise history of the simulacrum and its role in art, see Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff, eds., *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010)

In this incident, Pianosa becomes ‘the desert of the real’ and the map that Slothrop tampers with is the hyperreality on which the soldiers’ fate depends. The map becomes the simulacrum, which, according to Baudrillard, is a copy of the real that is no longer discernible from that real: ‘the real is produced from miniaturized cells, matrices, and memory banks, models of control—and it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times from these,’ thus resulting, in *Catch-22*, to the reality of war becoming irrelevant.²⁷ Although the existence of the era of hyperreality is detrimental in Baudrillard’s view, in Heller this hyperreality is justified by the soldierly affects and becomes a means of salvation for the soldiers. In other words, defamiliarization in the case of the incident of Bologna is the expression of soldierly affect (fear of getting killed in this case) that turns the copy or the simulacrum not only into Baudrillardian ‘hyperreality, more real than reality itself,’²⁸ but in fact into the only reality that matters.

The notion of the Baudrillardian simulacrum has been prominent in discussing Gulf Wars I and II, with the consensus being that, as Bassam Romaya notes, ‘the highly televised “shock and awe” campaign that inaugurated the Iraq war in live, real-time video [and] the theatricality of the war,’ turned it ‘into a “nonevent,” with its limited range of identification and recognition among spectators, captured merely in terms of simulacra.’²⁹ On the contrary, what happens in the defamiliarized narration of the city of Kano by Adichie and the city of Bologna by Heller is that two distinct types of representation within the narrative are employed with the singular purpose of representing the warscape as it is affectively perceived. This perception narrates the warscape not as an isolated place, conveniently irrelevant from traumatized bodies, but instead identifies the core of the warscape with the traumatized body, thus making it impossible for the collective traumatized space to be represented without the individual traumatic affect.³⁰ Instead of the simulacrum working as a disengagement from war trauma, in *Catch-22*, it works to express the engaged individual affect. Both Adichie’s and Heller’s warscapes work not to merely tell the traumatic story of the scape and its people, but more crucially to approach it from an affective point of view. In this manner, the novels succeed in defamiliarizing the traditional warscape of heroic battle. As Shklovsky stresses, familiarization ‘devours works, clothes, furniture, one’s wife,

²⁷ Baudrillard, p. 2.

²⁸ Baudrillard, p. 2.

²⁹ Bassam Romaya, *The Iraq War: A Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 101.

³⁰ Not only has the habituation of the scenes of war reached the point of banality particularly since Heller’s time, but also, quite interestingly, habituation within the Second World War is related to affective processes in Jörg Echternkamp’s recent book, where German society is used as a case study. See Jörg Echternkamp, *Germany and the Second World War Volume IX/II: German Wartime Society 1939-1945: Exploitation, Interpretations, Exclusion* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014) pp. 285-286.

and the fear of war;³¹ in *Catch-22*, the fear of war is exposed, ostensibly showcased, celebrated even, in order to change the familiarized warscape of violence. The same effect is produced by the narration of warscape in Adichie's novel, as Ugwu seems to be waking up from a life of daily routine into fear: '*It started in Kano* rang in his head. He did not want to tidy the guest room and find bedsheets and warm the soup and make fresh *garri*.'³²

This defamiliarized narration is explicitly shown in *Half of a Yellow Sun* through Richard's eyes: as he lands in Kano after the pogrom has started, the Nigerian army shoots all the Igbo people and Richard witnesses the mass killings. He then decides to write an article from the 'true' point of view of political turbulence which was rocking Biafra and sends it to British newspaper *The Herald*, where it is, however, rejected:

The international press was simply saturated with stories of violence from Africa, and this [article] was particularly bland and pedantic, the deputy editor wrote, but perhaps Richard could do a piece on the human angle? Did they mutter any tribal incantations while they did the killings, for example? Did they eat body parts like they did in the Congo?³³

This is an example of the familiarization of atrocities related, to the supposedly primitive Africans, taking place in a chaotic interchangeable warscape—from a European point of view, it might as well have been the Congo. From that point on, Richard seems all the more determined to construct his own affective version of the Biafran topography in his book titled *The Basket of Hands*.

Defamiliarized Scenes: Alberta, Canada

Like *Half of a Yellow Sun*, *Obasan* too demonstrates the struggle between urban scapes as they are arranged by the Canadian government and as they are perceived by Naomi Nakane, the protagonist of the novel. Kogawa's novel centers on the Pearl Harbor attack, after which the Japanese-Canadians of second generation were severely persecuted in Canada. Naomi narrates the events of these years which include most notably the seizing of her family's property, the family's uprooting and placement in separate work camps for Japanese people, and her mother's disappearance.

³¹ Shklovsky, p. 12.

³² *HoAYS*, p. 144, emphasis in the original.

³³ *HoAYS*, p. 167.

One of the central points of the novel is Naomi Nakane's attempt to expose the voices and the silences of the landscape and the people that inhabit it. One way that this is achieved is through the incorporation of a variety of voices: the novel is largely compiled of the diary of Naomi's aunt, Emily who keeps a detailed account of the incidents, as well as Naomi's memories as a child amidst what was racial war on the Japanese-Canadians. Thus, the form of the novel itself emphasizes the subjectivity of Naomi's perception, while undermining the official narration of Canadian government who negated the fact that any abuse had taken place against the Japanese-Canadians. Naomi's attempt to present a defamiliarized scape is distinct when she speaks about the Grand Inquisitor, a symbol of the discourse that supported the ostracizing of the Japanese-Canadians: '[w]hat the Grand Inquisitor has never learned is that the avenues of speech are the avenues of silence. To hear my mother, to attend her speech, to attend the sound of stone, he must first become silent.'³⁴ Speech and silence are both made of avenues, structured like a cityscape and in this cityscape Naomi must turn the familiar sounds to unfamiliar silences, thus increasing the difficulty of perception of this landscape where her mother went missing.

Naomi seeks to contest the supposed facts that make up her life story and her starting point in doing so is to reconstruct an affective urban landscape. Upon encountering official documents about the evacuation of the Japanese-Canadians, specifically an article titled 'Facts about evacuees in Alberta,' left for Naomi to read by her aunt Emily, Naomi exclaims: 'facts about evacuees in Alberta? The fact is I never got used to it and I cannot, I cannot bear the memory.'³⁵ In order for Naomi to counter-balance the supposed truth of the article, which presents the Japanese-Canadians working in a beet farm in happiness, Naomi narrates what it felt like for her and her family to be forced to work in that particular scape in Alberta: 'We are surrounded by a horizon of denim-blue sky with clouds clear as spilled milk that turn pink at sunset [...] The clouds are the shape of our new prison walls—untouchable, impersonal, random,'³⁶ and she carries on by saying that the story of the article 'is one telling. It's not how it was.'³⁷ What Naomi describes here is the weight of her memory and of the memories of her family. Hirsch explores this passing down of memory and argues that 'descendants of victim survivors as well as of perpetrators and of bystanders who witnessed massive traumatic events connect so deeply to the previous generation's remembrances of the past that they identify that connection as a form of *memory*, and that [...] memory can

³⁴ *Obasan*, p. 228.

³⁵ *Obasan*, p. 193.

³⁶ *Obasan*, p. 193.

³⁷ *Obasan*, p. 193.

be transferred to those who were not actually there to live an event.’³⁸ This is what Hirsch calls postmemory, and as we will see in *Obasan*, Naomi remembers not only the trauma of her own childhood and her own experiences, but also the trauma of her aunt Emily and her mother who dies in Nagasaki.

Attempting to relate the other, more pertinent tellings of the story, Naomi navigates around the Canadian landscape having as a map within her childhood experience only the affects that she records: ‘We are leaving the B. C. coast—rain, cloud, mist—an air overladen with weeping. Behind us lies a salty sea within which swim our drowning specks of memory—our small waterlogged eulogies.’³⁹ The names of landmarks and places are no longer part of the representation and the landscape itself seems to be anthropomorphized, containing, through the description of the landscape as perceived by Naomi, hers and her family’s affects. Naomi’s remembering of all the details of her family’s evacuation, urged by Aunt Emily in recollecting a past inextricably linked to their moving from one scape to another, is narrated by Naomi as a visceral process:

Aunt Emily, are you a surgeon cutting at my scalp with your folders and your filing cards and your insistence on knowing all? The memory drains down the sides of my face [...] it’s your hands in my abdomen, pulling the growth from the lining of my walls, but bring back the anaesthetist turn on the ether clamp down the gas mask bring down the chloroform when will this operation be over Aunt Em?

This affective process which Naomi goes through resembles a stream-of-consciousness narration and culminates in Naomi’s metaphorically giving birth to the narration of the landscape which follows, thus introducing the idea that the Japanese-Canadians have become interconnected with their surroundings as their life is dominated by the hard work in the Barker farm: ‘The whole field is an oven [...] we are tiny as insects crawling along the grill and there is no protection anywhere.’⁴⁰ The seemingly never-ending process of Naomi’s move from place to place gives the impression of an interchangeability of scapes, where the only thing that matters as far as their representation is concerned is the Naomi’s perception of each scape. This in turn leads to an effect which, as shall be seen, is a prolonging of the aesthetic experience of the warscape.

³⁸ Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory*, p. 3, emphasis in the original.

³⁹ *Obasan*, p. 111.

⁴⁰ *Obasan*, p. 195.

Prolonging and the Uncanny

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, right before the outburst of the civil war, Kainene, Olanna's twin sister, and her British partner, Richard, sit at the veranda of their house outside of the city of Port Harcourt discussing the violent events. Kainene says 'War is coming [...] Port Harcourt is going crazy' and she then stands 'looking in the far distance, as if she could actually see the city in its frenzy of excessive parties and frenetic couplings and speeding cars.'⁴¹ At this point, Kainene's gaze searches for a physical manifestation of the war in the city of Port Harcourt. Richard's perception of Port Harcourt is also of interest since it changes after he encounters a woman who wishes to sleep with him just because he is white and she has never experienced that before: 'It was as if the people in this city with the tall, whistling pines wanted to grab all they could before the war robbed them of their choices.'⁴² War is not only anthropomorphized here, robbing people of their potential, but also for Kainene, war appears to have the capability of invading the space that she and Richard inhabit; simultaneously war is taking place in the present, but its effects are prolonged in the future. Interestingly, the chapter comes to an end and the novel pauses at this point in anticipation of the war.

The anticipation of war constantly on its way, about to take over the city is a haunting element of the novel and prolongs the narration of the traumatizing events, thus creating a defamiliarized warscape. Whereas Naomi perceives the cityscape through silences, for Kainene and Richard the city is represented through noise and general frenzy. In Kainene's case, her gaze reproduces and at the same time mirrors the city therefore becoming an extension of her own affected self. This prolonging of the perception of the landscape in the novels serves the defamiliarization of the warscape in order to make sense of the trauma and operates on two levels: on a primary level, referring to defamiliarization as a trope that generates affect towards the literary text, prolonging could be read quite literally as the constant deferral of meaning in a linguistic sense; the landscaping of conflict is an attempt to represent the unrepresentable, to articulate the incoherent, and as such, this attempt is always deferred and therefore meaning is always prolonged.

What is prolonged in this instance, is narrative time, and this prolongation is, in turn, symptomatic of the inarticulable experience of trauma. In his discussion on affliction, Blanchot qualifies the experience of physical suffering with an arresting of time:

⁴¹ *HoaYS*, p. 171.

⁴² *HoaYS*, p. 172.

Physical suffering, when it is such that one can neither suffer it nor cease suffering it, thereby stopping time, makes time a present without future and yet impossible as present (one cannot reach the following instant, it being separated from the present instant by an impassable infinite, the infinite of suffering; but the present of suffering is impossible, it being the abyss of the present). Affliction makes us lose time and makes us lose the world.⁴³

For Kainene and Richard, time seems to have stopped as they are experiencing the traumatic loss of family members who have been killed in the Kano massacre that has just taken place, while at the same time the war has not reached them in Lagos. This is suffering in Blanchot's terms, such that has not become part of Kainene's and Richard's own bodies, but that they cannot entirely shake off, as they are aware of its coming.

If, for Blanchot, the present of suffering is impossible, then by extrapolation, the present locus of suffering is impossible, too. As any given warscape is part of the traumatic experience that it hosts, for those who have not been involved in that particular traumatic experience, the same warscape is an entirely different place. When the massacre takes place in Kano, Richard is on a transit flight to Lagos; his flight stops in Kano, where soldiers invade the airport, killing anyone whom they can identify as Igbo. When Richard finally lands in Lagos, instead of going to Kainene, he visits his English ex-girlfriend and enquires if she is aware of the coup:

‘Of course [...] I just hope it doesn't spread to Lagos [...] You didn't see anything at the airport in Kano, did you?’

‘No,’ Richard said.

‘They wouldn't go to the airport, I suppose. It's quite extraordinary, isn't it, how these people can't control their hatred of each other.’⁴⁴

The fact that Richard pretends that he has not experienced this traumatic incident, speaks to the specificity of the warscape in terms of traumatic time: for Susan, the massacre in Kano might as well not have happened, because she has not experienced it. Richard, too, is caught up in-between the traumatic experience, as he was not, and could not have been, the target of this attack. What takes place here, is a mirroring of the landscape: in one version of Kano,

⁴³ Blanchot, p. 120.

⁴⁴ *HoAYS*, p. 154.

no war is taking place; in the other, civil war is raging, and these two landscapes are divided by Richard's impossibility to articulate the trauma he experienced.

Already, the scape of traumatic affect becomes unfamiliar through its being mirrored. In this sense, Shklovsky's idea of prolonging the aesthetic sensation by making it unfamiliar is also related to the Freudian concept of the uncanny: what is the uncanny other than a prolonged image of the self, set in a scene that is familiar and unfamiliar at the same time, real and unreal?⁴⁵ Nicholas Royle defines the Freudian uncanny as that which is 'strangely familiar' and he gives a succinct account of the causes of uncanniness:

The uncanny is a crisis of the proper [...] including the properness of [...] places, institutions and events [...] It can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context [...] It can come in the fear of losing one's eyes or genitals, or in realizing that someone has a missing or prosthetic body-part, in the strange actuality of dismembered, supplementary or phantom limbs.⁴⁶

Royle's choice of words establishes connections between the uncanny and the Kristevan abject, as in both cases the idea of the *proper* is contested, and, in this case, the representation of the proper landscape which has turned into a land of affects is at stake. Adichie, Heller, and Kogawa construct improper, abject, or uncanny landscapes, since these landscapes turn from familiar to strange and from strange back to familiar through the habituation of war eventualities. The effect of uncanniness of the affective scape is underscored by the prolonging of the aesthetic experience of the description of the scape.

Jean-Luc Nancy's discussion of uncanny landscapes pinpoints the affect of the person who is wandering outside their country as uncanniness: 'when one is taken out of one's country, one feels estranged, unsettled, uncanny: one no longer knows one's way around, there are no more familiar landmarks, and no more familiar customs.'⁴⁷ Just as Richard is starting to feel that the newly-founded Biafra will be his new homeland ('he would be Biafran in a way he could never have been Nigerian—he was here at the beginning; he had shared in the birth'), at the same time, after the massacres, the land scape becomes

⁴⁵ Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003), p. vii. For Freud's original essay on the uncanny, see Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

⁴⁶ Royle, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Uncanny Landscape,' *The Ground of the Image* (New York: Fordham UP, 2005), pp. 51-62, (p. 54).

unfamiliar to him, as if he has been thrown into a country he does not understand, thus turning into a man he does not recognize.⁴⁸

The effect of the double, so crucial for the notion of the uncanny, is used by Adichie, Heller, and Kogawa to structure their warscapes and narratives.⁴⁹ The protagonist of *Catch-22*, Yossarian, is an American soldier who has found himself in a foreign country during the Second World War, a country whose topography has changed because it is used as an army base. Although neither Naomi nor Olanna are out of their homeland, it is their homeland that has changed into a foreign place. In *Catch-22*, a whole chapter is devoted to the uncanniness of the double. The chapter titled 'The Soldier Who Saw Everything Twice' starts on Thanksgiving Day at the military hospital where Yossarian is hospitalized with an anonymous soldier declaring that he sees everything twice.⁵⁰ The narrator makes a detour to a future Thanksgiving Day and then back to a year before, when Yossarian is once again hospitalized. This time around, Yossarian mirrors the soldier in that he is the one to discover that he sees everything twice; the dominant imagery in this chapter is that this military institution is made up of mirrors and here Heller toys again with the idea of the simulacrum, and the complex of the perceived and the real. The uncanny coincidence that both Yossarian and the unnamed soldier experience the same symptom works as a preamble (and as such, it prolongs the event that will follow) for Yossarian becoming a body double for a soldier named Giuseppe who has just died, and whom his family is visiting at the hospital. Yossarian becomes Giuseppe's uncanny doppelgänger symbolically prolonging the dead soldier's life while at the same time the interchangeability between Yossarian and Giuseppe nullifies the individual point of origin and merges the two soldiers' bodies.⁵¹

In *Obasan*, Naomi faces her double when she reads her Aunt Emily's diary of letters that Aunt Emily had sent to Naomi's mother. Aunt Emily sends the letters to Naomi and upon reading them, Naomi encounters a past version of herself, seen through Aunt Emily's eyes: 'I'm worried about the children. Nomi almost never talks or smiles. She is always carrying the doll you gave her and sleeps with it every night. I think, even though she doesn't talk, that she's quite bright.'⁵² Quite importantly, in Aunt Emily's diary Naomi's old self is given the name Nomi: her old self is somewhat reduced, while her current, longer name

⁴⁸ *HoAYS*, p. 168.

⁴⁹ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

⁵⁰ *Catch-22*, p. 203.

⁵¹ Dimitris Vardoulakis constructs the doppelgänger as 'aris[ing] at the points where each inquiry reaches a limit, transforming itself into something else' (p. 5). This is relevant for trauma literature, since it represents the unrepresentable and in doing so, faces serious limitations which the figure of the uncanny doppelgänger resolves, as it provides an opening to a parallel reality. For a brilliant tracing of the doppelgänger through literature and philosophy, see Dimitris Vardoulakis, *The Doppelgänger: Literature's Philosophy* (New York: Fordham UP, 2010).

⁵² *Obasan*, p. 101.

reveals her being torn between past and future. For Naomi, this reconstruction and encountering of her past self appears to prompt her into continuing to narrate her story, situating herself within the Canadian scapes and changing the point of view. The most crucial example of the change of perspective in narrating the same traumatizing events that were found in Aunt Emily's diary, is when Naomi encounters a previous version of herself in Aunt Emily's letters. The tone of the narrative changes and Naomi tries to position and define herself within the warscape:

I am sometimes not certain whether it's a cluttered attic in which I sit, a waiting room, a tunnel, a train. There is no beginning and no end to the forest, or the dust storm, no edge from which to know where the clearing begins. Here, in this familiar density, beneath this cloak, within this carapace, is the longing within the darkness.⁵³

Once again, the perceived warscape is prolonged since Naomi does not recognize where it starts and where it ends, but most importantly, the time of this passage or the longing which Naomi refers to is not specified. As Naomi delves deeper into her past, it becomes clear that her traumatic experience also has no beginning or no end.

Longing for a Future-past

The defamiliarized representation of the warscape extends to the narration of time. The unidentified timing of trauma in *Obasan* is a prevalent theme. Naomi's activist aunt unequivocally identifies her longing as an active affect that will bring justice and equilibrium for the future: "Life is so short,' [Naomi] said sighing, "the past so long. Shouldn't we turn the page and move on?" "The past is the future," Aunt Emily shot back.⁵⁴ For Naomi's story this is exceptionally true, as the longing for the family life that she never had is woven into the narration of her story and enables her to formulate ideas that will change her view of the future and the role of silence within her family and state.

Naomi's sense of longing brings the discussion back to Shklovsky and to a connection between his theory on literariness and the affect of nostalgia. If the prolonged aesthetic experience of the warscape hints at the idea that the traumatized bodies constantly long for a scape that was whole before the war started, then the time and space before the conflict is essentially related to the reconstruction of the warscape: what is at stake is the

⁵³ *Obasan*, p. 111.

⁵⁴ *Obasan*, p. 42.

longing of the characters that live through war to maintain the peacescapes of their past while ensuring that they will return to these scapes in the future. In this section of the chapter I am exploring the relationship between individual and collective affective constructions of time and space within the warscape. More specifically, putting forward the idea that the souvenir works as a synecdoche for the whole, it becomes obvious that the affect of nostalgia plays an important role for the narration of trauma and its topography.

This idea is integral to the theory of nostalgia that Susan Stewart develops in *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*.⁵⁵ Stewart examines the presence of the affect of nostalgia throughout various cultural forms, and defines nostalgia as a ‘social disease,’ or

a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in the lived experience. Rather, it remains behind and before that experience. Nostalgia, like any form of narrative, is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except as a narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack.⁵⁶

What this means in terms of war trauma narratives, is that the narration is inauthentic insofar as it can only resemble the true traumatic experience and therefore, is in fact a repetition of a lived experience to which the traumatized body can never return. Following this, the scape of the traumatic experience manifests in the present through a false construction/representation, since the true warscape can never be accessed. Stewart places fiction in the realm of repetition and in turn argues that, although narratives lack the authenticity of the lived experience, fictional narration creates a sense of nostalgic authenticity that is equally important with the original experience.⁵⁷ In other words, the narration of a given space and time may not be equivalent to the original experience, but this narration is original in its experience of nostalgia.

Stewart’s suggestion that the narration of ‘nostalgia is the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetition and denies the repetition’s capacity to form identity’ is key for reading war trauma.⁵⁸ Stewart’s assumption here follows the Freudian model of the repetition compulsion, where, as discussed briefly, the repetition of the same traumatic

⁵⁵ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke UP, 1993).

⁵⁶ Stewart, p. 23.

⁵⁷ Stewart, pp. 20-23.

⁵⁸ Stewart, p. 23.

experience will produce the same results. On the one hand, nostalgia is the aesthetic experience which thrives in the retelling of a story from an affective perspective, and on the other hand, nostalgia resonates with the narration of trauma as that which can only be approached through repetition.⁵⁹ Bearing this in mind, the second part of Stewart's statement which rejects repetition as a catalyst for the formation of identity could be seen as incomplete: the identity of the traumatized individuals and collectivities evolves and changes throughout the war narratives, and this change is especially owing not only to the repetition of the narration, but most importantly, to its relative inauthenticity. In Heller's narration, where repetition is a prevalent motif, but also in Kogawa and Adichie's stories where the characters' versions of the same facts repetitively overlap, new individual and collective identities are constantly forged.

Going back to the nostalgia for a specific time and a specific place, one of the most critical aspects of nostalgia enabling the articulation of trauma on an individual and a collective level, is Peter Fritzsche's affirmation that 'there can be no nostalgia without th[e] sense of irreversibility, which denies to the present the imagined wholeness of the past.'⁶⁰ This irreversibility is part of the trauma and it is shared amongst inhabitants or visitors of the same scape or city. The longing for the cityscape that was once whole is strengthened by the irreversibility of the destruction since, according to Fritzsche, 'nostalgia yearns for what it cannot possess, and defines itself by its inability to approach its subject.'⁶¹ This definition of nostalgia brings the narrative expression of longing as far away from the subject as possible, as a desire that can never be realized in meaning. In terms of linear time, nostalgia for the past that was whole is impossible because in order for one to feel it, one must have experienced the disintegration of the present. Since the present as such is constantly becoming the past, this means that the past has always been fragmented, and therefore the nostalgia for a past as wholeness is flawed. The irreversibility of the destructive events of war and the impossibility of satisfaction are the two elements of nostalgia for the past scape.

Nostalgia and longing paired up with the threat of abjection are the narrative themes that drive *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Olanna, her partner, Odenigbo, Baby and their housekeeper Ugwu in *Half of a Yellow Sun* are amongst all the Igbo people who must flee the university city of Nsukka at night as Nigerian forces are advancing; despite the fact that they have very little time to pack, Ugwu decides to take three family photo albums that Olanna put together. As they drive off, Ugwu fantasizes about his return and his union with a girl whom he courts:

⁵⁹ The trope of repetition is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

⁶⁰ Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Boston: Harvard UP, 2004) p. 65.

⁶¹ Fritzsche, p. 65.

‘he would be back soon. The war would last just long enough for the Biafran army to gas the Nigerians to kingdom come. He would yet taste Nnesinachi’s sweetness, he would yet caress that soft flesh.’⁶² The nostalgia for that which will have been marks the narrative with an inauthenticity that effectively enables the representation of trauma. It becomes evident in this case that Ugwu feels nostalgia for (the return to) a place that does not exist in reality, but rather is a place formulated by his longing to experience desire for Nnesinachi, a desire that is shaped in the past but must be consummated in the future. Hence, his desire for Nnesinachi helps Ugwu to be transported at a time and place of wholeness and safety and is an affective souvenir, an emotional item which has the capacity of returning him to a future-past. At this point, Ugwu expresses nostalgic affects for a future that he himself is increasingly uncertain of; the certainty that he expresses of the sweetness of Nnesinachi’s skin as well as the tone of his thoughts befit the description of a definite past instead of the indeterminate future that he is facing.

As Olanna, Odenigbo, Ugwu, and Baby evacuate their home in Nsukka, the city is depicted as lacking in architectural landmarks but brimming with affect, and once again the narration is enabled by a character’s perception of the warscape: ‘The campus streets were eerie; silent and empty [...] Dust swirled all around, like a see-through brown blanket.’⁶³ Dust becomes a sign of the disintegration of the urban scape, paired up with imagery of ineffective domesticity: the see-through blanket. Ironically, as they keep driving, they see a lorry ahead of them with the words ‘NO ONE KNOWS TOMORROW’⁶⁴ printed on it, and when the family does reach the city of Abba, the first of a number of destinations after a series of Nigerian army advances, their future is more uncertain than ever. At the time of the evacuation, Ugwu collects the albums that Olanna compiled as a reminder of their life up to that point; after they relocate to Abba, Olanna finds it difficult to connect with the villagers:

She felt bitter towards them at first, because when she tried to talk about the things she had left behind in Nsukka—her books, her piano, her clothes, her china, her wigs, her Singer sewing machine, the television—they ignored her and started to talk about something else.⁶⁵

⁶² *HoAYS*, p. 179.

⁶³ *HoAYS*, p. 179.

⁶⁴ *HoAYS*, p. 179.

⁶⁵ *HoAYS*, p. 185.

Olanna's mother carries her handbag 'full of the glitter and twinkle of jewellery, corals and metals and precious stones.'⁶⁶ The obsession with certain objects is closely related to the desire of returning and therefore to the concept of nostalgia and longing. The notion of longing here is an extrapolation of Stewart's description of longing, which she breaks down into the tripartite structure of 'yearning desire, the fanciful cravings incident to women during pregnancy [and] belongings or appurtenances.'⁶⁷ Of the three definitions that Stewart provides, the most relevant for the literature of war trauma is the longing that is projected through the belongings, personal items, or souvenirs that are carried from one scape to another. In short, the souvenir is a part that stands for the whole, a product that stands for the point of origin and that signals the acute ache to return. As such, the souvenir carries with it both the affect of the traumatized evacuation or departure from the landscape as well as the desire for the return to that landscape, therefore prolonging the impression of this landscape aesthetically.

The concept of the souvenir is featured as the remembrance of a life past and the potentiality of the same life to be reconstituted in the future in war trauma literature, particularly in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Obasan*, where relocation under war circumstances is a prevalent theme. The souvenirs are labeled belongings by Stewart not because they belong to the person who carries them, but because they have an inherent value, that of belonging to the scape of origin. What is more, the value of the souvenir increases dramatically after it stops being part of the place of origin: as Stewart explains, 'the souvenir speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing, for it is not an object arising out of need or use value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia.'⁶⁸ What is meant by the value of the souvenir then, is not value in terms of objective preciousness, but of affective use-value. To exemplify this, Olanna's photo albums only become of use after the evacuation, as if trauma bestows upon them a value of remembrance.

Apart from the use-value of the souvenir as a generator of memories and the affects that are part and parcel of these memories, or perhaps combined with this aspect of the souvenir, there is another feature of the souvenir, namely the souvenir as coping mechanism. This occurs because the souvenir triggers affects by working metonymically for an entire narrative. Stewart observes that the most common function of the souvenir is that it 'displaces the point of authenticity as it itself becomes the point of origin for narrative.'⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *HoAYS*, p. 188.

⁶⁷ Stewart, p. ix.

⁶⁸ Stewart, p. 135.

⁶⁹ Stewart, p. 136.

This is crucial because the souvenir, as its very name suggests, is not about what happened, or what factually took place, but what and how one remembers of it. The souvenir therefore, can be considered as a coping mechanism for individuals who are traumatized within a war, on the one hand because it is a living reminder of the scape of origin, and on the other hand because it allows for an alternative retelling of the war story. In Ugwu's case, his mental and affective souvenir of Nnesinachi is what fortifies his belief that he will be back soon, therefore allowing him to alleviate, however briefly, the trauma of the evacuation.

Chronotopes

The souvenir is primarily a designation of scapes, but most importantly, also a marker of time. According to Stewart, 'the souvenir moves history into private time. Hence the absolute appropriateness of the souvenir as *calendar*.'⁷⁰ This description of the souvenir is critical for the narration of war trauma because it is through personal objects that the characters become aware of larger historical and cultural movements. Stewart goes on to make a specific suggestion about the effect of the souvenir on time, stating that 'the souvenir generates a narrative which reaches only "behind," spiraling in a continually inward movement rather than outward toward the future.' This interpretation of the souvenir runs in fact in an opposite manner to the discussion of the affects generated by nostalgia for the landscape of origin, as it is evident from the literature of trauma and the examples discussed here that the power of the souvenir lies in the connection, realistic or not, that the souvenir has to the return to the landscape of origin, a return placed in the future. Therefore, the souvenir may be a sign of a particular time, however, I propose that its significance lies in its capacity to carry collective time with it and to transport the individuals to a time and space of collective future-past, meaning a future inextricably connected to the collective traumatic past experiences.

The presence of chronotopes is strong throughout *Obasan* and it is evident through a variety of tropes, culminating in the manifestation of the souvenir as that which unites individual and solitary present with collective past, but also future. In fact, most chapters begin relating the time and the place as they travel from city to city to find shelter: '[m]orning arrives, and the next and the next and we are still here in the house in the woods' (124); '[i]t is twilight, and Obasan and I are standing on the bridge [...] on our way to the wake in the Old Fellows Hall' (127). As war-time and the warscape become fused, the narration moves

⁷⁰ Stewart, p. 138, emphasis in the original.

from temporality to becoming intrinsically chronotopic, referring to both time and space. After Naomi finishes reading Aunt Emily's letters and decides to tell her story, time becomes synonymous with space: '[t]ime solidifies, ossifies the waiting into molecules of stone, dark microscopic planets that swirl through the universe of my body waiting for light and the morning' (66). This is the beginning of the chapter narrating the disappearance of Naomi's mother, a disappearance which is crucial for Naomi's private life and also signifies larger historical, collective events: through the letters that Obasan has kept as souvenirs of Naomi's mother's death, it is revealed to Naomi and her brother Stephen that their mother and their brother, with whom their mother was pregnant when she left Canada, died at Nagasaki, during the atomic holocaust. The letters have been written by Naomi's Grandma Kato, who, after the bombing had gone looking for Nesan and her son and upon finding them, spares no detail in describing their fate:

One evening when she had given up the search for the day, she sat down beside a naked woman she'd seen earlier who was aimlessly chipping wood to make a pyre on which to cremate a dead baby. The woman was utterly disfigured. Her nose and one cheek were almost gone. Great wounds and pustules covered her entire face and body. She was completely bald. She sat in a cloud of flies and maggots wriggled among her wounds. As Grandma watched her, the woman gave her a vacant gaze, then let out a cry. It was my mother. (239)

Recognition occurs on two levels: firstly, Grandma Kato recognizes Nesan in 1945, and secondly, through the aid of the souvenir, the reality of Nesan's death is brought forward in time and place and Naomi recognizes her mother in the present.

The result of this time-travel is that Naomi's individual story encounters Nesan's individual story at the site of a collective tragedy, through which a new collectivity is forged between mother, daughter, and warscape:

Young Mother at Nagasaki, am I not also there? In the dark Slokan night, the bright light flares in my dreaming. I hear the screams and feel the mountain breaking. Your long black hair falls and falls into the chasm. My legs are sawn in half. The skin of your face bubbles like lava and melts from your bones. Mother, I see your face. Do not turn aside.⁷¹

⁷¹ *Obasan*, p. 242.

What occurs at this point is an affective eruption which starts from Naomi's psyche and body at the village of Slocan in Canada and reaches Naomi's mother in the Japanese mountains back in time. The souvenir-letters therefore, have the capacity to transport the individuals in space and time, in other words, chronotopically, in order to form belated collectivities. Naomi calls the souvenir-letters '[...] skeletons. Bones only,'⁷² and it is around the souvenirs that the family gathers to read, as in ancient oracle bone reading, the truth about the past. Through the souvenir's chronotopic reaching backwards and forwards in time and space, Nesan's individual past story reveals a collective future.

The notion of the chronotope is Bakhtin's recognition of how literature attributes organic characteristics to space:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, and becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.⁷³

The idea of the scape having an interdependent relationship with time and various affective processes is key for the master trope of affective urbanism and the chronotope in the war trauma narratives, fused with the tropes of the grotesque, the abject, and the anthropomorphic scape provide new envisionings of the individual within the collectivity.⁷⁴ Kogawa, Heller, and Adichie express a pervading concern with time-space and collective existence in their war narratives. Bakhtin himself stresses the importance of collective existence within the chronotope in Rabelais's work, which he sees as 'marked with a high[...] degree of intensity in emotions and values,' and enabling 'the spatial and temporal series defining human fates and lives combine with one another in distinctive ways, even as they become more complex and more concrete by the collapse of *social distances*.'⁷⁵ Within the chronotope, Bakhtin notes a triangulation between space, time, and affective response, which contributes to the creation of a collective, and which necessitates the falling behind of the individual affective response, favouring the collective encounters, which in turn

⁷² *Obasan*, p. 243.

⁷³ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 84.

⁷⁴ Nancy argues that 'a landscape is always a landscape of time, and doubly so: it is a time of year (a season) and a time of day (morning, noon, or evening), as well as a kind of weather [un temps], rain, snow, sun or mist' (p. 61). In this sense, it could be argued that trauma works as another type of time denominator for war novels.

⁷⁵ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 243, emphasis in the original.

function as landmarks of experience. Bakhtin speaks of the formation of the Rabelaisian folkloric chronotope as a reaction to the decay of the notion of universal time in the post-medieval period and points out that the relationship between space and time had been one of destruction and mayhem, therefore creating the need for circumstances which opposed obliteration.⁷⁶ This is where the connection between the folkloric chronotope and the various chronotopes of war lies: the characters of the war narratives move through time and space in an attempt to hold onto or create anew the collective relationships that will counter-balance the annihilation of war.⁷⁷

The City

What can be seen in *Obasan*, is that the souvenir of the letter functions as a portal, or in chronotopic terms, as a threshold, through which Naomi is transported in a time of future-past; the same feature is exhibited in Heller's *Catch-22* in the form of the ruin. The souvenir and the ruin share similarities, since they are both artefacts and sites of mnemonic value and open doors to past individual and collective zenith and nadir moments, while obversely conserving these moments for future consumption. Walter Benjamin traces the relationship between the souvenir and the ruin when he writes that 'the relic [or ruin] comes from the cadaver; the souvenir comes from the defunct experience.'⁷⁸ The souvenir and the ruin then both pertain to the ghostly repetition of something dead which lives on in the present and future. In both cases, the peacescape, meaning the collective life before the occurrence of trauma, is preserved in its deconstruction, as the souvenir and the ruin prove that such a scape existed before the trauma took place, while attesting to the peacescape's dissolution. In terms of affective experiences, the ruin carries within it the most traumatic and the most gleeful affects at once: in the ruin, one finds the same infinite capability for destruction that Antelme speaks of (and Blanchot, too, in discussing Antelme), as well as the persevering affirmation that man has existed and will exist.⁷⁹ As such, both the souvenir and the ruin are

⁷⁶ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 206.

⁷⁷ Katy Shaw explores the cultural representations of the miners' strike in the UK during the 1980s in relation to the chronotope and finds that 'In the regeneration writings of ex-strikers, operative chronotopes unite in their celebration of the past as a source of communal heritage [...] As a result of this collectivisation of experience, the chronotope of communality functions as a beacon, a symbol of community' The chronotopes of war work in a similar manner, albeit there is no celebration of the past, but rather an affective remembrance as in Naomi's case, which stands for the collective trauma and its potential recuperation. Katy Shaw, *Mining the Meaning: Cultural Representations of the 1984-5 UK Miners' Strike* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), p. 125.

⁷⁸ Walter Benjamin, 'Central Park,' in *Selected Writings: 1938-1940*, Vol. 4, ed. by Howard Eiland and Michael William Jennings, trans. by Edmund Jephcott and others (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2003), pp. 161-200, (p. 183).

⁷⁹ Blanchot, pp. 130-134.

products of traumatic experiences, and their narrative representation is a reliving of the traumatic affect.

Apart from the similarity between the souvenir and the ruin, a difference that is observed between the souvenir in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Obasan* and the ruin in *Catch-22* is that the souvenir seems to accumulate value when it is hidden, concealed, indeed treasured and revealed in the right moment to restructure time as it was known until then, just as it happens with Olanna's photo albums or Obasan's letters; conversely, the ruin is permanently exhibited and flaunted, thus surrounding the visitor or inhabitant of a particular scape with memories of the past and projections of the future. As such, the ruin too has its share of chronotopicity, and although it is working distinctively from the chronotopicity of the souvenir, it too recreates time in collective terms; in fact, as the ruin blurs the lines between past, present, and future it allows for the creation of an affective collectivity.⁸⁰

The chronotope of the ruin makes its appearance through the city of Rome in *Catch-22* in the chapter sarcastically and allegorically titled 'The Eternal City.' In this chapter, Heller narrates Yossarian's wandering in the city of Rome witnessing stone as well as human ruins. The ruined monuments (doubly so, since they bear both signs of the ruin of universal time as well as signs of the ruin of the war) and the human abject bodies are Heller's preoccupation in this chapter as he bonds the bodies with their surroundings. The Roman ruins have been associated by Freud with memories, in that both the stone ruins and the human memories are part of a past lived experience that can be accessed by an actual or mental revisiting.⁸¹ The ruins in Freud's writing function almost as keeping the past lived trauma in hibernation. The ruin-mind and the ruined body analogy relates to the chronotopicity of the ruins, particularly in Yossarian's case, as it is through the ruins that he accesses the preserved trauma, ready to be reproduced.

This idea of stone and human ruins being fused into one persevering setting is carried forward by Benjamin who, in his analysis of baroque German literature, posits that 'in the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay.'⁸² Despite the

⁸⁰ The filmography of Patrick Keiller deals with the theme of the individual's role within the collectivity and their co-habitation within ruins. His 1986 film *The End* concludes with the protagonist's affective journey ending with his visit of the Pantheon in Rome. While the final image of the film is one where a diverse group of people pose underneath the ruins, the narrator wryly observes that 'there is really nothing very old in the world and that it's up to us to make whatever we can.' This statement is a follow-up of Keiller's 1983 film, *Norwood*, in which it is announced that 'collectivity lies in ruins.' *The End*, dir. by Patrick Keiller, 1986, Dailymotion <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xgilhq_the-end-patrick-keiller_shortfilms> [accessed 10 February 2016] and *Norwood*, dir. by Patrick Keiller (Luxonline, 1983).

⁸¹ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2015), pp 49-52.

⁸² Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: NLB, 1977), pp 177-178. Benjamin discusses the *Trauerspiel* and its main trope, the allegory, by placing emphasis, in Olga

specific focus of Benjamin's study on sixteenth and seventeenth century German drama, his view of history as a ruin-spawning apocalypse to be witnessed rings true within war trauma narratives, since trauma in itself is something that can be accessed through the ruins it leaves behind.⁸³ Following this, the chronotope of the ruin focuses on the transience of all that is human, (much like Freud had done not long before Benjamin) while celebrating the resilience of the ruin as a major topos in literature, history, and philosophy.⁸⁴

The chapter is set towards the end of the novel as Yossarian flies to Rome with his fellow soldier Milo and wanders through the city witnessing the destruction like Benjamin's Angel. It is tempting to suggest that Heller provides a counternarrative going against the historically factual event of Adolph Hitler's wandering in the city of Rome on the year before the Second World War broke out. Hitler fixated on the ruins of antiquity in Rome and decided to visit the Eternal City and meet with Benito Mussolini in 1938. It is possible that Heller alludes to this visit, which included extensive stopovers to renowned architectural ruins.⁸⁵ From this perspective, Hitler's demonstration of ownership of the ruins adds to the affective value of the ruins themselves, as they are engraved with another layer of history, that of fascist victory.

Whereas in every other chapter the narration moves from the present to the past to the future in an effort to accommodate Yossarian's flashbacks, in this chapter the reader receives an almost objective view of Rome from the plane in almost realistic time:

Rome was in ruins, he saw, when the plane was down. The airdrome had been bombed eight months before, and knobby slabs of white stone rubble had been bulldozed into flat-topped heaps on both sides of the entrance through the wire fence surrounding the field. The Colosseum was a dilapidated shell, and the Arch of Constantine had fallen. Nately's whore's apartment was a shambles. [...] The windows in the apartment had been smashed. (466)

Taxidou's words, on 'ruins, the view of history as catastrophe, the underlining of the significance of form (allegory), [and] the mingling of spirits with buildings,' Olga Taxidou, *Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004), p. 72.

⁸³ There is a significant number of critics who have read war in Benjaminian terms. A few key publications include Ronan O'Callaghan, *Walzer, Just War and Iraq: Ethics as Response* (London: Routledge, 2015), Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2016), and Elizabeth Stewart, *Catastrophe and Survival: Walter Benjamin and Psychoanalysis* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013).

⁸⁴ Freud, *Civilization*, p. 50.

⁸⁵ For a detailed account of Hitler's visit as well as an itinerary, see Paul Baxa, *Roads and Ruins: The Symbolic Landscape of Fascist Rome* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 2010), pp 141-145. For a video documentary of the visit, see *La Rivista Imperiale Sulla Via dei Trionfi*, online video recording, Youtube, 26 April 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlqMNAoAHYI> [accessed 2 January 2016].

It can be seen from the start of the chapter that time and place are inextricably connected within the warscape of Rome: '[b]uildings and featureless shapes flowed by [Yossarian] noiselessly as though borne past immutably on the surface of some rank and timeless tide' (477). The description of Rome starts with a dispassionate statement about the state of Rome, but then Heller is quick to insert Yossarian's gaze into the passage with 'he saw;' following that, the passage turns into an alliterative stutter that helps pronounce and prolong the perception of the time of Rome's destruction, as if to point out the fact that what Yossarian witnesses is the modern ruin of the ancient ruins. Words and phrases like *bombed*, *before*, *knobby slabs*, *rubble had been bulldozed* make the b sound hover threateningly above the ruins of Rome and sustain the impression of history collapsing in on itself that is created by the contemporary airdrome being reduced to *white stone rubble*.

The alliterative effect of *flat-topped*, *fence* and *field*, ends with *fallen*; following in the same vein, the dilapidated shell that the Colosseum is echoes the bomb shells that ruined it. As the effect continues with *shambles* and *smashed* Yossarian's gaze moves from the landscape of historic significance to the unit of personal importance, Nately's whore's apartment. The syntax of this last sentence and the overall description of the warscape resemble the continuous movement of a camera zooming in. Hence, this structure serves to delay the linguistic time of the aesthetic experience and at the same time plays on familiar and unfamiliar scenes, never arriving at a finalised representation of the warscape. In this manner, the objective version of the historical landscape is undermined and a more authentic warscape starts appearing, the narration of which is an attempt to bridge the incommensurability between the representation of trauma contained in the landscape and the lived experience of trauma itself.

The bridging of this incommensurability is attempted in the novels primarily through the setting of grotesque and abject scenes within the ruined city. This is a narrative example of how the chronotope of the ruined city works to relate bodily to landscape abjection:

Yossarian crossed quickly to the other side of the immense avenue [...] and found himself walking on human teeth lying on the drenched, glistening pavement near splotches of blood kept sticky by the pelting raindrops poking each one like sharp fingernails. Molars and broken incisors lay scattered everywhere. (476)

Rome in this excerpt is both the time and place of trauma. The abject imagery of the excerpt above helps to point out the juxtaposition between the physicality and temporality of the landscape afflicted by war, telling it like it 'really' is, and the supposed immortality and

continuity of official representations of urban landscape; again, the title of ‘eternal city’ brings out this juxtaposition. The abject elements of the excerpt above—the blood, teeth, fingernails, and wetness of the scene which alludes to bodily fluids—as well as the intense physical presence along with the absence of an explanation or meaning opens up access to a warscape with authentic characteristics and creates new meaning through this opening up. The chronotope of the abject city then can be described as a fusion between the chronotope of the threshold where Bakhtin places ‘the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life,’⁸⁶ and the chronotope of the town whose narrative structure is characterized by ‘a viscous and sticky time that drags itself slowly through space.’⁸⁷ In this chronotope, time slows down to allow for the merging of the personal and the collective physical trauma. Such is the threshold that Yossarian crosses, and he bears witness to this merging by viewing the events that have taken place in Rome through the prism of human bodily orifices and fluids.

The merging of individual and collective space peaks when Yossarian crosses the border between the street and Natelly’s whore’s apartment’s door to look for the whore’s kid sister. Yossarian realizes that the war has afflicted public and private in the same manner:

Yossarian turned away and trudged through the apartment with a gloomy scowl, peering with pessimistic curiosity into all the rooms. Everything made of glass had been smashed [...] Torn drapes and bedding lay dumped on the floor. Chairs, tables and dressers had been overturned. Everything breakable had been broken. The destruction was total [...] Every window was smashed, and darkness poured like inky clouds into each room through the shattered panes. (468)

Heller’s representation of the city of Rome as a chronotope gives the feeling of the private warscape and the public warscape merging with one another; the sluggish description of the warscape (‘he could see the glare of a broad avenue at the top of the long cobblestone incline. The police station was almost at the bottom; the yellow bulbs at the entrance sizzled in the dampness like wet torches. A frigid, fine rain was falling’) (472), prepares the reader for Yossarian’s instantaneous crossing of the threshold between his own personal experience of

⁸⁶ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 248. Bakhtin uses Dostoevsky as a case study to point out that the chronotope of the threshold is closely related to myriad other chronotopes, such as ‘those of the staircase, the front hall and corridor, as well as the chronotopes of the street and square’ (p. 248). By extrapolation, Yossarian comes face to face with the chronotope of the window as we shall see further on.

⁸⁷ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 248.

trauma and the collective trauma which connects all the abject individuals that he has encountered:

What a lousy earth! He wondered how many people were destitute that same night even in his own prosperous country, how many homes were shanties, how many husbands were drunk and wives socked, and how many children were bullied, abused or abandoned. How many families hungered for food they could not afford to buy? (472-473)

Yossarian's thoughts continue in a similar vein until he has crossed the threshold and starts walking 'in lonely torture, feeling estranged' (473), until he becomes one with the abject mob—a man whose 'eyes were pulsating in hectic desperation, flapping like bat's wings,' 'a woman of eighty with thick, bandaged ankles,' 'a gaunt, cadaverous, trustful man [...] with a star-shaped scar in his cheek and a glossy mutilated depression the size of an egg on one temple,' and a young woman 'with her whole face disfigured by a God-awful pink and piebald burn that started on her neck and stretched in a raw, corrugated mass up both cheeks past her eyes' (476-478). The detailed description of traumatized human bodies that wander in Rome is how time is marked in the chronotope of the abject city.

The Camp

In the warscape of bombed Rome in *Catch-22* the narrator states that 'the night was filled with horrors' just before Yossarian likens his surroundings first to 'a ward full of nuts' and then to 'a prison full of thieves' (475); the city itself as it has been shaped by the war becomes a series of institutions, in which the narrated bodies perform their institutionalized existence. As a soldier, Yossarian links his trauma to these institutions and does not seem able to imagine his life without them:

He could start screaming inside a hospital and people would at least come running to try to help; outside the hospital they would throw him in prison if he ever started screaming about all the things he felt everyone ought to start screaming about, or they would put him in the hospital. (199)

The importance of the structuring of the warscape through a variety of institutions that host traumatized bodies is great, as these sites become links between individual and collective

traumas, both for the male soldierly subjects as well as the female interns within the camps.⁸⁸ Heller, Adichie, and Kogawa narrativize the army camp, the survivor camp, and the internment/concentration camp respectively. Yossarian's paranoia is directly related to the institutions that pervade the warscape, but perhaps the institution which most supports this paranoia is the army camp where Yossarian resides. Whereas for Yossarian the whole of his surroundings is structured like the army camp, with different offices, institutions, and tents, in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Obasan* the element of the camp works in a different manner.

The camp has been discussed by Giorgio Agamben as having replaced the cluster of the city and turned into 'the fundamental biological paradigm of the West;'⁸⁹ what is meant by the term camp in these terms is the human existence which 'consists in the materialization of the state of exception and in the subsequent creation of a space in which bare life and the juridical rule enter into a threshold of indistinction.'⁹⁰ The key terminology that pertains to the warscapes discussed here is that the life of the subject and all the conditions that refer to it are located outside of the subject, once the latter crosses the threshold of the camp. What Agamben means by *state of exception* are the historical instances represented in Heller, Adichie, and Kogawa, namely the instances when the state proclaims to be in a national emergency, where all three administrative powers of the state, the judicial, the executive, and the legislative are assumed by the sovereign.⁹¹ This is what Agamben terms 'bare life:' 'a zone of indistinction and continuous transition between man and beast,' where the individual's life is always subject to institutional violence.⁹² This is an ever-present

⁸⁸ Kalí Tal discusses trauma based on multiple testimonies from survivors of sexual abuse as well as Holocaust survivors and goes on to argue that apart from the trauma of combat that pertains to male subjects, internment in concentration camps is also a legitimate cause of PTSD: 'official recognition of PTSD was granted by the (mainly male) APA in response to public outcry about the disorder in Vietnam veterans (most of whom are also male). But the "unveiling" of PTSD is useful to feminist critics, who have searched for new ways to understand and interpret women's experience and its inscription in women's literature' (p. 135). This is crucial for my reading of male and female bodies undergoing similarly traumatizing experiences within the camp-structured warscape and it is justified by Tal's argument that 'male survivors [...] sound very much like their female counterparts' (p. 167).

⁸⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998) p. 181. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the vocabulary used by Agamben includes the designation of yet another threshold. Agamben's argument serves to elaborate when the element of the camp occurs: 'we find ourselves virtually in the presence of a camp every time such a structure is created, independent of the kinds of crime that are committed there and whatever its denomination and specific topography' (p. 181).

⁹⁰ Agamben, p. 174.

⁹¹ A moment where the state of exception has been realized for Agamben occurs in 1942, 'with the internment of seventy thousand American citizens of Japanese descent who resided on the West Coast (along with forty thousand Japanese citizens who lived and worked there)' (*State of Exception*, p. 22). It should be noted at this point that the USA government interned the Japanese Canadians but did not liquidate their property as the Canadian government did. For Agamben's full analysis on the state of exception and all that it entails, see Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. by Kevin Attell (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2008).

⁹² Judith Butler builds on Agamben's term of bare life when she argues that bare life is 'life conceived as biological minimum [...] to which we are all reducible' and 'underwrites the actual political arrangements in which we live, posing as a contingency into which any political arrangement might dissolve' (pp 67-68). Butler discusses the bare life of the Guantanamo prisoners and talks about their existence as citizens as being

condition in *Catch-22*, with Yossarian and the other soldiers being in constant contact with Colonel Cathcart, without, however, being included in actual political life—what Agamben calls *bíos*—in any way. Life in the unit of the camp is nothing like *bíos* in that it does not include any kind of political choice. In fact, Yossarian associates the right to his life or death with sovereign figures:

There were too many dangers for Yossarian to keep track of. There was Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo, for example, and they were all out to kill him. There was Lieutenant Scheisskopf with his fanaticism for parades and there was bloated colonel with his big fat mustache and his fanaticism for retribution, and they wanted to kill him, too [...] There was Nurse Cramer and Nurse Duckett, who he was almost certain wanted him dead.⁹³

Although Yossarian as an anti-hero is a possible site of resistance in the novel, he shows his desperation in the face of Colonel Cathcart's exercise of administrative, executive, and judicial power. As Cathcart keeps arbitrarily raising the required number of missions that the men must fly before they can leave the military camp and go home, he contemplates that 'maybe sixty missions were too many for the men to fly [...] but then he remembered that forcing his men to fly more missions than everyone else was the most tangible achievement he had going for him' (246). Negotiating the terms and conditions of the soldiers' bare life seems to be an end goal both for the sovereign and the soldiers and it is used as a method of pressure and a negotiating tool from all parts; when Yossarian complains to Doc Daneeka about the number of missions going up, Doc replies that Yossarian would be in a better position if he finished the required fifty-five missions:

'You'd be in a much stronger position [...] then maybe I'd see what I could do.'
 'Do you promise?' [...]
 'I promise that maybe I'll think about doing something to help if you finish your fifty-five missions and if you get McWatt to put my name on his flight log again so that I can draw my flight pay without going up in a plane [...] Don't I have enough to worry about without worrying about being killed in an airplane crash too?' (201-202)

'suspended' (p. 68). For an excellent account of post 9/11 US policies, see Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006).

⁹³ *Catch-22*, pp. 197-98.

The soldiers appear to be living in a state of suspension and their reaction to the hovering fear of losing their lives on account of the sovereign's arbitrary decisions takes a parodic turn in Heller's narrative. This parodic component runs through the entire novel and is significant for the portrayal of the military camp, as it is paired with abjection and thus creates a carnivalesque sentiment. Although the Bakhtinian carnivalesque refers to the communal festivities that transcend death and authority, the part of the carnivalesque which reflects the military camp as constructed by Heller concerns its communal aspect, whereby, as Bakhtin stresses, not only does 'absolute familiarity' reign, but also 'differences between superiors and inferiors disappear for a short time, and all draw close to each other.'⁹⁴ Instead of the dancing and singing that supports the communal feeling for Bakhtin and promises the regeneration and the overcoming of death, the soldiers unite in cheerful abjection upon the imminent death mission over Bologna combined with a prohibition to submit sick leave:

'If anyone sick walks through my door I'm going to ground him,' Dr. Stubbs vowed [...] I'll knock him flat on his ass with an injection and really ground him.' Dr. Stubbs laughed with sardonic amusement at the prospect. 'They think they can order sick call out of existence. The bastards' [...]

The rain began falling again, first in the trees, then in the mud puddles, then, faintly, like a soothing murmur, on the tent top. 'Everything's wet, Dr. Stubbs observed with revulsion. 'Even the latrines and urinals are backing up in protest. The whole goddam world smells like a charnel house.' (126)

At this point of desperation, a group of soldiers sit together in the medical tent lamenting their common predicament that 'they all have to die anyway' (127), and as they share the common space of what Stubbs calls a charnel, the renewal that occurs is depicted in one of the most effective sentences in the novel: when Dunbar tells Stubbs that Yossarian refuses to fly to Bologna no matter what, Stubbs replies '[t]hat crazy bastard may be the only sane one left' (127).

⁹⁴ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p. 246. A similar analogy between interned subjects and the Bakhtinian carnivalesque has been drawn by Ileana Demetriu, who places the carnivalesque within the framework of the prison; Demetriu justifies the unexpected comparison between the frivolity of the carnival and the severity of the conditions of incarceration by arguing that, much like the carnival, 'prison culture is also set apart from the normal flow of things, provoking individuals into experimental schemes of sense-making that are meant to overcome their acute feelings of social and hierarchical disempowerment' (p. 122). This description is quite reminiscent of Heller's military camp as well, where the virtually incarcerated soldiers unite in the face of the collective suspension of their *bīos*. For Demetriu's parallelism of the carnivalesque and the prison, see Ileana Demetriu, 'Carnavalesque Rituals of Renewal,' in *A.k.a. Breyten Breytenbach: Critical Approaches to His Writings and Paintings*, ed. by Judith Lütge Coullie and Johan U. Jacobs (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), pp 117-150.

In *Obasan*, internment is also a dominant theme, albeit in different terms. Naomi narrates of her family's relocation to an internment/waiting camp called Sick Bay that

was not a beach at all [...] Men, women, and children outside Vancouver, from the 'protected area'—a hundred-mile strip along the coast—were herded into the grounds and kept there like animals until they were shipped off to road-work camps and concentration camps. (77)

In another camp, where the family is transported, called Hastings Park Pool, Naomi remembers that she got 'terrible stomach pains' and that everyone was crammed into two buildings 'like so many pigs' (90-91). When Naomi's family moves to a new house, she observes that

the ceiling is so low it reminds [her] of the house of the seven dwarves. The newspapers lining the walls bend and curl showing rough wood beneath. Rusted nails protrude from the walls. A hornet crawls along the ledge of a window. Although it is not dark or cool, it feels underground. (121)

From these examples, it becomes obvious that the new dwelling is in fact an undwelling for the family as well as an unravelling of their physical conditions. There is more to each dwelling in terms of what is uncovered rather than the protection and coverage it provides in physical terms, but more significantly, each temporary dwelling that Naomi's family occupies, serves the purpose of exposing their supposedly dangerous identity to the rest of the Canadian citizens. What this undwelling reveals, however, is that through the abusive institutions, a collectivity is formed.

The Familiar Foreigner

This collectivity is one of outsiders. As the camp structure of warscape becomes the host of grotesque, and abject bodies become Kristevan 'familiar foreigners,' abjection becomes the building material of the collectivity. For Colonel Cathcart, Yossarian becomes the 'familiar foreigner' all too easily, as he is remembered by the colonel 'in dejection' and the colonel truly believes that Yossarian the troublemaker will be his 'nemesis.'⁹⁵

⁹⁵ *Catch-22*, p. 241.

Yossarian—the very sight of the name made him shudder. There were so many esses in it. It just had to be subversive. It was like [...] *socialist, suspicious, fascist* and *Communist*. It was an odious, alien, distasteful name, that just did not inspire confidence. It was not at all like such clean, crisp, honest, American names as Cathcart, Peckem and Dreedle.⁹⁶

In the army camp, Yossarian becomes what Agamben terms *homo sacer*, as his life is expendable and his death meaningless for the collectivity.⁹⁷ This happens on account of his name sounding ‘foreign’ and being synonymous with other foreign and evil forces, a correlation that is shown through the italicization of the supposedly synonymous words. Adding to this the discourse of cleansing and cleanliness as synonymous with American identity, we see the army camp functioning as a filter through which the pure and clean are recognized and the dirty and abject are filtered through.

In *Obasan* we see that the Japanese Canadians, the Nisei as they are called, are treated in the beginning of the conflict with a curfew, not being able to go out in public spaces after sundown and as the conflict progresses they are unable to move to any prestigious neighbourhoods of Canada, to the point where they are given the catch-22 opportunity to ‘volunteer or else’⁹⁸ into the detention and work camps: the Nisei are explicitly treated as ‘enemy aliens.’⁹⁹ As Naomi keeps reading her auntie’s diary, she finds an entry that reads:

There was one friendly letter in the *Province* protesting the taking away of the right to earn a living from 1,800 people [...] But then there was another letter by a woman saying she didn’t want her own precious daughter to have to go to school with the you-know-who’s¹⁰⁰

The description of the Nisei as ‘you-know-who’s’ is typical of the familiar foreigner rhetoric: the person or people in question are denied the most basic of rights, that is to be named, and instead their existence is conditional on the ‘normal’ population’s narrative and knowledge. In fact, as the Nisei’s identity ‘you-know-who’s’ contains an invocation to collective memory, it is an incantation to alter the collective narrative in such a way that rejects the

⁹⁶ *Catch-22*, pp. 241-242, emphasis in the original.

⁹⁷ Agamben, p. 71.

⁹⁸ *Obasan*, p. 87.

⁹⁹ *Obasan*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁰ *Obasan*, p. 82.

name and identity of the Nisei people. The Japanese Canadians are familiar enough to be mentioned in the local newspaper but foreign enough for the author of the letter to avoid naming them.

What has been examined in this chapter is the affective configuration of the warscape, where assemblages between traumatized individuals are formed. Kogawa, Adichie, and Heller narrate the creation of specific sites where individual and collective trauma come together. Within these settings, the perception of the warscape is prolonged as each scape is represented through the prism of individual and collective trauma. The warscape is characterized by an intense chronotopicity in that it contains and locates images of the past, present, and future. This chronotopicity is manifested through symbols of threshold experiences, such as the souvenir and the ruin. Both the souvenir and the ruin are components of affective value and transport the individual from the present to the scape of origin, while at the same time transgress the boundaries of individual and collective trauma. Ultimately, from the souvenir, to the ruin, to the camp, the warscape becomes the site where individual and collective trauma meet.

Chapter Three: Mindscape

As far as I'm concerned
I'm still there
dying there
a little more each day
dying over again
the death of those who died

-Charlotte Delbo,
Days and Memory

The Iteration of Trauma

As has been seen by the uncanny, the souvenir, and the ruin, the repetition of the traumatic experience is intricately wound up with the narrative representation of traumatic affect. I now return to Freud in order to analyze the stories that the traumatized bodies produce. The question that is taken up in this chapter, following Freud and Caruth, is what kind of narrative this representation engenders. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud discusses the repetition of trauma in Torquato Tasso's tragic story of Tancred and Clorinda:

Its hero, Tancred, unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda, in a duel while she is disguised in the armour of an enemy knight. After her burial he makes his way into a strange magic forest which strikes the Crusaders' army with terror. He slashes with his sword at a tall tree; but blood streams from the cut and the voice of Clorinda, whose soul is imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his beloved once again.¹

For Freud, this story along with examples from individuals' lives where they seem to be characters in a master narrative that determines their fate, is proof that humans are possessed by a repetition-compulsion, since, he notes, even the acts that lead to misery form a 'compulsion of destiny' through their repetition.² As this repetition is a pattern in the war narratives that I am exploring, Freud's study of Tancred's trauma provides a starting point for my analysis.

¹ Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, p. 22.

² Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, p. 23.

In *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth builds on Freud's observation by focusing on the voice that gushes out of the wounded tree: this voice, she argues, 'represents the enigma of the otherness of a human voice that cries out from the wound, a voice that witnesses a truth that Tancred himself cannot fully know.'³ For Caruth, the wound speaks and Tancred's trauma is not located in the original experience of his wounding of Clorinda, but rather becomes manifest in the reverberation of Clorinda's wounding, namely the cry that erupts from the tree. This is important, Caruth writes, because this wound, like any other, tells a story, and, going back to Freud's theory of repetition-compulsion, it is a story that will find a way to be told. Two points arise from Caruth's analysis of Tancred's trauma. Firstly, what I am interested in, is that, by reading Caruth, it becomes clear that Tancred's trauma is established as part of his consciousness only when it is cried back at him by the voice of the wound. This affective calling back of the traumatic experience expedites understanding and appears necessary for the original not-yet-experience of trauma. This affective narration is vital for the war trauma narrative. The wounded tree's cry appears to work as a metaphor to allude to Clorinda's trauma; however, it is not. If the affective narration were metaphorical, then the repetition of trauma through the narrative voice would only be a re-statement of the trauma; as can be seen from Tancred's story, though, the repetition is in fact part of the surfacing of the originary trauma onto a level of consciousness.

Roberta Culbertson suggests that when language is called as a medium to communicate the traumatic affect, 'the result appears to be metaphor, but it is not.'⁴ Marisa Parham elaborates on Culbertson's suggestion by stating that reports of trauma cannot be metaphorical, since metaphor implies a distance between the signified and the signifier, namely between Clorinda's actual trauma and the cry coming from the tree.⁵ Yet what is seen in Tasso's story is not only that the originary trauma comes to life under the rubric of the affective narrative voice, but also that, once the traumatic experience is articulated by the narrative voice, the trauma is re-experienced. Culbertson, speaks of the traumatic affect as trapped within the individual's body, to the point where each repetition of the traumatic affect is not an allusion to the originary trauma, but rather the asserting of a traumatic pattern:

No experience is more one's own than harm to one's own skin, but none is more locked within that skin [...] Trapped there, the violation seems to continue in a reverberating present that belies the supposed linearity of time and the possibility of endings [...]

³ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 3.

⁴ Culbertson, p. 176.

⁵ Marisa Parham, Saying "Yes:" Textual Traumas in Octavia Butler's "Kindred", *Callaloo*, 32.4, (2009), 1315-1331, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27743151>> [accessed 1 November 2015].

Perhaps it is not even remembered, but only felt as a presence, or perhaps it shapes current events according to its template, itself unrecognized.⁶

At this point, Culbertson describes traumatic affect as an interior experience which cannot be easily reconciled with the external world. The repetition of the traumatic experience in war narratives is part of that reconciliation. Repetition as a narrative trope is key for representations of traumatic affect as, according to Edward Casey, it is what shapes imagination and therefore affective representation in literature:

In literature, [...] redundancies or patterns of repetition (patterns which are metric, alliterative, thematic, etc., in character) give shape to the imagined world of the work [...] Without the shaping force of repetition, this imagination is tempted to wander aimlessly beyond the bounds of the work and its world.⁷

Following this thought, it is the trope of repetition that channels affective representations of trauma. J. Hillis Miller identifies two kinds of narrative repetition as distinguished by Gilles Deleuze.⁸ The first type of repetition places the original event on a pedestal and the subsequent repetitions of this event in the position of original copies. The second type of repetition is of interest for this thesis, since it does not so much concern the repetition of the actual traumatic event, but rather concerns the repetition of the affective response that an event may produce. What is repeated in this case is the affective response based on the similarity between objects, places, or events, notwithstanding their similarity from a factual point of view. For instance, in *Obasan*, Naomi is abused by one of their neighbors, 'Old Man Gower.' Naomi describes this traumatic experience as the only thing that she cannot share with her mother: 'If I tell my mother [...] the alarm will send a tremor through our bodies and I will be torn from her. But the secret has already separated us [...] It is around that time that mother disappears.'⁹ Naomi is traumatized by the abuse itself, but what also traumatizes her, is the fact that this abuse essentially separates her from her mother; this traumatic affect is repeated when she is also physically separated by her mother because of the war.

The second point of interest in Tancred and Clorinda's story, is that, as Tancred unwittingly triggers an unstoppable affective narrative voice, it is acknowledged by Caruth

⁶ Roberta Culbertson, *Embodied Memory, Transcendence, and Telling: Recounting Trauma, Re-establishing the Self*, *New Literary History* 26.1, (1995) 169-195, (p. 170).

⁷ Edward Casey, 'Imagination and Repetition in Literature: A Reassessment,' *Yale French Studies*, 52, (1975), 249-267, (p. 255).

⁸ J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (Boston: Harvard UP, 1985), p. 6.

⁹ *Obasan*, pp. 64-66.

that this narrative voice comes from the ‘wounded other.’ The narrative that is generated acknowledging the wound becomes a spoken bond between Tancred and Clorinda: Tancred fails to recognize Clorinda during the battle and therefore kills her accidentally, but the recognition takes place in full scale when the cry comes from the wound, even though nothing is there to allude to the physical presence of Clorinda. Therefore, this affective narrative voice bonds Tancred and Clorinda together in trauma and creates a mutuality out of the two individuals. The narrative voice is important for Culbertson as well, as she places the shaping of collectivity and the reintegration of the traumatized individual into the social through narration, meaning the fabricating of a ‘socially accepted,’ ‘believable,’ and ‘legitimated’ story.¹⁰ This story, she continues, is the re-membered memory which has little to do with the actual traumatizing experience. What Culbertson provides is an interesting side effect, as it were, of the narration of trauma. This narration, she states, whether factually accurate or not, is a certain sign of the individual’s attempt to be reintegrated within the community.¹¹ Caruth, too, adopts a similar position: trauma, she writes, ‘as a historical experience of a survival exceeding the grasp of the one who survives, engages a notion of history exceeding individual bounds.’¹² From this, it follows logically that the narration of this survival would exceed the realm of individuality as well.

The connection between trauma and history (and the narrative discourse that is part and parcel of history, namely historiography), is prevalent in war trauma narratives. The genre of historiography has received much attention especially since the 1970s and has evolved from the writing of an objective past to the acknowledgement that several types of past are possible with an emphasis on collective memory. What is meant in the present research by historiography is the recounting of events in a manner that relies on cause and effect, as well as a relating of historical events that focuses on a unified background rather than the fragmented body and psyche of the subjects who inhabit this background. For LaCapra, ‘truth claims are necessary but not sufficient conditions of historiography. A crucial question is how they interact, and ought to interact with other factors or forces [...] in historiography, in other genres, and in hybridized forms or genres.’ Therefore, the art or science of the historiography of war depending on one’s point of view is not deemed here to be obsolete, but somewhat incomplete without the narration of traumatic affect which war trauma literature provides.¹³ The war trauma narrative can be read as a counterhistory in the

¹⁰ Culbertson, p. 179.

¹¹ Culbertson, p. 179.

¹² Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 66.

¹³ LaCapra, p. 1. For an elaboration on the connections between historiography and collective memory, see Jeffrey L. Olick et al., *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011). For an extremely useful

sense that it rejects the narrative structure and intellectualized language of the traditional historical narrative. In *Days and Memory*, Delbo writes about her Holocaust experience from the point of view of multiple repetitions: she is forced to relive her trauma every time she is asked to talk about it, she relives the trauma in her dreams, and she finds an uncanny echo of this trauma when she hears of the concentration camps in the USSR. The most important point that she makes however, is the distinction between external intellectual memory and the memory of the senses:

Because when I talk to you about Auschwitz, it is not from deep memory my words issue. They come from external memory, if I may put it that way, from intellectual memory, the memory connected with thinking processes. Deep memory preserves sensations, physical imprints. It is the memory of the senses. For it isn't words that are swollen with emotional charge. Otherwise, someone who has been tortured by thirst for weeks on end could never again say 'I'm thirsty. How about a cup of tea.' This word has also split in two. *Thirst* has turned back into a word for commonplace use.¹⁴

Delbo's poignant distinction between two kinds of registers, languages, narrations, selves, and ultimately recollections and re-tellings of the same story bears out Caruth's and Culbertson's ideas that the narratives of war trauma are filled with repetitions of wounds and seeming metaphors. In the heart of this affective storytelling, which works as a counter-discourse to the intellectualized discourse of history, lies the compulsive repetition of trauma both in terms of the content of the narrative, as well as its form.¹⁵

I have started the discussion with Tancred and Clorinda's shared trauma to trace a paradigm of affective expression that I recognize in the narration of Pynchon's *Gravity's*

and accessible guide to historiography see Michael Bentley, ed., *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁴ Delbo, pp. 3-4. Delbo's distinction between intellectual memory and the memory of the senses is reminiscent of Marcel Proust's writings and Benjamin's essay 'On the Image of Proust,' where he writes that Proust's writing of affective memory is in fact more of a forgetting than a recollection: 'the day unravels what the night has woven. When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but with a few fringes of the tapestry of lived life, as loomed for us by forgetting. However, with our purposeful activity and, even more, our purposive remembering each day unravels the web and the ornaments of forgetting,' in Walter Benjamin, 'On the Image of Proust,' in *Selected Writings: 1927 – 1930*, transl. by Rodney Livingstone and others, ed. by Michael W. Jennings (Boston: Harvard UP, 2005), pp 237-247, (p. 238).

¹⁵ Patrick Colm Hogan suggests that affective and cognitive structures are the key incubators of plot and narration and that the genre which pays attention to the 'emotional structure of stories' is affective narratology. Patrick Colm Hogan, *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), p. 1. As Hogan's study focuses more on the cognitive aspects of novels than the narrative techniques involved, his theory will not be taken further in my thesis.

Rainbow, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-5* (1969), and Anna Kavan's selected stories from the short story collection *I am Lazarus* (1945). This expression is manifested in these narratives through various narrative techniques centering on repetition, producing a collective counternarrative that works against the current of the historical master narrative. In the first part of this chapter I will identify, analyze, and show how these tropes of narrating trauma constitute an articulation of Delbo's memory of the senses. In the second part of this chapter, building on these repetitions, I will examine how they contribute to the recognition of the originary traumatic affect in terms of individual and collective selves as well as how the compulsive repetition engenders a paranoid narrative that counters the inarticulability of war trauma.

Pynchon's Affective Narration as Counterhistory

Evidence of Pynchon's narration functioning as a counterhistory of the Second World War is visible throughout *Gravity's Rainbow*. Whether through the narrator's voice or through the characters' views, arguments for the instability of the historical narrative are constantly made: 'history is Earth's mind, and [...] there are layers, set very deep, layers of history analogous to layers of coal and oil in Earth's body.'¹⁶ History here is related to earth's changeability and materiality, while further down history appears to be superficial and ultimately unreliable: 'History as it's been laid on the world is only a fraction, an outward-and-visible fraction [... we must also look to the untold, to the silence around us, to the passage of the next rock we notice.'¹⁷ Pynchon here denotes the incompleteness of the historical narrative whose value lies essentially in its visibility and accessibility; in order to complement this history's shortcomings, Pynchon's narrator continues, the untold, or rather, the unfathomable trauma, needs to be addressed. Pynchon turns to the narration of the inarticulable which hides in the silence (much like Kogawa does when she addresses the silence she grew up in) as the next step of the collective 'we,' and suggests a turn to the mirroring surroundings: the rock's passage is here what the tree's wound is for Tancred.

In *Gravity's Rainbow*, Pynchon textually represents affective responses which are otherwise omitted in a historical narrative. Pynchon seems to be aware of the fact that what is normally sacrificed for an accurately historical narrative to be created, is individual affect, and so, he inserts textual representations of affect on nearly every page of the novel:

¹⁶ *GR*, p. 600.

¹⁷ *GR*, p. 623.

yes, there *is* something sadistic about recipes with ‘Surprise’ in the title, chap who’s hungry wants to just *eat* you know, not be Surprised really, just wants to bite into the (sigh) the old potato, and be reasonably sure there’s nothing inside *but* potato you see.¹⁸

What Pynchon successfully performs here, is the codification of affect in a variety of ways: the use of italics, the capitalization of certain words, the structure of the answer to a supposed question, the longwinded sentence structure, the stutter of the word ‘the,’ and above all, the parenthetical reference to the affect of frustration itself, all construct a narration aiming at re-telling the story of food rationing during war. In fact, Pynchon is not so much concerned with re-telling the story, since that would imply a designated narrator and a designated listener; as neither of these roles are clearly defined in *Gravity’s Rainbow* (most of the times the narrator appears to be part of a character’s conscience), what takes place in the novel is an affective heteroglossia, to borrow Bakhtin’s term.

Bakhtin defines his notion of dialogized heteroglossia as ‘the authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape [...] anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance.’¹⁹ Dialogized heteroglossia is intrinsic to language itself, however, if one considers that the transmission of affect is in fact accomplished through communication, it stands to reason that affective expressions claim their own space in textual representation. The basic qualities of dialogized heteroglossia are present in the excerpt above: anonymity through the implied ‘I’ of the narrator, the ‘chap’ of the everyman, and a written ‘you;’ sociality is there too, since the passage is about one of the most social acts, that of eating. Individual and collective affects then become difficult to distinguish, as the narrator shifts the point of view quite easily. Moreover, by constructing a text which brings together the narration of historical events and the affective response to these events, coded in the text, Pynchon substitutes dialogized heteroglossia and polyvocality with affective heteroglossia and poly-affectivity: the context of the narration is no longer history, but the expression of collective affect through an individual utterance. Affective heteroglossia in that sense is marked not only by a classification of the events according to affect, but also by an excess of affect: to whom does the sigh belong? Who is the agent of the frustrated, seemingly superfluous stutter? This affective excess is the crux of Pynchon’s narrative and it brings me back to the Caruthian interpretation of the compulsion to narrate trauma, for what else is the

¹⁸ *GR*, p. 81, emphases in the original.

¹⁹ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 272.

scream that Tancred hears if not an excess of traumatic affect, which is manifested regardless of transmitter and receiver, but is somehow embedded in the context? Caruth parallels the voice of the speaking wound with the discourse of psychoanalytic theory, where the individual ‘listens to a voice that it cannot fully know but to which it nevertheless bears witness,’²⁰ and the same can be argued about the literary discourse as well: the narrative voice is unidentified but present.

Vonnegut’s Affective History

In Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-5* (1969), the antagonistic relationship between representations of affect and historical facts is key: ‘All this happened, more or less. The war parts, anyway, are pretty much true.’²¹ This is the opening line of Vonnegut’s novel, beginning with the narrator proclaiming the novel’s historiographic validity. This is a very bold claim for a novel, which, not only does not follow a linear narrative structure, but contains instances of the protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, travelling back and forth in time: ‘Billy blinked in 1965, traveled in time to 1958.’²² The novel follows Billy Pilgrim’s life, from his time as a soldier in the Second World War to his return as a war veteran and his death not long after that. Billy is traumatized in war when he is held inside a former slaughterhouse as a war prisoner in Dresden during the 1945 firebombing by the Allied forces. These events are not narrated in chronological order, as the narrative contains innumerable prolepses and analepses, based on the conceit that Billy accidentally travels in time.

Gravity’s Rainbow and *Slaughterhouse-5* have an unconventional relationship with history, as they clearly echo the historical events that were taking place as the novels were being written, namely the Vietnam War, the Cold War, as well as the collective fear of the Bomb. Another feature that the novels of this paradigm share is their ‘vietnamization,’ which is essentially the application of metahistorical knowledge to an already completed discourse.²³ Another reading of the two novels, according to John Limon, depicts them as being unique in their treatment of history, in that they both share ‘a family of characteristics, none of which appears in [Norman] Mailer or [James] Jones,’ or any other postwar writer for that matter, and are characteristics that ‘indulge[...] the dream of escape from serious

²⁰ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 9.

²¹ *S-5*, p. 1.

²² *S-5*, p. 33.

²³ Jarvis, p. 61.

responsibilities, or more accurately, feature an escape from history.²⁴ This attempt to escape history is most prominently featured through a direct dialogue with historical discourse, as seen from the beginning of the novel, in Vonnegut's assertion of the reality of the traumatic events to be recounted. Peter Freese writes that Vonnegut's opening line of *Slaughterhouse-5* 'constitutes a disturbing violation of traditional reader expectations and creates considerable ontological insecurity.'²⁵ In addition, this opening line seemingly establishes the historical actuality of the events that will follow while at the same time preempting the factual accuracy that the verb 'happened' has. By declaring the factual truth of the narration within a literary narrative, Vonnegut negates that very truth. Although there is no doubt that the novel contains many historically accurate events accompanied by a narration that verges on a testimonial, Vonnegut's point of departure in his narration is not the historical record of the traumatic event, but rather, its affective trace, embodied in the individual experience.

Caruth claims that 'the traumatized carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history they cannot entirely possess.'²⁶ The narrator of *Slaughterhouse-5* embodies this paradox:

I would hate to tell you what this little book cost me in money and anxiety and time. When I got home from the Second World War twenty-three years ago, I thought it would be easy for me to write about the destruction of Dresden, since all I would have to do would be to report what I had seen [...] I think of how useless the Dresden part of my memory has been, and yet how tempting Dresden has been to write about, and I am reminded [...] of the song that goes:

My name is Yon Yonson,
 I work in Wisconsin,
 I work in a lumbermill there.
 The people I meet when I walk down the street,
 They say, 'What's your name?'
 And I say,
 'My name is Yon Yonson,
 I work in Wisconsin...'

²⁴ John Limon, 'The Second World War in American Fiction,' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-century British and American War Literature*, ed. by Adam Piette and Mark Rawlinson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2012), pp. 110-17, (p. 113).

²⁵ Peter Freese, 'Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* or, How to Storify an Atrocity,' in *Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-five*, ed. By Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), pp. 17-32, (p. 24).

²⁶ Caruth, Introduction to *Explorations in Memory*, p. 5.

And so on to infinity.²⁷

The excerpt above is another example of affective heteroglossia: the narrator is aware of the fact that, upon its remembering, the traumatic experience conjures up other traumatic events, on the one hand, and an infinite chain of affective responses, on the other hand. The narrator is not able to provide a historically accurate report, because he doesn't *know* what happened, but instead, he *remembers* what happened: Dresden is a part of embodied memory instead of historical knowledge.

The repetitious song that accompanies this realization speaks to the fact that, as Vonnegut writes, 'there would always be wars,' therefore, not only can each traumatic experience not be isolated from the rest, it is also repeated in every war, to infinity. In the novel, historical and collective traumas are constantly mirrored in fictional and personal traumatic events, thus constructing a narrative that combines historical facts and individual affect. The epilogue of the novel places national traumatic moments alongside individual ones:

Robert Kennedy, whose summer home is eight miles from home I live in all year round, was shot two nights ago. He died last night. So it goes.

Martin Luther King was shot a month ago. He died, too. So it goes.

And every day my Government gives me a count of corpses created by military science in Vietnam. So it goes.

My father died many years ago now—of natural causes. So it goes. He was a sweet man. He was a gun nut, too. He left me his guns. They rust.²⁸

The implication in this passage is that every collective trauma is infinitely repeated in other collective traumas but also in personal catastrophes. In this epilogue, Vonnegut places the trauma of Dresden within a continuum, marked by historical events and the traumatic affects that they trigger.

Kavan's Anticlimax

Taking a similar position to Vonnegut but through a different literary technique that speaks directly to affect, Kavan also contests 'real' history. Kavan's short stories in her collection *I*

²⁷ *S-5*, p. 2.

²⁸ *S-5*, p. 154.

am Lazarus (1945) are saturated by history without directly narrating historical events. These stories are essentially a sidelong glance at history and a lament for the individuals whom the official historical narrative has left behind. What is symptomatic of Kavan's counternarration of history is her treatment of the moment of the narrative climax. Kavan reverses the climax in most of her writings creating profoundly anticlimactic environs in which her traumatized characters come face to face with their trauma as well as other affects. Traditionally, the climax in a narrative is that which leads to the resolution of the story. Kavan substitutes climax with anticlimax to revisit historical truths driven by unresolved traumatic affect rather than resolution, an affect that creates a collectivity of traumatized individuals. The most characteristic of her stories in that manner is the story of Kling, an inmate in a psychiatric hospital, who is apparently suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and whom the doctors and nurses of the institution are trying to cure so that he gets sent back to the front. In the story titled 'Face of my People,'²⁹ Kavan builds the narrative around Kling's desired abreaction and divides the environment of the hospital as well as the narrative itself into two sides, one of authority and another of insubordination, which I read as a metaphor for the two narratives implicated in Kavan's writing, the historical and the affective.³⁰

Kling is a non-Anglophone traumatized soldier treated by an unnamed nurse and Dr. Pope. The first gap between the sides of authority and insubordination occurs here: the doctor's name fulfilling his authorial prophecy is directly juxtaposed with Kling's own foreign name, which is not a fulfilment of anything: 'For many months he had been called Kling, that being the first syllable and not the whole of his name which was too difficult for these tongues trained in a different pronunciation.'³¹ Although Kling's English language skills are purportedly good, the name 'Kling' reminds him of the fact that 'an impersonal machine [...] had caught and mauled him and dragged him away from the two small lakes and the mountains where his home was, far off to this flat country across the sea' (55). But Kling has yet another reason why he should dislike his name. During an episode where Kling takes part in a gardening activity of the inmates, the dirt, the metallic sounds of the spades, and the sound of his own name trigger a repetition of his trauma:

²⁹ Anna Kavan, 'Face of my People,' in *I am Lazarus* (Peter Owen: London, 2013), pp 51-64. Hereafter FP.

³⁰ The method of abreaction is extensively discussed by Carl Jung where he terms it 'the dramatic rehearsal of the traumatic moment, its emotional recapitulation [...] We all know that a man feels a compelling need to recount a vivid experience again and again until it has lost its affective value [...]' (pp. 7413-7414). It is also worth noting that Jung considers abreaction to be a successful curative process when undertaken voluntarily by the patient and when the relationship between patient and doctor is trusted. For an analysis of abreaction in relation to curing trauma, see C. G. Jung, 'The Therapeutic Value of Abreaction,' in *Collected Works of C.G. Jung: The First Complete English Edition of the Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. I-XX, trans. by R.F.C. Hull, ed. by Sir Herbert Read (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 7412-7421, (pp. 7413-7414).

³¹ FP, p. 55.

He heard the *Kling!* of his name being shouted, and again a second chattering *kling!* and running heard the spade kling-clink on the stone, he seemed to be holding it now, grasping the handle that slipped painfully in his wet hands, levering the blade under the huge ugly stone and straining finally as another frantic *kling!* came from the spade, and the toppling, heavy, leaden bulk of the stone fell and the old, mutilated face was hidden beneath. (56)

This layered narration has a double effect: on the one hand it reveals how the calling out of his name by a voice embedded in the authoritative structure of the story (in terms of the hospital setting but also in terms of the authorial narration), reveals Kling's multiple trauma, both of war and of personal nature; on the other hand, quite unexpectedly, the revelation of his war trauma is an exemplary anti-climactic moment, as it spirals into a set of traumatizing events for Kling, without serving as a point of revelation for the story, as Kling's exact nature of trauma is not revealed to the reader. In that sense, the story itself appears to be misbehaving in terms of authorial rules, much like Kling himself is by defying the hospital rules and refusing to speak to Dr. Pope.

As a form of treating and potentially curing trauma, the method of abreaction is a representation and a performance of the original trauma with the purpose of the affective value being transferred to the designated therapist; the performance needs to be voluntary and agreed to by the patient. Kling's abreaction, namely putting his trauma in words and narrating his traumatic story is set up by Kavan to be the climactic moment of the narrative, as the story builds suspense around the revelation that will take place once Kling experiences the abreaction and starts talking. Dr. Pope's affirmation that 'oysters can be opened' creates the expectation of a forced abreaction (53), and, sure enough, towards the end of the story, Kling is called to the doctor's office for a hypnotic abreaction. After Dr. Pope injects Kling with a substance that supposedly induces a state of sleeping confession, Kling has an urge to talk: 'He was very frightened with the strange sleep so near him, he wanted to call for help, it was hard for him to keep silent. But somewhere in the midst of fear existed the thought, They've taken everything; let them not take my silence' (63). Again, Kavan constructs a world divided between authority and insubordination, where Kling's submission to that authority means that the narration of his trauma will be appropriated by the medical discourse and will become part of the official side of war. During the hypnotic abreaction, Kling does relive his trauma, which from fragments of it being mentioned concerns Kling's physical ordeal during the war but also the witnessing of his father's death, however, as

much as his trauma is a huge part of the abreaction process, there is another aspect to it. Owing to the repetition of his trauma, Kling is united with the world of the traumatized, until history is inseparable from other stories: ‘all he could see above was a cloud of faces, the entire earth was no graveyard enough for so many, nor was there room to remember a smile or a cigarette or a voice anymore’ (63). As the smile, the cigarette, and the voice are instances in the story of possible connections with others before the abreaction, Kavan here reinforces the belief that for the traumatized individual, the only connective circuit is the experienced trauma.³²

So far Kavan has prepared the reader for a much-anticipated climax when Kling would no longer have a choice but to relinquish his narrative. Kling’s urge to narrate his trauma becomes one with the ground zero of the traumatic lived experience, namely the violent death of Kling’s father:

He knew that he would have to speak soon, and, staring wildly, with the old man’s face almost on his, he could see the side of the face that was only a bloodied hole and he heard a sudden frantic gasp and gush of words in his own language and that was all he heard because at that moment sleep reached up and covered over his face. (64)

Kling’s abreaction is quite similar to Tancred’s experience, since Kling too is faced with a speaking wound and the words, seemingly ‘gushing’ from the wound, are only ‘heard’ by Kling. Secondly, however, and most crucially for Kavan’s story as an example of affective narratology, the climactic moment of Kling’s narration of his trauma becomes profoundly anti-climactic, since his native language cannot be understood by anyone in the hospital: “‘Most frustrating and disappointing,” said Dr. Pope. “Oh, well, it’s no good trying to work on him now.”” The last words of the story seal the impossibility of a narrative closure in the conventional sense of attaining a resolution.

Traumatic Encounters in Pynchon, Vonnegut, and Kavan

Kling’s traumatic experience and traumatic repetition of that experience scratches the surface of what is perhaps the most important trope of the narration of trauma. What takes place through the tropes of affective narration is the constant repetition, mirroring, and

³² Kling seems to be well-liked by Williams, an inmate who is the instigator of insubordination in the particular ward of the hospital. Williams almost makes Kling smile, offers him a cigarette, and advises him not to talk to the doctor (*FP*, p. 60).

consequent recognition of trauma. Casey explains that repetition in literature is often misunderstood as based strictly on epistemological grounds: ‘repetition is presumed to be psyche-independent, an aspect of the literary work understood in its objective being.’³³ What is established through Casey’s argument is that repetition of a pattern in narration has strong affective implications and that although the repeated material belongs to the past, repetition may lead to affective discoveries that pertain to the future: ‘Repetition can direct itself into the future.’³⁴ Paradoxically, what drives the compulsive repetition of a pattern relating to trauma is the need to add layers of sameness to narration, only to be able to peel back the narrative and reach the traumatic core.

The repetition of the trauma pattern in the war trauma narratives leads to uncovering the original trauma in a way that is similar to the Aristotelian definition of recognition: ‘A recognition, as the word indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing either friendship or enmity, among these marked out for either good or evil fortune.’³⁵ Although Aristotle places the notion of recognition in the plot of tragedy within the realm of epistemology or factual knowledge, he also completes this definition by writing that ‘such a recognition [...] will contain pity or terror’ for the audience witnessing the recognition.³⁶ This definition of recognition attaches an affective component to it, which becomes magnified in the face of the individual’s encounter with the repetition of a trauma. The main implication here is that the repetitive traumatic encounters of an individual bring the individual a step closer to the point of the originary trauma, and since experiencing this originary trauma is impossible, and becomes possible only by proxy, in other words by repetition, this recognition is the closest the individual can get to the trauma. Such repetitive traumatic encounters leading to recognition are traced by Pynchon, Vonnegut, and Kavan, where the originary trauma is represented by the affective responses to its repetition, leading to a discovery of individual selfhood by becoming part of a wider collectivity.

Recognizing the Collective Predicament in *Gravity’s Rainbow*

The traumatizing event and its uniqueness despite its iteration is evident from the first page of *Gravity’s Rainbow*: ‘A screaming comes across the sky. It has happened before, but there

³³ Casey, p. 250.

³⁴ Casey, p. 249.

³⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics I*, trans. by Richard Janko (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company), p. 15.

³⁶ Aristotle, p. 15. Aristotle’s qualitative mapping of the poetics of tragedy revolves around the ideas of reversal, recognition, and suffering. The best kind of recognition, he argues, is combined with a simultaneous reversal, namely the turning of events to a completely opposite result. My discussion of recognition does not include a reversal, but is rather seen as the result of one’s eventual encounter with their own trauma(s).

is nothing to compare it to now.³⁷ The recognition of the historical event and the rupture that the narration performs on the structure of history are both present in this sentence.³⁸ The recognition of trauma which takes place through the compulsive repetition of trauma is present in *Gravity's Rainbow* in the affective relationship between Katje and Slothrop. Katje's affective expressions become Clorinda's belated scream for Slothrop, as he relives the trauma of having been experimented on physically and psychologically through Katje:

now and then...too insubstantial to get a fix on, there'll be in her face a look, something not in her control, that depresses him, that he's even dreamed about and so found amplified there to honest fright: the terrible chance that she might have been conned too. As much a victim as he is—an unlucky, an unaccountably futureless look...³⁹

Slothrop has been having an affair with Katje which was set up by Pointsman as part of a scheme to monitor Slothrop. Katje seems to be falling for Slothrop as much as he has fallen for her, but most importantly, in this episode, Slothrop begins to connect with Katje on an affective level by seeing his trauma in her: 'she nudges at the shutters of his heart, opening to him brief flashes of an autumn country he has only suspected, only feared, outside him, inside her....'⁴⁰ Slothrop recognizes his trauma (the control that They exercise upon him, his having been a guinea pig for war research purposes, and the constant surveillance he is under) by comparison to Katje's trauma: 'Back in a room, early in Slothrop's life, a room forbidden to him now, is something very bad. Something was done to him, and it may be that Katje knows that. Hasn't he, in her "futureless look," found some link to his own past, something that connects them closely as lovers?' (210). What Slothrop encounters is another level of knowledge, and that lies at the heart of the narrative technique of recognition. Slothrop cannot reach the knowledge of precisely what has happened to him, however,

³⁷ *GR*, p. 3.

³⁸ John Johnston reads the consistent Pynchonian pastiche of different types of narratives as a counter-attack to the 'digitalization of information,' prominent in the military and economic industry during the Second World War and argues that 'Pynchon's prose fictional narrative counters this digitalization by transposing its history into a continuous but indeterminate stream of delirious media effects, as the novel mimics film, radio, dance hall music, drug-induced hallucinations, and séances in which the dead speak' (p. 63). Johnston's argument also contributes to the idea that history is not the original narrative, but rather a decoy that lures subjects into accepting the rise of a new type of power structure. For more detail into the aspects of media elements in Pynchon and other American authors, see John Johnston, *Information Multiplicity: American Fiction in the Age of Media Saturation* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1998).

³⁹ *GR*, p. 210, emphasis in the original.

⁴⁰ *GR*, p. 210.

through Katje's look, which stretches back to the past instead of the future, he obtains the knowledge of knowledge: he knows that he knows that he is traumatized.

A similar recognition of trauma, only on a larger scale, takes place when Slothrop wanders in bombed Berlin. Much like Yossarian in Rome, Slothrop becomes an eye-witness, albeit of a darker nature, of the massive scale trauma in Berlin. The difference between him and Yossarian, though, is that Slothrop does not simply witness the traumatized city and individuals, he rediscovers the trauma that has taken place. As it happens elsewhere in the novel, the narration consists of both the events and details of the actual bombing as well as Slothrop's affective response to them, which, thanks to the narrator's voice prevailing over the text, reaches back to centuries of trauma, becoming a collective recognition of trauma and a collective affective response. As Slothrop follows the members of his company (Trudi, Magda, and Säure) he starts sensing the trauma of downtown Berlin: 'Grandiose Slothrop limps after everybody, a network of clear interweaving ripples now like rain all through his vision, hands turning to stone, out of the Tiergarten, past shellstruck lime and chestnut trees, into the streets, or what is serving for them' (373). All of a sudden, Slothrop encounters what he perceives as a huge strange being: 'Jesus Christ what's that—' and as the narrator takes over, what is documented in the paragraphs that follow is not just Slothrop's account of the traumatized city, but also the affective process of his recognition of the trauma (373).

The narrative voice takes the lead from Slothrop's questions onwards: 'Well, what it is—is? what's "is"?' (374). Before the narration of the episode even begins, the narrative voice seems to be questioning the representation of the traumatic scene through words. The narrator continues the story of Slothrop's affective process:

is that King Kong, or some creature closely allied, squatting down, evidently just, taking a shit, right in the street! [...] "Hey!" Slothrop wants to shout [...] But he doesn't, luckily. On closer inspection, the crouching monster turns out to be the Reichstag building, shelled out, airbrushed, fire-brushed powdery black. (374)

The narrative route that Pynchon uses to arrive at the eye-witness account of bombarded Berlin is a path that goes through Slothrop's affective expression. The narration of the demolition of the German parliament is filtered through Slothrop's affects of curiosity, surprise, and recognition of trauma, but the narration serves yet another point. This optical deception works as a preamble for another, much cruder optical deception; in a sense, what occurs here is a typically Pynchonian game of using an optical illusion as a narrative illusion,

namely using the illusion of King Kong-Reichstag to divert the reader from another illusory episode which follows and is far more disturbing.

As soon as Slothrop recovers from the recognition of bombed Reichstag, he encounters yet another surprise:

here, laid side by side on the pavement, are these enormous loaves of bread dough left to rise under clean white cloths—boy, is everybody hungry: the same thought hits them all at once, wow! Raw dough! loaves of bread for that monster back there... oh, no that's right, that was a building, The Reichstag, so these aren't bread... By now it's clear that they're human bodies, dug from beneath today's rubble, each inside its carefully tagged GI fart sack. But it was more than an optical mistake. They are rising, they are transubstantiated, and who knows, with summer over and hungry winter coming down, what we'll be feeding on by Xmas? (375)

By narrating illusion after illusion, Pynchon exposes Slothrop's originary trauma. Instead of prosaically and directly narrating the lack of food during the war, Pynchon indirectly but poignantly records Slothrop's affective response at his encounter with death. By recognizing the true nature of what lies under the white sheets, Slothrop reaches his individual fear of dying of hunger, or even worse, feeding on human flesh. This metaphor serves to remind the reader that the recognition of trauma is not a matter of transcendence, but rather of abjection: the bread is abjectly transubstantiated in its recognition as dead bodies.

The recognition and interpretation of the event that *happened* is important both for affective narration and historiography, however, from the narratives examined in this thesis, it can be seen that although historiography is concerned with describing the original historical event and writing about it, upon the narration of war trauma as an affect, *performances* of traumatic events are privileged and the road to the originary trauma is underscored by semblances, copies, or repetitions of that trauma.⁴¹ In *Gravity's Rainbow* in particular, Pynchon explicitly speaks of two wars, the real one and the historical one: 'the

⁴¹ Vasily Grossman deals with a very successful example of the confusion between truth and semblance in his novel *Life and Fate* in which he narrates the trauma racial, professional, and ultimately existential identity of his characters who are living under Stalinism, while at the same time the battle of Stalingrad rages on. When towards the end of the novel the protagonist, nuclear physicist Viktor Shtrum speaks to Stalin over the phone he notes that Stalin's voice is 'slow and guttural and he placed a heavy stress on certain syllables; it was so similar to the voice Viktor had heard on the radio that it sounded almost like an *impersonation*. It was like Viktor's *imitation* of Stalin when he was playing the fool at home. It was just as everyone who had heard Stalin speak [...] had always described it' (pp. 746-747, emphases mine). For the complete novel, see Vasily Grossman, *Life and Fate* (Reading: Vintage, 2011). Grossman's novel narrates bodily trauma in a way similar to Myrivilis's, Adichie's, and Kogawa's narrations, and so including an analysis of his novel in this thesis would be an overlap and not a significant addition to the existing material.

mass nature of wartime death is useful in many ways. It serves as a spectacle, as diversion from the real movements of the War. It provides raw material to be recorded into History, so that children may be taught History as sequences of violence.⁴² The idea of war violence as ‘material to be recorded into History’ implies that this violence is somehow rehearsed, and therefore, performed.

In *Gravity’s Rainbow* a great number of the characters interrupt the narration by bursting into song. Instead of the narration following a linear unfolding of historical events or dialogues between the characters, it becomes a parody of history. This gives the impression that the novel is the performance of war and that the characters are actors who perform a simulation of their fate, as, for instance Osbie Feel does when he encourages the rest of the soldiers to get up in the morning with a song:

Osbie Feel stands in the minstrel’s gallery, holding one of the biggest of Pirate’s bananas so that it protrudes out of the fly of his stripped pajama bottoms [...] he acknowledges dawn with the following:

Time to gather your arse up off the floor,

(have a banana)

Brush your teeth and go toddling off to war [...]

Ev’rything’ll be grand in Civvie Street

(have a banana)

Bubbly wine and girls wiv lips so sweet—

But there’s still the German or two to fight [...]

Gather yer blooming arse up off the floor!⁴³

More poignantly, in another anecdotal episode of *Gravity’s Rainbow*, Mexico, Jessica and Roger’s nieces visit the theatre for Boxing Day to watch *Hansel and Gretel*.⁴⁴ As the play progresses,

⁴² *GR*, p. 107.

⁴³ *GR*, p. 9.

⁴⁴ The motif of *Hansel and Gretel* is recurrent in the novel and here seems to be a mirror of the episode between Blicero, Katje, and Gottfried in a sadomasochistic setting, whereby Katje and Gottfried engage as supposed brother and sister in sexual activities with Blicero shouting commands at them: ‘Brother in play, in slavery... [Katje] had never seen him before coming to the requisitioned house near the firing sites [...].’ The link between the play and the sexual act becomes explicit when the narrator states that ‘[t]heir Captain allows no doubt as to which, brother or sister, really is maidservant, and which fattening goose’ (*GR*, p. 97). The constant mirroring of the same motif adds to the confusion between original and copy.

[on] stage Hansel [...] cowered inside the cage. The funny old Witch foamed at the mouth and climbed the scenery. And pretty Gretel waited by the Oven for her chance....

Then the Germans dropped a rocket just down the street from the theatre. A few of the little babies started crying. They were scared. Gretel, who was just winding up with her broom to hit the Witch right in the bum, stopped: put the broom down [...] and sang:

Oh, don't let it get you,
It will if they let you, but there's
Something I'll bet you can't see
It's big and it's nasty and it's right over there.⁴⁵

The actors of the children's play start improvising, making the theme of the play the war that is raging outside. The play is now the war and reality is turned into a performance (the war is overtly described as 'theatre' in Pynchon's narration),⁴⁶ which creates collective affective bonding: "Now sing along," she smiled, and actually got the audience, even Roger, to sing.⁴⁷ At this point the historical narrative as the narrative of collective experience is substituted in Pynchon's novel by an expression of collective affects that include personal narratives as well.⁴⁸

History and the Recognition of Trauma in *Slaughterhouse-5*

The same feature of performance and semblance is prominent in *Slaughterhouse-5* too, working as a recognition of a collective traumatic fate. When Billy Pilgrim is on military practice to prepare for battle in South Carolina with another fifty soldiers, the umpire who, according to the narrator, is the person that announces 'who was winning or losing the

⁴⁵ *GR*, p. 177.

⁴⁶ *GR*, p. 326.

⁴⁷ *GR*, p. 178. In his seminal work on *Gravity's Rainbow*, Weisenburger interestingly places this episode within Pynchon's intention in a 'vastly articulated defamiliarization of history and culture' (Weisenburger, *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion*, p. 7).

⁴⁸ Weisenburger goes on observing the restructuring of history by Pynchon and his incorporation of the individual element within the collective: 'many of the novel's episodes draw their backgrounds, references, even details of plotting, from a central source text [...] [however] working with such texts, Pynchon's eye seems preternaturally alert for moments of personal testimony, comments often buried in footnotes or beneath heaps of technical data and objective detail' (*A Gravity's Rainbow Companion*, p. 8). Weisenburger's testimony not only helps establish *Gravity's Rainbow* as a history of the collective and personal at once, but also acts as a vindication of Pynchon's work against the major body of criticism of his work, namely that it is too technical, haphazard, and amoral.

theoretical battle, who was alive and who was dead' gives them 'comical news:'⁴⁹ in the theoretical battle, namely the practice battle, 'the congregation had been theoretically spotted from the air by a theoretical enemy. They were all theoretically dead now. The theoretical corpses laughed and ate a hearty noontime meal.'⁵⁰ The umpire literally *pronounces* the men of the congregation dead thus creating two levels of representation of the battle, a narrative representation of the actual battleground and a representation of the representation of the battleground. In *Slaughterhouse-5*, the American soldiers who become prisoners of war and are transported to Dresden close to the end of the war are utterly shattered from the fatigue and malnutrition of the war circumstances; as they reach the checkpoint in Dresden,

eight ridiculous Dresdeners ascertain[...] that these hundred ridiculous creatures really *were* American fighting men fresh from the front. They smiled, and then they laughed. Their terror evaporated. There was nothing to be afraid of. Here were more crippled human beings [...] Here was light opera.⁵¹

The traumatized American men are confronted with the recognition of their trauma through the 'ridiculous Dresdeners,' for whom their trauma means nothing. In Vonnegut's novel, history is turned into the reading of a script and an acting of a play, in other words, history is reduced from an original to a copy as well.

What history signifies for Vonnegut is mostly the official side of the war; towards the end of *Slaughterhouse-5*, Billy Pilgrim is in the hospital after he is involved in an airplane crash with his father-in-law, well after the bombing of Dresden. Next to him lies Bertram Copeland Rumfoord, a Harvard professor of history who is writing a 'one-volume history of the Army Air Force in the Second World War.'⁵² Rumfoord is described as an arrogant polymath: 'Rumfoord was a retired brigadier general in the Air Force Reserve, the official Air Force Historian, a full professor, the author of twenty-six books, a multimillionaire since birth, and one of the great competitive sailors of all time.'⁵³ Vonnegut here is taking no chances in letting his reader sympathize with Rumfoord, but most importantly, Rumfoord's qualification as a historian is directly associated with the military and the capital. One of the sources that Rumfoord uses to compile his book on Dresden is *The Destruction of Dresden*

⁴⁹ *S-5*, p. 23, emphasis mine.

⁵⁰ *S-5*, p. 23.

⁵¹ *S-5*, p. 109, emphasis in the original.

⁵² *S-5*, p. 139.

⁵³ *S-5*, p. 135.

written by David Irving.⁵⁴ It soon becomes evident that the event of the destruction of Dresden had been brushed under the carpet of official history for twenty-three odd years. The reason for Dresden being kept a secret is, according to Rumfoord's condescending statement, the fear that if the event was revealed 'a lot of bleeding hearts [...] might not think it was such a wonderful thing to do.'⁵⁵ Vonnegut mercilessly casts Rumfoord in the role of a historian who is about to write the 'twenty-seven-volume *Official History of the Army Air Force in World War Two*,' but whose opinion at the same time is, in the narrator's words, that 'people who were weak deserved to die.'⁵⁶ In the official archive of history, traumatic affect is not represented.

At this point, Billy is experiencing a moment of recognition of the role of affect as that which resists the unlocking of meaning, resists interpretation and appropriation by the grand narrative that history is. This is precisely what Vonnegut touches on when he places Billy in the position of writing letters about visiting the planet Tralfamadore to a newspaper, the *Ilium News Leader*. A part of Billy's second letter contains the idea that

When a Tralfamadorian sees a corpse, all he thinks is that the dead person is in bad condition in that particular moment, but that the same person is just fine in plenty of other moments. Now, when I myself hear that somebody is dead, I simply shrug and say what the Tralfamadorians say about dead people, which is 'So it goes.'⁵⁷

Billy here speaks for the core of the affective process, which is that it is self-contained and does not depend on cause and effect. According to Billy, life is life and death is death and the affect that accompanies the witnessing of someone's death is self-reflexive and self-justified. Whereas historiography takes for granted that historical facts cannot function without their causal analysis, affective narrative makes the causal analysis redundant.

The official historical narrative is criticized by Pynchonian narration as being 'an aggregate of last moments,'⁵⁸ and this is a conviction shared by Vonnegut's characters as well; when the narrator in *Slaughterhouse-5* visits his old friend O'Hare to recall and discuss

⁵⁴ *S-5*, p. 136. The *Destruction of Dresden* is not a fictional work, but rather the first book of Holocaust denier and revisionist historian David Irving. Irving's book was published in 1963 and was a big success, but was based on forged documents. For more information on David Irving's trial, see Richard J. Evans, *Telling Lies about Hitler: The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial* (London: Verso, 2002). Vonnegut does not use any quotations that come directly from Irving's mouth, however, he assuredly models Rumfoord and his extravagant and licentious lifestyle after Irving's.

⁵⁵ *S-5*, p. 140. Rumfoord's insulting statements in this episode certainly bring to mind David Irving's real life hateful comments directed at Holocaust survivors.

⁵⁶ *S-5*, p. 141.

⁵⁷ *S-5*, p. 20.

⁵⁸ *GR*, p. 151.

details of the war, O'Hare's wife Mary angrily voices her concern that even if the narrator writes the book about Dresden, he too will omit the affective details and will thus make the war look 'wonderful: '“You'll pretend you were men instead of babies, and you'll be played in the movies by Frank Sinatra and John Wayne or some of those other glamorous, war-loving, dirty old men.”⁵⁹ The same concern with uncovering the reality about the war as being fought by children and marketed for children when in fact its hardcore realities are for adults only is manifested in *Gravity's Rainbow*: after the narrator enumerates the propaganda policies that include Hollywood and Walt Disney films, the narrator asks 'what do you think, it's a children's story? There aren't any. The children are away dreaming, but the Empire has no place for dreams and it's Adults only in here tonight, here in this refuge with the lamps burning deep.'⁶⁰ For both Slothrop and Billy, the moment of recognition of trauma entails their recognition of an adult self.

Recognition of Trauma in Kavan's 'The Brother'

Nowhere is the repetition of trauma as a recognition of the traumatized self more prevalent than in Kavan's work. Her short story 'The Brother' focuses on the tragic story of two brothers, a story which the invalidated elder brother decides to recount amidst the trauma of the Second World War.⁶¹ Although very few references are made to the traumatizing circumstances of the war, these function as an impetus to narrate the personal story of the two brothers:

I'm even encouraged to write by the provision of pencils and, in spite of the paper shortage, of plenty of cheap foolscap paper [...] Sitting here in this lonely little room, without friends, without a dream, without even a future; sitting here hour after hour, listening to the sea's curious muffled bass which incorporates at irregular intervals a voice-like contralto pleading. (69)

Although the narrator is unable to actively participate in the war due to his sickly nature, he is not left untouched by the war: the war seems to have deprived him of basic provisions as well as friends and a future. The outside suffering seems to be seeping into the narrator's room through the sound of the sea which carries within it the collective suffering. It is this

⁵⁹ *S-5*, p. 11.

⁶⁰ *GR*, p. 137. Jarvis reads the passages where Pynchon demystifies war as allusions to the Vietnam War as another war which was also notoriously fought by children (Jarvis, p. 75).

⁶¹ Anna Kavan, 'The Brother,' in *I am Lazarus* (London: Peter Owen, 2013), pp. 69-79. Hereafter TB.

collective suffering that prompts the narrator to tell the story of what he calls ‘the pattern which my brother and I traced out in our mutual relations’ (69).

The compulsive repetition of trauma in the form of a pattern is present from early on, and from that point onwards, the story forms helixes of trauma in the narrator’s life, each of the traumatizing moments revealing another moment of trauma. In support of this, almost every paragraph begins with phrases echoing one another: my brother, my mother, poor mother, when my brother, and my mother, at last my mother.⁶² As the narrator attempts to tell the story of the traumatizing events which led to his brother’s death by pneumonia, he appears to go through a self-induced abreaction:

Ah, now I really grasp the difficulty of what I have undertaken [...] I begin to hesitate [...] however closely I pay attention to the sea noise I can’t distinguish anything definite: only the subdued, interminable clamour which now sounds to me like a high wind in the trees near the house where we used to live. (70)

This is the narrator’s easing into the reliving of his personal trauma, while at the same time explicitly identifying the clamour of his surroundings with the sound of his personal traumatizing experience. It appears that the first trauma for the narrator is traced back at the moment of his very birth, being intensified, however, by the difference between him and his brother: ‘he was healthy and lovable and never caused a moment’s alarm. Whereas I, dragged bloodily through a long and difficult birth, for years swung between life and death’ (71). This difference is intensified by the brother’s ‘looks, his popularity, [...] the fact that he played his part as an affective member of society,’ while the narrator lives an invalidated life mostly spent indoors (73). On top of this traumatizing circumstance, the mother’s display of affection towards the brother forces the narrator to recognize his trauma as a repetitive and unstoppable force: ‘To my jealousy was added a devastating sense of inferiority. And these two emotions working together like deadly germs in the blood generated an uncontrollable aggression against my brother which broke out in constant violent and utterly unjustified accusations’ (73). The narrator records the culmination of his affects into a pattern of bodily manifestations bound to lead to a deeper traumatization. As the reader is drawn deeper and deeper into a spiraling narration of traumatic affects, the story reveals the cause of the brother’s death. During an attempt on the part of the brother to reunite with the bitter and estranged narrator, the narrator responds with an unwitting coughing seizure which prevents him from being reunited with his brother. His brother recovering from a spell of

⁶² TB, pp. 69, 70, 71, 72, and 77 respectively.

influenza himself, leaves the house in order to get the medication that will relieve the narrator's fit, despite the mother's warning that he may relapse. 'Next day my brother was seriously ill with pneumonia. By the evening he was delirious; unconscious the following day,' the narrator recalls (76). Both the plot and the sentence structure center on what is the core trauma, namely the death of the brother.

The last traumatic encounter between the narrator and his brother takes place when the brother is on his deathbed and there occurs the most important moment of recognition for the narrator. As the narrator enters the room where his terminally ill brother lies, he witnesses the change in his brother:

His short fatal illness had changed him exceedingly. His face had turned sunken and sallow, his hair had lost its gloss and stuck to his forehead in dank strands. Violent tremors shook me as I stood at the side of the bed. Was it my own or my brother's dying face that confronted me there, distorted by anguished breaths? (76)

The narrator recognizes his own self in the face of his brother and at that moment of recognition their sickly disposition becomes a shared trauma, the only shared affect ever to exist between the two brothers. Becoming a deadly doppelgänger, the narrator begins to realize that he has in a sense transmitted his trauma to his brother, and a second wave of recognition arrives, in the form of the narrative voice similar to that belonging to the wounded tree in Clorinda's case:

I saw that he wished to say something to me [...] At last the words came; clear, and yet not like human speech at all, they came from so far away.

It's a pity.

It was like listening to a voice speaking across oceans and continents. And after a long delay, very softly, so that none of the others heard, followed two more words.

For you. (76)

The narrator recognizes himself as the culprit, in this case the one responsible for his brother's death. The nature of the voice, its non-human and collective qualities, as it is described as not having been heard by the others in the room, afford an ambiguous interpretation: were the words even articulated, or is this voice part of the compulsive recognizant pattern that enables the articulation of trauma?

After this climactic moment, the brother dies and the mother drifts apart from the narrator. Slowly but steadily the narration reveals that this personal trauma was only a fragment of a collective war trauma that is taking place as the narrator is writing. His mother's wailing after his brother dies haunts the narrator to the point of being identified as 'an accompaniment to the waves breaking outside' (78). Kavan zooms out of the individual trauma thus taking the narrative full circle in the final words of the story: 'Perhaps there will never be an end to it all [...] Perhaps when I die, perhaps death alone will bring peace, the armistice and end to this sad internecine strife' (79). The war is raging both on the inside and the outside of the narrator and both his individual and the collective trauma can be relieved if and when peace and the armistice finally arrive.

The Recurrence of Traumatic Plots

So far I have shown how repetition provides access to affective and cognitive sides of selfhood and may reveal the origins of trauma, particularly as this repetition takes place through a narrative voice. The narrative that is generated through the repetitive pattern of traumatic representation brings to cognition that which is elusive. Casey places repetitive patterns within the expression of imagination, when he writes that in literature, repetition as an expression of imagination calls forth what is 'absent from present perception or possession, unavailable to action or cognition.'⁶³ This is where an underlying relationship between repetition and paranoia is formed. In order to trace the development of this relationship, we must first look to the affective ramifications of the constant repetition of trauma during war.

What is immanent in the experience of war trauma is the feeling of unknowability, or of someone else, a Master, knowing and withholding the plot. In addition to this, propaganda during war masking the war trauma and formulating a plot that does not correspond to the lived experience, makes the isolation and insignificance of the individual an integral part of war trauma. This is the prevalent mood in *Gravity's Rainbow*. As the narration focuses on Slothrop's night after his forced abreaction at 'The White Visitation' while the war rages on outside, a connection is made between the repetition of trauma and ennui:

you had not heard the Mosquitoes and Lancasters tonight on route to Germany, their engines battering apart the sky [...] a few puffs of winter cloud drifting below the

⁶³ Casey, p. 251.

steel-riveted underside of the night, vibrating with the constancy, the terror, of so many bombers outward bound. Your own form immobile, mouth-breathing, alone face-up on the narrow cot next to the wall so pictureless, chartless, mapless: so *habitually blank*....⁶⁴

Slothrop witnesses the sky being torn apart by war aircraft, and the constant, terrifyingly traumatic movement of the war is juxtaposed with Slothrop's own immobility and his view of the opposite wall, metaphorically signifying his view on life. Slothrop views life as 'pictureless,' 'chartless,' and 'mapless,' and this absence of signification causes the habituation of plotlessness: in Slothrop's words, his life is habitually blank. In other words, the repetition of trauma may on the one hand reconcile the ordinary trauma with other traumas, on the other hand however, the same repetition creates conditions of dense, impenetrable, and essentially plotless ennui.

If, as Elizabeth Goodstein argues, we take ennui or boredom to be related to both 'diversion and repetition within an established framework of meaning,'⁶⁵ we can discern a clear narrative pattern in the literature of war trauma: war trauma begins as a diversion and a break from daily life, but as the shock of its repetition becomes the norm, the traumatized individuals are subdued in boredom. Goodstein provides an elaborate history of ennui, from the malaise of religious deliverance and secular melancholy to a more historicized type of ennui based on subjective experience.⁶⁶ Most importantly, Goodstein links ennui with confronting one's meaningless death, which lies at the core of trauma literature. In discussing Hegel's concept of the guillotine induced death and its significance for the relationship between individual and collectivity, Goodstein writes:

For Hegel, the guillotine is [...] the birthplace of modern subjectivity: the link between absolute freedom and radically meaningless, mechanical death delineates the direction of post-Enlightenment thought. This new concept of death gives rise to

⁶⁴ *GR*, p. 139, emphasis in the original.

⁶⁵ Elizabeth S. Goodstein, *Experience without Qualities: Boredom and Modernity* (Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 2005), p. 40.

⁶⁶ Goodstein's argument is simultaneously a critique of Reinhard Kuhn's work on ennui. His grounding of the term of ennui in the Western world is criticized by Goodstein for its deliberate a-historicity which turns ennui into perhaps falsely universal both in terms of space and in terms of time. Kuhn's ennui does not refer to ennui as a malaise of the war, what is relevant for the present research though, is Kuhn's framing of ennui as a 'monumental struggle against the power of nothingness' (p. 378), which is precisely into what literature on trauma delves. As Kuhn suggests, '[t]wentieth century literature depicts the triumph of the demon of noontide over a despairing world' (p. 374). For the definitive and original guide to ennui in the Western literary canon, see Reinhard Kuhn, *The Demon of Noontide* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1976).

an entirely new experience of boredom as the expression of the modern subject's genuine aloneness in a world without a divine referent.⁶⁷

This kind of boredom then, is the affect which occurs when there is no meaning for the individual: it makes sense that individuals traumatized by war, whose future is relentlessly uncertain, or, in the hands of others, unknown to them, fully experience this specific type of ennui.

But what is the relationship between the recognition of trauma and ennui? Or, in other words, what happens *after* Tancred recognizes himself as the culprit of Clorinda's trauma? It has been shown so far that recognition in war trauma narratives may lead to a series of epistemological and affective discoveries. However, as the constant repetition of trauma constitutes the traumatic state as a habitual condition, no discoveries can be made, since the individual is placed in a continuous state of uncertainty and unknowability. This is not to say that recognition of the originary trauma or of another level of individuality or collectivity stands in opposition to ennui, but what is of interest here is essentially the aftermath of recognition. For instance, in *Slaughterhouse-5*, Billy Pilgrim and one of the minor characters named Eliot Rosewater, who is treated for PTSD in the same ward as Billy, are described as experiencing the type of ennui that follows the recognition of trauma: 'They had both found life meaningless, partly because of what they had seen in war.'⁶⁸

This lack of meaning seems to be a key symptom of ennui, a symptom which once again is counter-attacked by the construction of a narrative. This narrative is the narrative of paranoia. Daniel Beaumont places the quest for meaning at the center of his discussion of the relationship between recognition and paranoia. Beaumont argues that recognition in narration can mean both the revelation of an individual identity, but it can also signify the discovery of a system of obscured facts.⁶⁹ Such a discovery of meaningful facts, or even the invention of them, satisfies the quest for meaning for the traumatized individual and enables him or her to exit the state of ennui insofar as the latter denotes aloneness and uncertainty. This touches on one side of paranoia; as Leo Bersani argues in his seminal work on paranoia and Pynchon, paranoia is 'synonymous with something like unfounded suspicions about a hostile environment,' and includes but is not limited to 'delusions of grandeur, schizophrenic

⁶⁷ Goodstein, p. 43.

⁶⁸ *S-5*, p. 73.

⁶⁹ Daniel Beaumont, 'The "Lone-Nut" Theory: Paranoia and Recognition on Contemporary American Fiction,' in *Recognition The Poetics of Narrative Interdisciplinary Studies on Anagnorisis*, ed. by Philip F. Kennedy and Marilyn Lawrence (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 193-212, (p. 194).

dissociation, and erotomania.⁷⁰ In any event, what lies at the heart of the paranoid narrative is the desire for another kind of recognition, be it reaching another epistemological level or an ontological one.

Sandra Baringer touches on the possible relation between paranoia and trauma when she argues that '[p]aranoia is the universal state of mind of early infancy. But psychic regression has long been understood as a response to trauma, and such regression can be productive.'⁷¹ Although paranoia as an infantile state is a statement which requires more in depth analysis, what Baringer hints at is the traumatized subject's abreaction as a chronological regression whose purpose is to relive the trauma and relieve its agony. The repetition of an infinite network of traumatic plots creates a narrative of paranoia in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-5*, and Kavan's short story 'The Picture,' which functions in itself as an abreactive release of affective tension through storytelling.⁷² In addition to this, paranoia acquires both an individual as well as a collective character in its capacity to unite a group of affected individuals.

One Must Imagine Slothrop Happy

In *Gravity's Rainbow*, Slothrop undertakes the Sisyphean task of compulsively looking again and again for the reason behind his traumatic symptom. In his repetitive search, Slothrop is faced with the lack of meaning and ends up creating a narrative of conspiracy and paranoia in order to make sense of the war trauma. His narrative provides the affective release that Slothrop (and other characters) need to relive the war trauma, meaning that the paranoid narrative becomes a form of traumatic repetition by creating new meaning instead of merely repeating the same trauma. Albert Camus's quote about Sisyphus's happiness ('one must imagine Sisyphus happy') is appropriate for Slothrop;⁷³ what Slothrop and Sisyphus have in common is that they both struggle to reach an unrealizable purpose: Sisyphus endlessly rolls a boulder up a hill only to see it tumble down again and Slothrop repeatedly constructs a paranoid narrative, only to see its meaning unravel.

Gravity's Rainbow deals with the quest of several characters for a truth which always seems to be obscured by external forces. The word paranoia itself appears multiple times in

⁷⁰ Leo Bersani, 'Pynchon, Paranoia, and Literature,' *Representations*, 25 (Winter, 1989), 99-118 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928469>> [accessed 16 March 2016] (p. 99).

⁷¹ For more on conspiracy and literary representations in twentieth century American Literature, see Sandra Baringer, *The Metanarrative of Suspicion in Late Twentieth Century America* (New York: Routledge, 2013) p. 102.

⁷² Anna Kavan, 'The Picture,' in *I am Lazarus* (London: Peter Owen, 2013), pp. 82-86.

⁷³ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. by Justin O'Brien (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005), pp. 115-119, (p. 119).

the novel and has generated a substantial amount of criticism, most notably Bersani's essay.⁷⁴ Interestingly enough, it is the definition of anti-paranoia as provided by the narrator in *Gravity's Rainbow* that offers the starkest insight for the state of paranoia itself:

Rain drips, soaking into the floor, and Slothrop perceives that he is losing his mind. If there is something comforting—religious, if you want—about paranoia, there is still also anti-paranoia, where nothing is connected to anything, a condition not many of us can bear for long. Well right now Slothrop feels himself sliding onto the antiparanoid part of his cycle, feels the whole city around him going back roofless, vulnerable, uncentered as he is, and only pasteboard images now of the Listening Enemy left between him and the wet sky.⁷⁵

The characterization of paranoia as religious is not accidental, as, paradoxically, it is the paranoid belief in infinite interconnectivity that keeps Slothrop sane. Not only does he feel displaced and imbalanced without his faith in interconnectivity, but more importantly, the possibility of the recognition of what the narrator calls the Listening Enemy becomes scarce: without paranoia, instead of the truth, Slothrop is left with pasteboard images of the unknown enemy.

The desire to make connections is described by Pynchon's narrator in terms of a compulsion: 'it's a Puritan reflex of seeking other orders behind the visible, also known as paranoia.'⁷⁶ This means that to put things into a relationship of connectedness is on the one hand an exercise in control as Bersani has it, but at the same time requires the performing of a repetitive and precise practice of compulsory nature, through which the recognition of 'truth' will take place.⁷⁷ The truthfulness of this truth is naturally debatable, but in any case it is not just a truth on an epistemological plane, but on an existential one as well: Slothrop thinks that 'Either They have put him here for a reason, or he's just here. He isn't sure that he wouldn't, actually, rather have that *reason*. . . .'⁷⁸ The characters are after knowledge of their own identities. Pynchon employs various repetitive movements in the novel aiming at

⁷⁴ Samuel Chase Coale has extensively discussed the theme of paranoia and although he has done so within the frame of postmodern anxieties, his work reads as a major guide of American authors that have engaged with paranoia as a literary trope and draws on religious and political causes. The major American authors whose work Coale analyzes include Thomas Pynchon, Joan Didion, Don DeLillo, and Toni Morrison. See Samuel Chase Coale, *Paradigms of Paranoia: The Culture of Conspiracy in Contemporary American Fiction* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005).

⁷⁵ *GR*, p. 441.

⁷⁶ *GR*, p. 190.

⁷⁷ As Bersani writes, 'The plotters get together—"they connect"—in order to plot the connections that will give them power over others' (Bersani, p. 102).

⁷⁸ *GR*, p. 441, emphasis in the original.

uncovering a hidden truth, cause, or origin, not unlike the repetitive movement that is aimed at uncovering the originary trauma. Therefore, it may be argued that paranoia in Pynchon is the formation of a traumatic plot in an effort to tell a controlled story of the originary trauma.

Paranoia for *Gravity's Rainbow* becomes a counterplot that offers resistance to the propagandist war narrative and seeks to unravel the façade that hides the originary trauma. Pynchon specifically performs what Jarvis calls an uncovering of 'how World War II propaganda often hid the bodily costs of war,' namely how a unified depiction of the facts of war presented a unified body that fought the good war.⁷⁹ Propaganda is a major issue for Pynchon, who suggests that the effects of war are not only hidden but often caused by the language of propaganda: as military man Fahringer claims in *Gravity's Rainbow*, 'some typewriters in Whitehall, in the Pentagon, killed more civilians than our little A4 could have ever hoped to.'⁸⁰ In another rather histrionic example of the narrator's exposing of the bitter truth, it is argued that the continuity of the war on the home front is primarily established by 'paper: paper specialties, paper routines. The War, the Empire, will expedite such barriers between our lives. The War needs to divide this way, and to subdivide, though its propaganda will always stress unity, alliance, pulling together. The War does not appear to want a folk-consciousness [...]'⁸¹ What is implied here is that conspiratorial paranoia might as well have a counter-effect on the divisive effects of the war.

Indeed, the uncovering of religious, medical, and military institutions plotting against the individual, delineating the limits of his and her existence are simultaneously a step up in the recognition ladder. By unraveling the traumatizing truth, the narrator reveals the true identity of the individual:

Is that who you are, that vaguely criminal face on your ID card, its soul snatched by the government camera as the guillotine shutter fell—or maybe just left behind with your heart, at the Stage Door Canteen, where they're counting the night's sake, the NAAFI girls, the girls named Eileen, carefully sorting into refrigerated compartments the rubbery maroon organs with their yellow garnishes of fat [...] everybody you don't suspect is in on this, everybody but you: the chaplain, the doctor, your mother hoping to hang that Gold Star, the vapid soprano last night on the Home Service programme [...] Walt Disney causing Dumbo the elephant to clutch to that feather.⁸²

⁷⁹ Jarvis, p. 75.

⁸⁰ *GR*, p. 461.

⁸¹ *GR*, p. 133.

⁸² *GR*, p. 137. The NAAFI was created in 1921 as the Navy, Army, and Air Force Institute with the purpose of managing recreational activities and providing goods to British servicemen and their families. The NAAFI was mostly responsible for providing social services through local canteens and whereas upon its creation

In this episode, Pynchon's narrator wanders through a series of analepses in and out of public and private expressions of the war as well as institutions and mechanisms that support the war, using as a starting point Roger and Jessica's affair; in this particular excerpt it appears that the narrator is addressing Roger's affective state, culminating in a long paragraph that discusses the war and its discontents. The pronoun 'you' here has the double effect of singling the individual out, while at the same time planting the seed of collectivity, as 'you' could be virtually any serviceman or servicewoman who enters the NAAFI canteen, or anyone who is affected by the war, or any reader. Persecution by the System, 'the Grid [which] runs inching ever faster' and which Roger despises so is marked from the identification method of the 'government camera:' the ominous 'guillotine' shutter snatching a soul bears echoes of native tribes who refused to be photographed because they were afraid their souls would be held into the camera box, thus constituting 'you' as a foreign subject who is simultaneously at home.⁸³ In Pynchon's representation of the NAAFI, the NAAFI girls take a sinister character as they appear to have grotesquely taken out the servicemen's hearts and gleefully examined them before placing them in a container like a factory line: 'oh Linda come here feel this one, put your finger down in the ventricle here, isn't it swoony, it's still *going*....'⁸⁴

Pynchon's treatment of propaganda exposes its very essence: there is a system of signification controlled by unknown masters, and this system threatens to swallow the individual who has seemingly no control over the plot of which he or she is part.⁸⁵ In this plot, the master has all the knowledge and the individual is, as Beaumont argues, a subject to be known.⁸⁶ Whether the master is visible as in the case of Pointsman or invisible like 'They' are for Slothrop, the fact that the individual has no control over their life's plot is in itself traumatizing and also becomes a reminder of the unknowability of the originary trauma. In the 'Abreaction Ward' of St. Veronica's Hospital, Pointsman has the time and the funding to research the relationship between cause and effect from a Pavlovian perspective

women occupied 55% of the unit, by 1943 85% of the NAAFI was made up of women. Alan Harfield notes that the "NAAFI girls" came from all walks of life and [...] were all volunteers' (Harfield, p. 709). For the NAAFI and other military terms and abbreviations, see Alan Harfield, 'Navy, Army, and Air Force Institute (NAAFI),' in *World War II in Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by David T. Zabecki (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 709.

⁸³ *GR*, p. 136.

⁸⁴ *GR*, p. 137.

⁸⁵ In *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, Barry Lewis terms paranoia within a postmodernist setting as 'the threat of total engulfment by somebody else's system.' See Barry Lewis, 'Postmodernism and Fiction,' in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, ed. by Stuart Sim (London: Routledge, 2011), pp 169-182, (p. 176). This is one very important aspect of paranoia, however, when it comes to the experience of war, as shall be seen, paranoia becomes intricately related with trauma and its repetition.

⁸⁶ Beaumont, p. 193.

in order to help cure traumatized and shell-shocked soldiers.⁸⁷ As seen by the methods used by Pointsman, however, the structure of abreaction takes the dark character of a master and slave narrative, echoing the structure of the war itself: ‘starve them, traumatize, shock, castrate them,’ orders Pointsman so that he can force the abreactions.⁸⁸ All the patients who are used as guinea pigs for Pointsman’s experiments become part of his plot: one of the patients of St. Veronica’s hospital sheepishly asks ‘*how do I know doctor that I’ll ever come back?*’ and the answer *trust us*, after the rocket is so hollow, only mummery—trust you?—and both know it.’⁸⁹

What is of interest in this case is that the repetitive performance of the trauma, the abreaction, becomes the origin of yet another trauma, in the narrator’s words, ‘this transmarginal leap,⁹⁰ this surrender. Where ideas of the opposite have come together, and lost their oppositeness.’⁹¹ As Pointsman puts it, ‘[s]peaker and spoken-of, master and slave, virgin and seducer, each pair most conveniently coupled and inseparable’ are part of the ultraparadoxical phase, which is deemed by Pointsman as the phase that Slothrop is in and which, according to Pointman’s interpretation of Pavlov’s theory, is one of the causes of paranoia.⁹² Metaphorically speaking, if the ultraparadoxical phase means that the master narrative is indistinguishable from the slave narrative, then the plotted within has become the plotter. Right after he classifies Slothrop as paranoid, Pointsman speaks of Pavlov’s letters to the renowned French psychologist Pierre Janet.⁹³ The connection between

⁸⁷ Ivan P. Pavlov and his laboratory work on psychopathology dating as early as the 1900 and using primarily dogs as subjects on which to experiment, is idolized by Pointsman who follows in Pavlov’s footsteps. For a concise account of Pavlov’s life and scientific contributions, see George Windholz, *Introduction to the Transaction Edition, Psychopathology and Psychiatry by Ivan P. Pavlov* (London: Transaction Publications, 1994) pp. 1-10.

⁸⁸ *GR*, p. 49.

⁸⁹ *GR*, p. 51, emphasis in the original.

⁹⁰ Pavlov characterizes the passing to the ultraparadoxical phase as a ‘leap,’ (p. 323). For Pavlov’s account of his findings on psychopathology, see Ivan P. Pavlov, *Psychopathology and Psychiatry* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1994).

⁹¹ *GR*, p. 50. Pavlov reckons that this is indeed a possibility that may be induced due to reasons of neurological cause: ‘[o]ur attitude towards the surrounding world [...] would be distorted to a very great degree if there were constant confusion of opposites: I and not I; mine and yours; [...] there must be a profound reason for the disappearance or weakening of this general notion, and, in my opinion, this reason can and must be sought in the fundamental laws of nervous activity’ (Pavlov, p. 35). This phase where ‘the inhibitory stimuli produce a positive effect, and the positive stimuli a negative effect’ is termed by Pavlov—and Pointsman uses the term as well—as ultraparadoxical (Pavlov, p. 35). It is evident here that Jung and Pavlov stand without confusion at opposite points, as Jung contends that problematic abreaction is related to the relationship between patient and therapist.

⁹² *GR*, p. 92.

⁹³ Pierre Janet published material on paranoia and hallucinations between the 1920s and the 1940s and was indeed in contact with Pavlov. Interestingly, it has been argued that Janet’s terminology has been influenced by the technological and scientific advancements of the first part of the twentieth century. For a comprehensive account of Janet’s work on paranoia and hallucinations, see Andrew Moskowitz, Gerhard Heim, Isabelle Saillot, and Vanessa Beavan, ‘Pierre Janet on Hallucinations, Paranoia and Schizophrenia’ in *Psychosis, Trauma and Dissociation: Emerging Perspectives on Severe Psychopathology*, ed. by Andrew Moskowitz, Ingo Schafer, Martin Justin Dorahy, (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2011).

Slothrop's paranoia and Janet's theory is prevalent throughout *Gravity's Rainbow*; according to Weisenburger, Janet hypothesizes that opposite notions can indeed be confused in distressed and traumatized individuals in the sense that the patient 'projects the pain of this conflict outside, objectifying this conflict by personifying it in others. In short, the patient becomes paranoid, feels persecuted.'⁹⁴

This is evident in Slothrop's case. Slothrop is subjected to a forced abreaction in St. Veronicas Hospital when he is injected with sodium amytal and falls into a hypnotic state.⁹⁵ This is done by the team of PISCES at the hospital, who are determined to find out what makes Slothrop tick, meaning get an erection two to ten days before the falling of a V-2 rocket. First of all, the most prevalent of all the assumptions made in the novel about Slothrop's erections is made by Pointsman and has a fundamentally paranoid base: 'the stimulus, somehow, must be the rocket, some precursor wraith, some rocket's double present for Slothrop in the percentage of smiles on a bus.'⁹⁶ The assumption here is that Slothrop reacts to an unknown, invisible, ghost of a stimulus, which, as we have seen, leads to authoring his own controlled story by use of his penis.

Secondly, during his forced abreaction Slothrop enters into a paranoid textual exercise supposedly taking place between him and Them:

Dear Sir:

Did I ever bother you, ever, for anything, in your life?

Yours truly,

Lt. Tyrone Slothrop.⁹⁷

To this, Slothrop supposedly receives a reply:

Dear Mr. Slothrop:

You never did.

The Kenosha Kid.⁹⁸

Slothrop constantly rewords the same sentence to mean different things: 'Bet you never did the "Kenosha," Kid' becomes 'Bet you never did the "Kenosha Kid"' and so on.⁹⁹ According

⁹⁴ Weisenburger, *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion*, p. 39, emphasis in the original.

⁹⁵ *GR*, p. 61.

⁹⁶ *GR*, p. 88.

⁹⁷ *GR*, p. 61.

⁹⁸ *GR*, p. 62.

⁹⁹ *GR*, p. 62.

to the narrator, ‘These changes on the text “You never did the Kenosha Kid” are occupying Slothrop’s awareness as the doctor leans in out of the white overhead to wake him and begin the session.’¹⁰⁰ At the heart of this repetition compulsion lies Slothrop’s paranoid urge to control his abreaction by narrating all possible versions of the story, in other words, the repetitions of his trauma.

In a similar fashion to that of Slothrop’s repetition of the same story, narrative paranoia is reflected in a wide array of lists, as if to make up for the listlessness of the ennui of war. According to the narrator, the White Visitation is merely a ‘disused hospital for the mad,’ which comprises ‘a few token lunatics, an enormous pack of stolen dogs, cliques of spiritualists, vaudeville entertainers, wireless technicians, Couéists, Ouspékians, Skinnerites, lobotomy enthusiasts, Dale Carnegie zealots,’ all excited and encouraged by the new market the war has created.¹⁰¹ The repetitive compulsion of paranoia is mirrored through the constant list-making. One such occupier of The White Visitation is Mexico, who becomes paranoid as he wakes up one morning fully institutionalized and away from Jessica who has functioned as his semblance of continuity and sense of reality. What triggers his paranoid thinking is finding a long brown hair tangled up in his mouth. This abject detail initiates Mexico into paranoia, interrupting his daily boring routine:

shuffling to the lavatory, his graying government flannel tucked limply inside the cord of his pajamas, it came to him: what if it’s some mauve turn of the century tale of ghostly revenge and this hair here’s some First Step...Oh, paranoia? You should’ve seen him going through all the combinations as he moved around doing lavatory things among the stumbling, farting, razor-scraping, hacking, sneezing and snot-crusting inmates of Psi section.¹⁰²

Mexico’s paranoid affects are built up in tandem with the detailed list of the inmates’ morning routine, expelling abject substances. As he delves deeper into list-making, Mexico’s identity crisis becomes intractable:

Yes: suppose they can see into your mind! a-and how about—what if it’s *hypnotism*? Eh? Jesus: then a whole number of *other* occult things such as: astral projection, brain control (nothing occult about *that*), secret curses for impotence, boils, madness,

¹⁰⁰ GR, p. 62. John Limon reads this repetition as proof that ‘signifiers can serve various masters, so that even proper nouns can be expropriated’ (Limon, *Writing after War*, p. 148).

¹⁰¹ GR, p. 79.

¹⁰² GR, p. 127.

yaaahhh—*potions!* [...] psychic-unity-with-the-Controlling-Agency such that Roger would be he and he Roger, yes yes a number of these notions rambling through his mind here [...] with [...] Ronald Cherrycoke hawking fine-marbled amber phlegm into the basin—what’s all this, who *are all these people....* Freaks! *Freeeeaks!* He’s surrounded!¹⁰³

The peak of Mexico’s paranoia coinciding with his coming in close contact with abject substances of the other is not coincidental, but rather serves to heighten the idea that paranoia in Mexico’s case is not only isolating him from other individuals, but also threatens his very identity. The list of possible threats that Mexico compiles here must be called out, must take form and shape and become expelled, like Cherrycoke’s phlegm into the basin.

Exercises in Controlled Abreactions

Whereas Slothrop’s and Mexico’s paranoia leaves them guessing possible explanations for their trauma, Billy casually travels back and forth in time and space without questioning his symptom. During his eighteenth anniversary party, Billy has a psychosomatic response to the music being played by a quartet. One of the guests, science fiction writer Kilgore Trout, talks to Billy:

‘You ever put a full-length mirror on the floor, and then have a dog stand on it?’ Trout asked Billy. [...] ‘The dog will look down, and all of a sudden he’ll realize there’s nothing under him. [...] That’s how *you* looked—as though you all of the sudden realized you were standing on thin air.’¹⁰⁴

Billy reacts to the music played by the quartet because he knows that in the future he will be involved in an airplane crash, where another quartet will be travelling with him. This is a climactic moment in the novel, as it is at that point that Billy leaves the party and goes upstairs to his bedroom in a symbolic affective ascent, and for the first time remembers the trauma of having survived the bombing of Dresden: ‘Billy thought hard about the effect the quartet had had on him, and then found an association with an experience he had had long ago. He did not travel in time to the experience. He *remembered* it shimmeringly.’¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *GR*, p. 127, emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁴ *S-5*, pp. 127-128, emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁵ *S-5*, p. 129, emphasis mine.

This is the first time in the novel that Billy tries and succeeds in remembering an event: he might be travelling in time and space, but the traumatic event is not registered in his memory. Whereas there could be a debate about whether Billy's character can be read as having reached a sublime truth, or as being merely a paranoid shell-struck soldier, one cannot disagree with the fact that Billy's transportation in space-time does not constitute an active part of memory. As Alberto Cacicedo writes in his discussion of *Catch-22* and *Slaughterhouse-5*, the narrative in both cases is driven by the characters' inability to remember or forget their trauma:

The fictional character and the real novelist must revisit the traumatic event over and over again precisely because it has determined their lives in profound ways; yet, because of its horrific power, the event has also erased itself from their consciousness.¹⁰⁶

Building on this argument, it is my contention that the repeated attempts to remember that which has not been entirely forgotten, result in the creation of a paranoid narrative, which prepares Billy for the abreaction that follows. In that sense, paranoia in *Slaughterhouse-5* works as a controlled exercise in preparation for the point when the originary trauma will be remembered. The two literary techniques used by Vonnegut as means to this end are his repetition of the phrase 'So it goes' and his constant use of striking similes. These techniques are part of a paranoid narrative in which establishing connection are necessary, and in Vonnegut's novel, connections are emphasized as the antidote to death: '*Before you kill somebody, make absolutely sure he isn't well connected.*'¹⁰⁷

The literary reflex of the phrase 'So it goes' occurs every time a fatal incident takes place no matter how the fatality is induced:¹⁰⁸ Billy's "father died in a hunting accident during the war. So it goes," or "Everybody was killed but Billy and the copilot. So it goes," or "The Pole was a farm laborer who was being hanged for having had sexual intercourse with a German woman. So it goes."¹⁰⁹ This becomes the paranoid mantra of the novel, whose repetition puts the lid on an infinite number of individual and collective traumas. The frequent use of the phrase appears to be a linguistic symptom of the repeated death of the body serving both as a distraction from this death and as a testament to a traumatic yet

¹⁰⁶ Alberto Cacicedo, "'You must remember this': Trauma and Memory in *Catch-22* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 46:4, (2005), 357-368, (pp. 359-361).

¹⁰⁷ *S-5*, p. 78, emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁸ *S-5*, pp. 27, 28, 30, and 32.

¹⁰⁹ *S-5*, p. 17 and p. 113.

mundane event. This repetition works as the paranoid mind's reminder that there is something that needs to be forgotten.

In the novel it is taken for granted that Billy Pilgrim travels back in time, whereas in the beginning of the story, the narrator emphatically writes that he 'really *did* go back to Dresden [...] in 1967.'¹¹⁰ Perhaps the difference between the two returns is that Vonnegut's return is part of his remembrance of his traumatic experience in Dresden, whereas Billy's constant returns are only rehearsals for that moment towards the end of the novel when his delusions will cease and he will indeed remember his experience. This is further supported by the fact that each visit to Dresden reveals more and more information about the traumatic event, until during Billy's penultimate visit, the aftermath of the bombing is explicitly narrated: 'Billy, with his memories of the future, knew that the city would be smashed to smithereens and then burned—in about thirty more days. He knew, too, that most of the people watching him would soon be dead. So it goes.'¹¹¹

Billy's supposed memories from the future speak to his cognition of the traumatic event, juxtaposed with the fact that he has not responded to the trauma affectively, but more importantly, they are memories that seem to be pulled from a collective register of war trauma. In that sense, Billy's delusions keep him within a collective predicament where the event of the bombing of Dresden has happened and will always happen, as the Tralfamadorians say about the destruction of universe: 'A Tralfamadorian test pilot presses a starter button, and the whole Universe disappears [...] He has *always* pressed it, and he *always* will.'¹¹² This is changed when at the party his memory of the event is triggered and he starts remembering the bombing in full detail, for the first time reliving it and revealing it to the reader. Most noticeably, the traumatic event is not described exclusively in past or future tense, but in the past continuous as well:

He was down in the meat locker on the night that Dresden was destroyed. There were sounds like giant footsteps above. Those were sticks of high explosive bombs. The giants walked and walked [...] They were all being killed with their families [...] The girls that Billy had seen naked were all being killed, too.¹¹³

As Billy's abreaction comes to an end, the narration melts into Billy's free association of the traumatic incident of the plane crash, followed by one of his delusions on the planet

¹¹⁰ S-5, p. 1.

¹¹¹ S-5, p. 109.

¹¹² S-5, p. 84, emphases in the original.

¹¹³ S-5, p. 129.

Tralfamadore, followed again by the aftermath of Dresden, and ending in Billy's hospitalization after the plane crash. Despite his pilgrimage toward a necessary abreaction, Billy does not escape his paranoid delusions.

This pattern of controlled abreactions is also expressed by the repetitive similes that Vonnegut uses, where unlikely, almost paranoid connections become part of a reassigning of affective meaning to traumatic events in *Slaughterhouse-5*. The simile which appears repetitively in the novel is the one where after the bombing, Dresden is 'like the surface of the moon.'¹¹⁴ Considering that *Slaughterhouse-5* was published only a few months before the Americans sent a man on the moon, it appears that Vonnegut's simile makes connections not just within the novel but to events outwith the novel: on the one hand Billy is able to tell what the surface of the moon actually looks like since he saw it from a close distance when he was abducted by Tralfamadoreans, and therefore his delusions help to supplement Dresden's description with affective value. On the other hand, this repetitive simile taps into another famous American conspiracy theory according to which no man has ever been on the moon. This simile and its paranoid associations speak to the heart of trauma and its representation: if one cannot put it in words, does that mean that it did not happen?

The pattern of similes is recurrent in the novel and operates in a similar fashion. Billy's exhaustion from marching is described through a simile: 'He was leaning against a tree with his eyes closed. His head was tilted back and his nostrils were flaring. He was like a poet in the Parthenon. This was when Billy first came unstuck in time.'¹¹⁵ This paranoid comparison kickstarts Billy's first delusion of time-travel and sets the affective tone of Billy's traumatized state. Likewise, similes in the novel dictate sensory and affective expression. In the same march, Billy's fear in hearing a dog bark in his exhausted state is expressed through a simile: 'that dog had a voice like a big bronze gong;'¹¹⁶ after Billy and the other American soldiers exchange fire with Germans, they try escape without drawing any more fire: 'They crawled into a forest like the big, unlucky mammals they were [...] The Americans had no choice but to leave trails in the snow as unambiguous as diagrams in a book on ballroom dancing—*step, slide, rest—step, slide, rest*;¹¹⁷ later in the novel, Billy's colonel suffers from whooping cough: 'Every time he inhaled his lungs rattled like greasy paper bags.'¹¹⁸ Torn between the literal and the paranoiacally metaphorical, the narrator

¹¹⁴ *S-5*, p. 43, p. 129, p. 130 and p. 144.

¹¹⁵ *S-5*, p. 31.

¹¹⁶ *S-5*, p. 35.

¹¹⁷ *S-5*, p. 61, emphasis in the original.

¹¹⁸ *S-5*, p. 48.

assigns affective value to traumatizing scenes by alluding to images as far away from war as possible.

Kavan's Traumatic Frames

The repetition of trauma has been so far discussed as leading to a recognition of the originary trauma and at the same time of another selfhood. This repetition is part and parcel of paranoia as an affective expression of war trauma, since it fuels both the habituation of trauma and the consequent paranoid narrative that is constructed as an escape from this trauma. What the paranoid characters are looking for is a recognition of their being as well as the understanding (re-cognition) and seizing control of the plot.

Trauma and paranoia are closely related in most of Kavan's writing. Coming straight from the heart of the Second World War, Kavan's short story 'The Picture' expresses an affective state of being watched and controlled not unlike the one found in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. Although the war trauma is not explicitly discussed, the traumatized state of the protagonist and his or her alienation from the environment, as well as the fact that very few details apart from the incident with the picture are revealed to the reader, create a paranoid narrative similar to the narrative of the soldiers treated by Kavan during the war. This narrative as expressed through the incident of the picture, I argue, does not only stand metonymically for the bigger picture of war trauma, but most crucially it becomes an affirmation of that trauma through the protagonist's misrecognition and a self-fulfilling prophecy that the trauma is never-ending.

The plotline of 'The Picture' is simple: the protagonist attempts to pick up a significant picture they left at a shop to be framed and after a series of paranoid misunderstandings and disappointments, the protagonist leaves the shop empty-handed. The allegorical element of the protagonist's desire to have a precious picture framed is not to be underestimated. What the protagonist is aiming at is the grasping of the picture and the framing and therefore understanding of the plot. Mary Ann Caws reads the frame in modernist literature as an 'aid[...] to perception,' and an integral part of the plot, whether in its literal or in its metaphorical form.¹¹⁹ In Caws's work on high modernist fiction, the frame is not about what is circumscribed within it, but also what is circumvented, which leads to the attention being shifted to the trope of framing itself rather than the contents of the frame.¹²⁰ This resonates with Kavan's story, as the contents of the frame are never disclosed

¹¹⁹ Mary Ann Caws, *Reading Frames in Modern Fiction* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1985), p. 4.

¹²⁰ Caws, pp. xi-xii.

to the reader, thus leading to the conclusion that it is the process of the framing of the plot that is important to the protagonist.

The story begins by establishing the protagonist's foreignness and uncertainty about the surroundings, culminating in what is seemingly a rational and hopeful statement: 'The sun was shining the afternoon I went for the picture [...] the sun does shine more here in the winter than it does at home. But that afternoon it shone as if the winter had almost come to an end' (82). The protagonist appears to have placed a great deal of hope in springtime, which is juxtaposed not only with literal winter, but with the strangeness of the place: 'The cold mornings open their eyes to glare at you one after another, like hostile strangers.' Ironically, it is the protagonist who is being looked at and framed by the surroundings, and this is a theme that runs through the entire story. The possibility of the picture becoming framed is invested with 'pleasure' and 'happiness' and the protagonist describes it as 'an ally in the alien territory of my room' (82). No further mention of the room or the dwelling of the protagonist is made, however, this description of the framed picture teams it up with the protagonist: the two of them would stand out in the 'strange environment,' which, despite its strangeness, seems to be a perfect example of unremarkability: there is not 'anything very remarkable about' the weather and the town is marked by its 'drab appearance' (82). As soon as the protagonist enters the frame shop, the narrative zooms into oddness: 'The inside of the shop felt really chilly, and it was dark as well [...] It wasn't until after I'd rung the bell, which in this case was an uncommon one made of glass, that I saw there was somebody already in the shop' (83). From this point onwards, the frame shop becomes itself framed by oddness: most ominously, the protagonist is found within this paranoid framing as he or she has the impression of being watched by the man in the shop:

I can't attempt to explain the impression I got then, an impression that was absolutely illogical and contradicted by the man's very attitude [...] It's not exactly agreeable to feel that a stranger has got you under observation, particularly if you happen to be [...] in a place where things frequently turn out quite different from what they appear.
(83)

The Russian doll effect of the frames in this description is what sets the story in motion. The framing seems to be repeated from different angles: the protagonist is watched by the man, who supposedly watches the protagonist but is 'straining his eyes to examine the pictures before him' (83), while the protagonist is framing the story for the reader, and all of this is taking place in a shop full of frames. Not only is this repetitive framing an integral part of

the protagonist's paranoia, it also sets up multiple views that need to be met with recognition. Instead, however, all the frames stand empty and the eyes peering through these frames encounter emptiness, as the plot remains unrecognizable. In fact, Kavan's story frames a series of misrecognitions: the person that finally comes to help the protagonist with his request of the picture is not in the protagonist's words, 'the old man whom I'd been expecting and upon whom, for some reason, I seemed to have pinned my faith, but a dark-haired girl in a red dress whom I'd never seen before' (83). In the protagonist's non-recognition of the shopkeeper, a shattering of the framing occurs, as the plot is discontinued.

The story carries on in the same vein: the man's presence is of unrecognizable purpose, the girl does not recognize the protagonist and he or she enters an unrecognizable affective state: 'The situation already seemed to have developed beyond my control. I was oppressed by an intuition, hard to put into words, that the true meaning of what was happening was in some way hidden from me: and yet I dreaded the moment when it would become clear' (84). The protagonist is looking for a freeze frame of meaning, but it is missing. When the girl eventually does retrieve a framed picture, not only does the name on the package of the frame belong to someone else, but also the picture is revealed to be 'an inane nursery print of a frog in a top hat' (84). Instead of recognizing his or her own selfhood, the protagonist goes through a reverse mirror stage.

The lack of recognition extends from the girl's 'blank face' to the protagonist's surprise at his or her own voice upon protesting for the lost frame: 'Why didn't my voice sound indignant?' (84). When the protagonist requests to see the old man who had arranged the framing of the picture, the old man's response speaks to the core of the story: 'Picture? Picture? He repeated in an unexpectedly querulous voice [...] What picture? There are hundreds of pictures here' (85). The paranoid fear of losing the picture, and with it, losing the plot, is affirmed here for the protagonist:

Then it began to dawn on me that the thing which has so often happened to me in this country had happened again, that I had made a mistake, that I had fallen into the trap of accepting as real an appearance that was merely a sham, a booby trap, a malicious trick. (85)

The frame may have been lost but the trauma has been affirmed. The final non-recognition in the story takes place when eerily, the old man asks the protagonist to describe the picture, at which request the protagonist completely unravels as he or she presumes that everyone in the shop is laughing at another yet unrecognizable joke made on his or her expense. The

frame of the story itself closes when the protagonist ends the narration with a variation of the sentence that the narration began: 'How terribly long and hard the winters seem when one is far from home' (86). Although the story's paranoid framing does not reveal the plot of the story entirely, or perhaps because of that, the emphasis is on the act of framing, both as a narrative device to narrate the repetition of trauma and as part of the paranoid quest for meaning.

In this chapter I have explored the dynamic of the repetition of trauma and the ways it specifically plays into the affective representation of war trauma in Pynchon, Vonnegut, and Kavan, arguing that these narratives provide views par excellence of affective narratology. By narrating semblances of historical events, Pynchon and Vonnegut contest the historical master narrative and provide affective aspects of trauma. Similarly, Kavan's manipulation of the narrative technique of the climax reverses traditional narrative expectations. Simultaneously, the constant repetition of traumatic events unravels the traumatic experiences one by one and reveals the originary trauma, at the heart of which lies the recognition of a traumatized self but also, quite crucially, the recognition of a collective bond. Finally, as the traumatic plots are repeated over and over, a possibility for the creation of new meaning emerges: the compulsive repetition of traumatic stories, both individual and collective leads to the creation of paranoid plots in all three writers under discussion here. This in turn provides potential for the traumatized individual to seize control of the plot and perform a collective exit from the vicious circle of trauma.

Chapter Four: Timescape

Can't you see that tragedy is
approaching with inevitable
precision?
-Stratis Tsirkas,
The Lost Spring

Back to the Future

This thesis has so far been concerned with the literary representation of the traumatic affect of war through individual and collective bodies and through warscapes. In order to be able fully to convey the coordinates of traumatic war affect, it is now time to turn to its timing, in other words the literary representation of traumatic war affect and its movement from past to present and future. Carrying on from the idea that the repetition of trauma connects the reproduction of the trauma that took place in the past and the making sense of that trauma in the future, it can be argued that, in terms of the movement of time, repetition as a narrative trope refers to a future past. This is true of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Kogawa's *Obasan*, and Kavan's short story 'Who Has Desired the Sea.' In these literary works, the repetition of semantic patterns as well as the compulsive repetition of traumatic events shape expectations of the future.

In his analysis of the role of repetition in English poetry, Derek Attridge explicitly relates repetition of past elements with the creation of meaning in the future. Attridge writes that semantic or content repetitive patterns in poetry 'involv[e] the experiences of anticipating a goal, arriving at that goal, and extending that goal by further elaboration.'¹ From this, it follows that any narrative pattern creates an anticipation of specific meaning that is related to the repeated content. When that which is constantly repeated is the traumatic event, the affective response generated is that of an anticipation of another traumatic event. It is this anticipation that is the subject of the present chapter.

Anticipation of trauma is exemplified in *Half of a Yellow Sun* when one of a series of air-raids takes place above a village where Igbo people have taken shelter. Odenigbo, Olanna, Ugwu, and Baby rush to the bunker as the sound of the air raid siren seems to be coming from another dimension: 'Olanna thought [the sound] had come from the radio

¹ Derek Attridge, "The Movement of Meaning: Phrasing and Repetition in English Poetry," pp. 61-84, in *Repetition*, ed. Andreas Fischer (Tuebingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1994), pp. 63-64.

before she realized it was the air-raid alarm [...] The strafing had started [...] they all crawled down into the bunker.² The climax of this episode takes place when, as the village is being bombed, the anticipation of death becomes embodied by Olanna:

Olanna slapped at the crickets; their faintly moist bodies felt slimy against her fingers, and even when they were no longer perched on her, she still slapped her arms and legs. The first explosion sounded distant. Others followed, closer, louder, and the earth shook. Voices around her were shouting, ‘Lord Jesus! Lord Jesus!’ Her bladder felt painfully, solidly full, as though it would burst and release not urine but the garbled prayers she was muttering [...] Another explosion shook the ground. Then the sounds stopped.³

The anticipation of trauma is mirrored here in Olanna’s repetitive movement of slapping the crickets away from her body. Similar to how Olanna reacts to the crickets even after they are gone, the reaction to anticipated traumas is a compulsive one even if it is a reaction to invisible dangers. As Peter Saint-Amour writes about the anticipation of traumatic events, ‘The warning is the war; the drill and the raid are one.’⁴ Olanna’s body reacts to the affect of a feared death by being absorbed into this anticipatory feeling: the bursting of Olanna’s bladder is identified with the possibility of the bunker being blasted off the ground, but that symbolism does not trivialize the air-raid. Instead, the affect of anticipation in this particular passage has a character both individual and collective, as, in the face of an impending death, Olanna’s bodily fluids are identified with the prayers for a collective salvation that are articulated by the collectivity.

From this example, anticipation appears to have two key aspects: firstly, it is a compulsive and to a certain extent embodied affect, and secondly, it extends beyond the bounds of the individual and into the collectivity. Patricia Rae discusses anticipation as a reflexive defence mechanism in George Orwell’s novel *Coming Up for Air*: according to Rae, Orwell places his protagonist in a nostalgically pastoral setting in order for this protagonist to recall a past ideal situation and to hold on to it while signs of an impending war are becoming more and more frequent.⁵ In that sense, for Orwell’s protagonist nostalgia

² *HoAYS*, p. 274.

³ *HoAYS*, pp. 274-275.

⁴ Paul Saint-Amour, *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form* (New York: Oxford UP, 2015), p. 13.

⁵ Patricia Rae, “‘There’ll be no more fishing this side the grave:’ Radical Nostalgia in George Orwell’s *Coming Up for Air*,” in *Modernism and Nostalgia: Bodies, Locations, Aesthetics*, ed. by Tammy Clewell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 149-165.

is a reaction to the anticipation of war. To put it even more simply, this is a case of nostalgia and anticipation coming together to facilitate the affective transcendence of the individual from peace to war. Rae indicates that this nostalgia-anticipation nexus is quite common in pre-war literature and terms this affect which stands between mournful nostalgia and anticipated trauma as “proleptic elegy,” a feature of British writing in the late 1930s wherein writers unnerved by the prospect of another war indulge in proleptic re-enactments of familiar consolations.’⁶ Anticipation, then, draws from the past and concerns present preparedness for a future trauma.

As well as its connection to the past, anticipation bears a vivid connection to a changed future. Rebecca Coleman frames the anticipation created by contemporary images within the potential of a better future and argues that,

as potential, the futures of images of transformation are pervasive, appealing and powerful because they are *affective*. The promises made by images of transformation are affective in that they address hopes and dreams of a better future, and engage the body through the intensity of feeling. Images of transformation contain something that is ‘waiting to happen.’⁷

Coleman speaks specifically of the effect that images of positive change have on the human perception of the future, however, what is relevant to the anticipation of trauma is that the body is engaged in a similar manner. Images of potential destruction are equally affective with the images of potential positive change. Therefore, it can be argued that the present itself is a state of affective futurity insofar as the impending trauma unlocks affects which belong to the not-yet.

The example above speaks to the fact that when it comes to the representation of traumatic experience, the subjective lived time and the more public time of events taking place merge. It therefore appears that anticipating the future neither belongs to the realm of individuality, nor to the sphere of collective and social existence in exclusivity. Anticipation and its complicated collective and individual traces are touched upon in Paola Iovene’s words as she notes that anticipation

⁶ Rae, ‘Radical Nostalgia,’ p. 152. Rae’s genealogy of the term of proleptic elegy where Rae contextualizes anticipation within a sense of ongoing *déjà vu*, can be found at Patricia Rae, ed., ‘Double Sorrow: Proleptic Elegy and the End of Arcadianism in 1930s Britain,’ in *Modernism and Mourning* (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing and Printing Corporation, 2007), pp. 213-232.

⁷ Rebecca Coleman, *Transforming Images: Screens, Affect, Futures* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 23.

involves the fears and aspirations that shape lives and narratives in their very unfolding, and the perception of the possibilities and limits that inform human actions and are often mediated by literary texts [...] Anticipation is both structural and subjective.⁸

This view is fundamental for the anticipation of war trauma. In Adichie, the individual anticipation is strengthened by the radio and the newspapers; in Kogawa, the newspapers as well frame the future in a way more than dismal; and in Kavan's story, anticipation is institutionalized as it is constantly triggered within the mental asylum that the protagonist inhabits. The affect of anticipation therefore, exceeds the limits of conscious choice in the first instance and time limits in the second instance, culminating in a merging of collectivity and individuality. Perhaps the most vital aspect of the affect of anticipation and simultaneously the most pertinent to war trauma, is the ambivalent relationship of the individual to the present and future. In the words of Vincanne Adams, Michelle Murphy and Adele Clarke,

predictable uncertainty leads to anticipation as an affective state, an excited forward looking subjective condition characterized as much by nervous anxiety as a continual refreshing of yearning, of 'needing to know.' Anticipation is the palpable effect of the speculative future on the present. The anticipatory excitement of the cliff hanger as a narrative mode is as familiar as terror-inducing apocalyptic visions. *As an affective state, anticipation is not just a reaction, but a way of actively orienting oneself temporally.*⁹

If anticipation is seen here as a materialization of the future in the present, then the upshot of this in terms of traumatic events is that in every repetition of a past trauma, a future trauma is experienced as well. The temporal orientation that Adams, Murphy, and Clarke speak of is inherently biopolitical when it comes to trauma: individual bodies in the present are not only influenced by the possibility of another traumatic event taking place, these bodies are

⁸ Paola Iovene, *Tales of Futures Past: Anticipation and the Ends of Literature in Contemporary China* (Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 2014), p. 4.

⁹ Vincanne Adams, Michelle Murphy and Adele E. Clarke, 'Anticipation: Technoscience, life, affect, temporality,' *Subjectivity*, 28, (2009) 246–265 <doi:10.1057/sub.2009.1>, emphasis in the original. Adams et al navigate their theory within the labyrinthine anticipatory affects of life and technology and their political implications, and, while they do not touch on literary theory in their article, their argumentation is most valuable for the current discussion of war trauma.

also becoming embedded in a collective sensory experience of the present in the face of the approaching trauma.

With regard to anticipation as an affect generated by war, Eugène Minkowski wrote in 1918 that as far as the Great War is concerned, anticipation is an affect central to human experience:

During the war we were waiting for peace, hoping to take up again the life that we had abandoned. In reality, a new period began, a period of difficulties and deceptions, of setbacks and painful, often fruitless efforts to adapt oneself to new problems of existence.¹⁰

Minkowski situates the quintessential war trauma within the anticipation of a future history built on past lived experiences. In her discussion of Minkowski's theory and its relationship to the French interwar years, Roxanne Panchasi analyzes Minkowski's notion of the lived future: 'According to Minkowski,' Panchasi writes,

the lived future could be understood through the analysis of various phenomena, including two modes: (1) *activity*, or the actions that human beings engage in that they are oriented toward some future goal or objective, and (2) *expectation*, a form of anticipation with more of a sense of the inevitable about it.¹¹

Panchasi qualifies this statement by adding that these expectations seem to have a life of their own, and to exist despite the individual's affects. This brings anticipation as an affect close to the Beckettian perseverance of imagining the future in spite of war trauma. In the case of anticipation, this perseverance takes on a somewhat perverse guise, as the expected future is more often than not a traumatic future. From this, it follows that what is compulsively repeated in every expression of anticipation is a future trauma, lived, or rather re-lived pre-emptively.

¹⁰ Eugène Minkowski, *Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies*, trans. by Nancy Metzel (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1970), pp. 6-7.

¹¹ Roxanne Panchasi, *Future Tense: The Culture of Anticipation in France Between the Wars* (New York: Cornell UP), p. 2, emphasis in the original.

Plotting the Future

The structural side of anticipation as represented in war trauma literature is fundamental for the plot of that literature. Peter Brooks defines the plot as ‘the principal ordering force of those meanings that we try to wrest from human temporality.’¹² This is a key definition of the plot in trauma literature where, as we have seen, narrating traumatizing events in their order of succession (in other words, within human temporality) does not help to reveal their meaning. This meaning then, can be revealed through an apocalyptic vision into the future, namely the anticipation for yet another trauma or even for the end itself. For the characters of war trauma literature, their past traumas acquire meaning only through the existence of a future trauma or eventual death.

Brooks defines the concept of the plot as a forceful compulsion to make sense through reordering the events and he treats the literary end as a major narrative category, positing that anticipation presupposes the will or desire for completion.¹³ When placed in the framework of trauma literature, this statement opens the door to the possibility of the narration of trauma being influenced not just by past memory, but by future memory as well. This is evident not only in Adichie’s novel, where at times the characters appear to function under knowledge of events that in terms of linear time have not happened yet, but also in Kogawa’s novel, where Aunt Emily writes her diary in anticipation of the future memories that the family will have acquired. The same happens in Kavan’s short stories, where the characters often have visions of their future selves.

The stylistics of trauma literature (its symbols, metaphors, word choice) become micro monuments of specific traumas and concurrently recall and anticipate the individual bodily trauma. As the trauma narratives I will be discussing contain elements of monumentalization and memorialization of trauma, they instantly inscribe individual trauma within the collectivity. Being an integral part of the plot, the affect of anticipation for the traumatized subject is represented in war trauma literature as a perpetual state of existence, since the traumatized individual is aware of the original trauma but is also anticipating the reliving of this trauma and its symptoms. Following this thought, the individual anticipates the reliving of a past memory, therefore a memory of the past that is somehow lodged in the future guiding the narrative plot: in the case of war trauma literary representation, the plot is anticipation in and of itself.¹⁴

¹² Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Boston: Harvard UP, 1992), p. xi.

¹³ Brooks, p. 94.

¹⁴ One cannot help but notice that the reconstructing of trauma in literary works is in itself a metafictionally anticipatory mechanism, linking, as it were, the war trauma of the past with that of the future. In this chapter,

Building on the above, in this chapter I will be arguing that through its compulsive nature of experiencing the not-yet, the affect of anticipation is the traumatic trope of writing individual past traumatic memory into the collective future, an inscribing which is paired with the envisioning of the traumatized self and body in the future.¹⁵ As such, the literary works of war trauma employ anticipation as a mechanism to provide a sense of continuity for the individual—fragmented as it may be, by anticipating its future trauma, the body of the individual is guaranteed a future existence; constant post-traumatic and simultaneously pre-traumatic anticipation for the end provides the individual with the opportunity to narrate his and her own end. The literary trope of anticipation works in a twofold way, as in trauma literature both semantic and contextual anticipation seem to unfold.

Narrating the Collective Future in *Obasan*

Immediately after the beginning of the Second World War and specifically after the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Empire of Japan, the Japanese-Canadians are shown by Kogawa to enter a state of waiting to comprehend how the event will influence them:

It's too early yet to know how the war will affect us. On the whole, I'd say we're taking things in our stride. We're used to the prejudice by now after all these long years, though it's been intensified into hoodlumism. A torch was thrown into a rooming-house and some plate-glass windows were broken in the west end—things like that.¹⁶

This excerpt is taken from Aunt Emily's diary which Naomi finds in Obasan's house; the purpose of the diary is in itself anticipatory, as it is addressed to Naomi's mother, Nesan, and it is a purpose that will be fulfilled only upon the family's reunion: '[w]hen you come back, Nesan, when I see you again, I will give you this journal. It will be my Christmas present to you [...] It's one of Dan's Christmas gifts to me.'¹⁷ Emily's diary is an expression of anticipation which links the past traumatizing experience of Japanese citizens' assimilation into the Canadian society with the future traumatizing events that are looming. In addition to this, the diary constitutes not only an expression of lineage but also an

however, I will be dealing strictly with the representation of anticipation within the literature of trauma and not as a crossover between fact and fiction.

¹⁵ Iovene's argument helps tie in the individual futurity with the collective one.

¹⁶ *Obasan*, p. 80.

¹⁷ *Obasan*, p. 80.

anticipatory link between individual affect and its collective embracing: the only thing that unites Emily and Nesan is the anticipation of reunion.

Naomi reads further into Emily's diary, where Emily narrates the gradual deteriorating situation of the Nisei and the growing anticipation for an uncertain but seemingly inescapable end:¹⁸ '[w]ho knows where we will be tomorrow, next week [...] The diseases, the crippling, the twisting of our souls is still to come.'¹⁹ This almost messianic prediction is read both as a pre-empting of the traumatic events to happen and as an expression of disappointment that they have not occurred already to end the period of anticipation. What strikes one as the key that anticipation can be read through, is the collectivity of the simultaneous certainty and uncertainty of the future trauma: *We* and *our* are intoned through Emily's lamentations and the unavoidable end seems to at least be a collective one; anticipation thus acquires a collective stance which is both the aim of the individual expression of anticipation as well as a coping mechanism to deal with the anticipated trauma.

The dreaded end is in fact negated in Kogawa due to Emily's ability to tell the ending story over and again while at the same time envisioning the continuation of some sort of collective existence. As Emily's family including Naomi have not yet evacuated their residence in Vancouver, Emily gets more and more frustrated and her next diary entry reads 'Dear Diary' instead of 'Dearest Nesan':²⁰

I don't know if Nesan will see any of this. I don't know anything any more. Things are swiftly getting worse here. Vancouver—the water, the weather, the beauty, this paradise—is filled up and overflowing with hatred now. If we stick around too long we'll all be chucked into Hastings Park.²¹

Since Emily realizes that the end of the family's stay in their home in Vancouver is approaching, she narrates her anticipation for this ending, an anticipation which is paired up with hope for a better future. Considering that Emily is the author of the diary, it is worth noting here that the affect of anticipation in a given society has been connected with the overflowing impulse that 'prompts individuals to write' by Iovene, and in that sense, Emily's

¹⁸ This general sentiment of simultaneous certainty and uncertainty, or rather, certainty for an uncertain end is framed by Iovene who places anticipation within a 'heuristic category that takes on different guises in the literary contexts examined [...] to encompass the perception of simultaneous uncertainty and inevitability' (p. 9).

¹⁹ *Obasan*, p. 85 and p. 87.

²⁰ *Obasan*, p. 91.

²¹ *Obasan*, p. 91.

diary seems to be an organic manifestation of that anticipatory affect.²² In Kogawa's literary representation of anticipation, hopefulness brims through Emily's writing as much as incantations of the end do. In fact, hopefulness is discussed as an integral part of anticipation by Adams, Murphy, and Clarke as well, who place hopefulness at the center of the affective nexus of anticipation when they distinguish among five stages of anticipation which operate logically and chronologically: *injunction* as the unavailability of uncertainty for a given society, *abduction* as the navigating of the individual between past, present, and future, *optimization* as the individual's effort for a better future, *preparedness* as the preparation for the future trauma, and *possibility* as the individual's mode of hopefulness for better circumstances.²³

Emily's family has received extensions from the Canadian government to stay in Vancouver, however, when the final call to evacuate their house is made, Emily narrates the end of their lives in Vancouver as a step to a newfound collectivity;²⁴ what is more, anticipating and narrating the end turns the end on its head, since it is used as an enabling mechanism to ensure the collectivity's existence in the uncertain future. Each entry up to the final one contains an anticipatory statement which either predicts or prolongs the evacuation: 'Things are changing so fast [...] It's an awful unwieldy business, this evacuation [...] We got another extension and are trying to get a place here in B.C. somewhere [...] Got to get out in the next couple of weeks.'²⁵ The literary trope of suspense becomes a literal prolonging of the end, which ceases to be the end as we know it. The affect of anticipation depicted by Kogawa in Emily's diary can ironically be expressed by the Japanese word *bukimi*, a term which was used in Hiroshima to denote the ominous climate that was so prevalent before its bombing. Paul Saint-Amour extensively deconstructs *bukimi*, and although he clarifies that this anticipatory affect of impending catastrophe is inextricably tied to the unprecedented human-made razing of entire cities, he also notes that *bukimi* was the affect of uncanny anticipation created by 'the city's eerie exemption from conventional bombardment,' fact which led to a series of speculations debating 'whether Hiroshima and

²² Iovene, p. 9.

²³ Adams et al, p. 246, emphasis in the original.

²⁴ Anticipation for a future trauma culminates in anticipation for the end of all ends, the one after which narration will be impossible. The paradox of writing about the end and after the end is commented on by Saint-Amour in his analysis of Hans Erich Nossack's memoir entitled *The End: Hamburg 1943*. Saint-Amour defies Nossack's assertion that he and his wife, Misi, exit the precincts of anticipation because they have finally witnessed the end; Saint-Amour rightfully wonders whether the supposed end which Nossack raves about was truly the event that Nossack anticipated, or whether it acquired the stance of the end precisely because it happened after it had been anticipated (pp. 5-6). For Nossack's memoir, see Hans Erich Nossack, *The End: Hamburg 1943* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

²⁵ *Obasan*, pp. 84, 97, 102, and 103.

its inhabitants had been set aside for preservation or annihilation.’²⁶ From this it can be deduced that the type of affect that the Japanese Canadians are reported by Kogawa to have felt resembles *bukimi* since they too, were singled out, segregated from white Canadians and transported into special locations facing an essentially plotless future.

What becomes visible from Emily’s description of Vancouver as a living hell is that, much as anticipation’s time is uncertain and debatable, the place of anticipation seems to always be *here*, thus acquiring a chronotopic stance. Kogawa frames anticipation within the spatial confines of the currently inhabited and affected topos within which other topographies of possibility are envisioned and anticipated. Emily writes about the anticipation she experienced when the Japanese Canadians were forced to evacuate their places of habitation:

It’s becoming frightening here, with the agitation mounting higher. It isn’t just a matter of fear of sabotage or military necessity anymore, it’s outright race persecution. But the great shock is this: we are all being forced to leave. All of us.²⁷

As the Nisei are jettisoned from the current society and every normalized aspect of that society their very existence becomes illegal, and indeed, impossible. Their place of habitation too, becomes an impossibility and the necessity arises for them to belong *elsewhere*. Despite the abstractness of the place to which they are about to be transported, the Nisei form a collective future, influenced by the common predicament of physical and cultural displacement. Anticipating the future in a communal way is literally all they have left to unite them. In that sense, anticipation is related both to the ejected individuality of the present as well as the collective normativity of the future. Anticipating as an affect appears to be situated between the abject present where the individuals are deprived of their identity within the current society and the normative future where the individuals are reborn within the confines of a collective identity:

No more extensions. Everything piled on at once. We’re trying to get into a farm or house around Salmon Arm, or Chase or some other decent town in the Interior—anywhere that is livable and will still let us in. Need a place with a reasonable climate.

²⁶ Saint-Amour, p. 2.

²⁷ *Obasan*, p. 109.

Some place where we can have a garden to grow enough vegetables for a year [...] Fumi and Eiko and I want to stick together.²⁸

When the anticipated end finally arrives, it is inextricably connected not only with a new beginning and a feeling of collectivity, but also with a new topography, one that is associated with a time and space of possibility and rebirth where the collectivity perseveres. The voice of ‘we’ resonates throughout Emily’s diary, particularly when referring to future possibilities. Based on this, anticipation of the future in *Obasan* may be viewed as a traumatic response that facilitates the transition from an individuality deprived of its national and cultural identity to a collectivity with an identity that is stronger than ever.

Silence as Anticipation of the Other’s Trauma

Anticipation in *Kogawa* is an affect neither of the present nor of the future, but rather a time unit on its own which silently becomes a talisman of the collective existence. In other words, *Kogawa* presents anticipation as a stoically affective survival mechanism that starts as individual anxiety and climaxes into projecting a collective existence into the future, traumatized and nearly torn apart, but still an existence nevertheless. As the Nisei are physically and socially reduced and restricted more and more, they are ejected from linear time and their existence enters into a standstill where anticipation blocks all other affects and becomes the dominant mode of existence. In Aunt Emily’s words,

Nothing affects me much just now except rather detachedly [...] There’s no sadness when friends of long standing disappear overnight—either to Camp or somewhere in the Interior. No farewells—no promise at all of future meetings or correspondence—or anything. We just disperse. It’s as if we never existed. We’re hit so many ways at one time that if I wasn’t past feeling I think I would crumble.²⁹

Emily narrates the repetition of the trauma of losing a loved one primarily as the reason why her existence is in limbo but most importantly relates the confusing disappearances to the present and future traumas as her story is narrated in the present tense through Emily’s diary entries. Crucially, the repetition of the pronoun ‘we’ binds the Nisei within their anticipated dispersal.

²⁸ *Obasan*, p. 103.

²⁹ *Obasan*, p. 88.

This anticipated dispersal is hardly spoken of: there are ‘no farewells’ and literally no communication. In fact, ominous silence is a prevalent trope of narration in *Obasan*. When faced with anticipation of trauma or traumatic change, the characters of the novel turn to silence as a form of survival and resistance. King-Kok Cheung recounts that this silence has been criticized by a number of theorists as a form of absence which is seen as detrimental to the identity of the Nisei.³⁰ Cheung discusses the notion of silence in Western as well as Eastern frameworks and narrows down the definition of silence in a Japanese context as ‘pensiveness, alertness, and sensitivity.’³¹ It is this sense of silence as alertness that is interesting: insofar as this silence is a reaction to the anticipation of trauma, it provides a collective release which insures the envisioning of a collective presence in the future, and therefore strengthens the collective identity of the Nisei. As alertness, silence becomes a protective affect that extends to the future. For Naomi, her mother’s silence is an essential part of their bond. This is best exemplified by Naomi’s description of an incident where she and her mother witness several chicks being plucked to death by a hen:

With swift deft fingers, Mother removes the live chicks first, placing them in her apron. All the while that she acts, there is calm efficiency in her face and she does not speak. Her eyes are steady and matter of fact-- the eyes of Japanese motherhood. They do not invade and betray. They are eyes that protect, shielding what is hidden most deeply in the heart of the child. She makes safe the small stirrings underfoot and in the shadows. Physically, the sensation is not in the region of the heart, but in the belly. This that is in the belly is honoured when it is allowed to be, without reproach, without words. What is there is there.³²

In this incident, the mother’s silence works pre-emptively for Naomi, as it prevents her from being traumatized by an inexplicable scene while at the same time it strengthens the mother-daughter relationship in a way that, as implied by the narrator, words cannot do.

Throughout the numerous incidents where silence is favoured as opposed to speech in Naomi’s family, the implication is that this silence anticipates the other’s trauma and works to prevent it. In the bath scene remembered by grown-up Naomi, Grandman Kato is bathing young Naomi in hot water, however, Naomi does not raise her voice in complaint:

³⁰ King-Kok Cheung, ‘Attentive Silence in Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*,’ in *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*, ed. by Elaine Hedges and Shelley Fisher Fishkin (New York: Oxford UP, 1994), pp. 113-129, (p. 113).

³¹ Cheung, p. 113.

³² *Obasan*, p. 59.

Sweet torture, with Grandma happy and approving and enjoying the heat I cannot endure [...] But I will suffer endless indignities of the flesh for the pleasure of my grandmother's pleasure.³³

Silence in that sense becomes the bonding material among members of the family and prevents their dispersal by the language that Emily is so skeptical about: 'With language like that, you can disguise any crime,' she tells Naomi.³⁴ Gayle Fujita describes this kind of bonding silence as a 'nonverbal mode of apprehension summarized by the term "attendance."' ³⁵ Fujita explains how 'attendance' as cultural concept leads Naomi to understand who she has become, but that is not where 'attendance' stops. This apprehension is the affect that Naomi experiences in the face of the impending trauma and it does not go away in her adult years until she reads the truth about her mother's future. In that sense, the silence is a suspension of the anticipation of the present and a continuation of that anticipation into the future: Naomi's silence is a sign of her pre-traumatic stress as she is afraid for the worst, namely a separation from her mother. This fear is not alleviated until she finds out the circumstances under which she was separated by her mother. To go back to Fujita's term, Naomi's silence in anticipation shows her simultaneous attendance to her past, present, and future as they have been shaped by trauma and appears to be the only connection between her and her family.

Anticipation as a Trope of Origin in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Consistent with Kogawa's balancing of anticipation between individual and collective affectivities, Adichie uses anticipation as a literary trope to narrate a story of origin. The most obvious manner in which anticipation is used by Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a structural one, which influences the delivery of the plot; the novel is divided into four parts that do not follow a chronological order. Part one and two are titled 'The Early Sixties' and 'The Late Sixties' respectively, while in part three and four there is a return to 'The Early Sixties' and 'The Late Sixties.'³⁶ The primary effect of this type of anticipation is to tease

³³ *Obasan*, p.48.

³⁴ *Obasan*, p. 34.

³⁵ Gayle K. Fujita, "'To Attend the Sound of Stone: The Sensibility of Silence in *Obasan*,'" *MELUS*, 12.3, (1983), 33-42, (p. 34).

³⁶ *HoAYS*, pp. 1, 117, 207, and 259 respectively. The transition from part two to part three especially is quite reminiscent of the hysteron-proteron trope discussed in the previous chapter. While debunking the trope of anticipation in war literature, it becomes clear that it is the wider framework within which hysteron-proteron resides, serving to prolong the unavoidable end.

the reader and take away the reader's illusion of any control of the narrative, as well as to create a sense of suspense for both the private and the collective lives of the characters: at the end of part two which recounts the events that took place immediately after the first Biafran coup, Odenigbo's and Olanna's servant Ugwu sees the Eberechi, the young woman he is in love with, but who has just been engaged to an officer so that her family can survive the war. Ugwu wonders

what had happened after she was pushed into [the officer's] room and who was to blame more, her parents or the officer. He didn't want to think too much about blame, though, because it would remind him of Master and Olanna during those weeks before Baby's birth, weeks he preferred to forget.³⁷

In this paragraph, three temporal relationships come together in anticipation of the future: the before and after of Eberechi's stepping into the officer's room, the before and after Baby's birth, and Ugwu's past, present, and anticipation of the future. As the novel has fast-forwarded from the early sixties, when Odenigbo and Olanna moved in together in Nsukka, to the late sixties, when the couple has already got their child named Baby, the reader is informed with this ominous inscription that in terms of narrative space-time something has already happened, an event which in reader space-time is anticipated and has not happened yet.³⁸ Anticipation in this sense transfixes past, present, and future on the level of the narration and the readership, and most importantly, extends the uncertainty of the narrative trauma into the past, functioning as a reminder that the worst might in fact have already happened.

Apart from Ugwu's anticipatory statement playing a trick on the reader, it also serves as one of the many introductions to stories of origin in the novel. In this case, Ugwu's thought works as a preamble for the story of Baby's conception and the start of the friction between Olanna and Odenigbo. In the same vein, Adichie's novel is strewn with episodes which occupy an anticipatory place in the narrative and stand on the verge of a new beginning, both in individual and in collective terms. It is within a climate of anticipation that Olanna

³⁷ *HoAYS*, p. 200.

³⁸ Eric Jenkins distinguishes between three types of space-time when it comes to visual and textual narratives: 'Viewer space-time indicates the present space-time of the person watching the movie or reading the book. The narrative space-time means the world portrayed on the paper or the screen. Spectator space-time describes the "textual" positioning and locating of the camera in relation to the narrative world' (p. 44). As can be seen, Adichie uses anticipation as a trope that pierces through narrative space-time and as the affect of anticipation is projected onto the reader, the fourth wall of narration breaks down. For affect and cinematic narratives, see Eric S. Jenkins, *Special Affects: Cinema, Animation and the Translation of Consumer Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2014).

remembers the start of her relationship with Odenigbo: right before Olanna moves in to Nsukka so that she can be close to Odenigbo she visits her parents and twin sister, Kainene, in Lagos. As Odenigbo is driving her to the airport in a joyful episode of the beginning of chapter two, Adichie presents both lovers to be oblivious to the portentous sign on the side of road which reads ‘BETTER BE LATE THAN BE *THE* LATE.’³⁹ A few pages in the chapter the narrator zooms on Olanna’s remembrance of her first encounter with Odenigbo, but until then, the climate becomes more and more anticipatory: “‘I can’t wait, *nkem*,”” says Odenigbo to Olanna with anticipation, to which she wants ‘to tell him that she couldn’t wait to move to Nsukka either,’ but ends up saying goodbye with the warning statement of “Drive carefully.”⁴⁰ The uncertain waiting is further enhanced when Olanna meets a family who are awaiting for their son to return on a flight from overseas: as the plane touches down and lifts off again before the final landing, the ‘grandmother screamed [...] both hands placed on her head in despair,’ thinking that the plane will not land after all.⁴¹ Up to this point Adichie has built an anticipation for happy events that are potentially blighted by the occurrence of near-tragedies. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Olanna’s and Odenigbo’s first meeting is also marked by waiting: ‘She did not notice Odenigbo at first, standing ahead of her in a queue to buy a ticket outside the university theatre.’⁴² From part two of the novel onwards, anticipation for an individual or collective trauma is used as a structural element of the narration of the times of happiness more often than not, and it is this climate of anticipation that functions as a preamble for the narration of a new beginning.

At this point a detour is in order to demonstrate the ways through which this type of structural anticipation takes the form of words or phrases which have been strategically placed so as to alert the reader to the impending trauma: after Olanna visits her parents in Lagos, she goes to see her cousin Arize in the city of Kano, and as the cousins joyfully cook together discussing future plans, Arize is described to be ‘cutting open the chicken.’⁴³ After the second coup which triggers an anti-Igbo pogrom, Arize is murdered and when Odenigbo and Olanna have an argument about the latest developments, he brings Arize’s death up: “‘How can you sound this way after seeing what they did in Kano? Can you imagine what must have happened to Arize? They raped pregnant women before they cut them up!’”⁴⁴ The

³⁹ *HoaYS*, p. 26, uppercase and emphasis in the original.

⁴⁰ *HoaYS*, p. 26.

⁴¹ *HoaYS*, p. 28. Olanna stays to help the grandmother until her son lands, but apart from having an ominous effect, this seemingly unimportant event anticipates another episode much later in the novel, where Olanna is a mother herself unable to feed Baby due to food shortages; she runs into a member of the family that she helped that day and he gives her egg yolk in gratitude so that Baby does not starve (*HoaYS*, p. 269).

⁴² *HoaYS*, p. 28.

⁴³ *HoaYS*, p. 41.

⁴⁴ *HoaYS*, p. 191.

diction used in both these instances is similar and is a pattern frequently employed by Adichie. Englishman and Kainene's lover Richard is intimidated by her and fails to perform sexually; at the same time, he is still in a relationship with his former girlfriend Susan. When he goes to Susan's place to break up with her he feels exhilarated and as he leaves her house to go to Kainene, 'he has the overwhelming urge to sing,' and he notices that the houses of the neighbourhood are 'hugged by palm trees and beds of languid grass.'⁴⁵ The next paragraph describes yet another afternoon when Richard and Kainene attempt to have sex, but Richard is 'uselessly limp.'⁴⁶ The foreshadowing of Richard's temporary impotence is necessary as Richard's sexual activity or lack thereof is an important issue in the subplot of Olanna and Kainene.

Metafictional Anticipation

So far I have pinpointed the trope of the affect of anticipation on an individual and personal level and how it provides the framework for stories of origin. The most important story of origin and the master plot is the story of the nation of Biafra being born, or in a sense, stillborn. At the end of chapter three of part one, the plot of the novel is metafictionally interjected with what appears to be an introduction or rough outline of another book with its own title and plot:

1. The Book: The World Was Silent When We Died

For the prologue, he recounts the story of the woman with the calabash. She sat on the floor of a train squashed between crying people, shouting people, praying people. She was silent, caressing the covered calabash on her lap [...] and then she lifted the lid and asked Olanna and others close by to look inside.

[...]

After he writes this, he mentions the German women who fled Hamburg with the charred bodies of their children stuffed in suitcases, the Rwandan women who pocketed tiny parts of their mauled babies [...] For the book cover, though, he draws a map of Nigeria and [...] he uses the same shade of red to circle the boundaries of where, in the Southeast, Biafra existed for three years.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *HoAYS*, p. 68.

⁴⁶ *HoAYS*, p. 68.

⁴⁷ *HoAYS*, p. 82.

The first achievement of this short passage is that it anticipates the creation of at least another story, the emergence of another voice, and the re-placement of the Biafran story in yet another setting; this telling of the story with its authorial uncertainty and different font, is interpolated in the main story thus adding to the plurality of stories and voices.⁴⁸ As up to the point where this passage comes in the reader only identifies Richard as a potential writer, it seems plausible that this is the start of Richard's book;⁴⁹ however, as short passages from *The Book* keep appearing at the end of chapters and towards the end of the novel, it is disclosed that Ugwu, the houseboy, was becoming a writer all along.

Apart from the birth of a new writer, the passage anticipates a story that has not happened yet, both in terms of narrative and in terms of reader space-time. The story anticipated is none other than what Olanna experienced as she fled from Kano during the anti-Igbo pogrom, which is related to the reader at the beginning of part two: 'Olanna sat on the floor of the train with her knees drawn up to her chest [...] thrown against the woman next to her, against something on the woman's lap, a big bowl, a calabash.'⁵⁰ Ugwu's book anticipates the traumatizing event of the uncovering of the calabash without revealing it, an event which becomes deeply engraved in Olanna's mind and body and is one of the reasons of her post-traumatic stress disorder: 'She opened the calabash [...] Olanna looked into the bowl. She saw the little girl's head with the ashy-grey skin and the plaited hair and rolled back eyes and open mouth.'⁵¹ Ugwu's passage at this point works as an anticipatory mechanism for both Olanna's individual trauma caused by her experience in Kano and the birth and death of Biafra, which, Ugwu states, existed for three years.

Not only is anticipation for the individual trauma connected to a collective beginning in Adichie, it is also associated with other past and future collective traumas, thus anticipating Biafra's recognition as independent by other African states and its inscription into an international network of traumatizing historical facts.⁵² What is striking in this

⁴⁸ In 2013 Adichie gave a stimulating talk on the vice that the 'single story' is for a nation and a person. <https://eastandsouth.wordpress.com/2013/04/12/chimamanda-adichie-the-danger-of-a-single-story/>

⁴⁹ It is possible that Adichie here plays with the Western reader's stereotypical expectation to assume that the white man is the author of the story instead of the poor African houseboy.

⁵⁰ *HoAYS*, p. 148.

⁵¹ *HoAYS*, p. 149.

⁵² John Stremmlau's thorough account of the international reactions to the Nigerian-Biafran civil war contain a list of the most crucial events which shaped Biafra to be an international political issue whose developments might have been rooted in Africa, but were also played out in the West. What is worth noting here within Ugwu's writings is that this internationalization of Biafra's issue did not result in the desired cease-fire on the part of Nigerian forces, but rather had contrary and devastating events, such as the pogrom in Kano: 'It is a lamentable irony that rather than bring the war to an end and so terminate the sufferings of the Biafran masses, recognition provoked an intensification of both ... Not only did it encourage the hawks on the Biafran side to unnecessary intransigence as far as peace negotiations are concerned, it also provoked in the federal military government an increased determination to make nonsense by military means of whatever gains Biafra may have scored diplomatically.' Raph Uwechue qtd in John J. Stremmlau, *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2015), p. 140.

passage is that Biafra's traumatizing events are not only related to events in Hamburg, presumably from the Second World War, but also to events from the Rwandan genocide, which took place in the 1990s, starting with the massacre of the Tutsi people and culminating in a war between Rwandan government forces and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RTF).⁵³ Biafra's existence is depicted through an anticipated assemblage of past and future individual and national traumas. Through Ugwu's book, Adichie introduces the internalization of the Biafran independence war while contextualizing in terms of the further trauma that it brought along.

Schrödinger's Future: The Plot of the Not-yet in Kavan

War trauma literature is reliant upon the existence of a traumatic future, a future that may mean survival and continuation of existence, or total annihilation. If anticipation of the traumatic future shapes a large part of Adichie's novel, then for Anna Kavan's collection of short stories *I am Lazarus* it becomes the master plot. Most of Kavan's stories bear some resemblance to the atmosphere of anticipation that Kogawa builds, since Kavan's stories also revolve around a claustrophobic setting where the collective fate has seeped into the individual life. More specifically, the majority of the short stories in the *I am Lazarus* collection feature characters who struggle with physical and mental trauma as a result of the Second World War. As has been seen so far, the stories focus on abreactive snippets of the patients' traumatized existence; most of the individuals in Kavan's stories are profoundly affected by the war and attempt to be rehabilitated into the normalized collectivity through contact with physicians, their attempts, however, are interrupted by the anticipation of the inevitable reoccurrence of trauma. The repetition of the same trauma notwithstanding, Kavan employs the anticipation of that repetition as a driving force that leads the individual to uncover, recognize, and occupy a newfound place amid the collective trauma.

One of the most palpable examples of such a character is the protagonist of the story 'Who Has Desired the Sea,' a man who has returned from the front and as he presumably suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, he is hospitalized in the 'Neurosis Centre' in a room where the windows are strangely pasted over with thin paper.⁵⁴ The 'man on the bed'

⁵³ Alain Destexhe notes that Rwanda's events have been characterized as a genocide, however, the systematized and deliberate famine in Biafra induced by Nigerian federal forces and supported by Britain clearly bears aspects of a genocidal war, hence the connection between Biafra and Rwanda gains ground. See Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (London: Pluto Press, 1995), p. 16, and Allan Thomson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007).

⁵⁴ 'The Sea,' p. 21. The title of this story is in fact a line from 1902 poem by Rudyard Kipling 'The Sea and the Hills.' The choice of the title is not accidental as Kipling's poem bears the stance of an uninhibited desire to go to the sea despite its uncertainties and the dangers it anticipates. In Kipling's poem, this desire is paired

as he is introduced to the reader feels imprisoned within the asylum and has thoughts of impending bombings: ‘There was no sense in the paper [...] It wouldn’t prevent the glass splintering if a bomb dropped anywhere near.’⁵⁵ This is the first thought that the protagonist expresses and the fact that it is a logical thought serves a double purpose: firstly, it gives credibility to the protagonist thus making the reader question the purpose of his hospitalization; secondly, the rationality of his thought supports the thought that follows, thus turning it into a substantial background for the reader. Not only does the anticipation of a bombing seem possible and plausible, but it sets the mood for the narration of the story.

Like most of Kavan’s characters, the unnamed man seems to ache with anxiety and anticipation over an unwanted ominous event that he is certain will take place, but at the same time depends on him:

There was something which had to be done. Something immensely difficult that had to be done by him while the afternoon sun still shone. It was something he would not be able to do. It was too difficult. It was impossible. But it was required of him. He would be obliged to attempt this impossible thing. He would not be allowed to evade the foredoomed attempt. They would come to the ward and fetch him away to make it.⁵⁶

The repetition of meaning with different words in this paragraph describing the patient’s thoughts is a powerful element. The man is anticipating a predestined event that he fears, but he also lies in waiting of another event which could potentially lead to his salvation: ‘So for these last few minutes he must wait with his whole attention for the young man with the thick untidy hair and the little scar. So he must hope that his twelfth-hour arrival would make everything plausible’ (24). The description of the anticipation that the patient is affected by not only creates a sense of suspense for the reader, but more importantly places the plot of the story itself in a mode of suspension. To put it simply, as the plot continues it becomes clear that it is anticipation in itself: ‘So, he thought, here it is: it’s come now, the time when I have to do the impossible thing. And for a second he felt sick inside, but that passed, and he was behind the glass and feeling nothing at all’ (25).

up with the longing for peace and solace and the general vein of the poem if one of inevitability of doom: ‘Who hath desired the sea?—the sight of salt/ water unbounded—/ The heave and the halt and the hurl and/ the crash of the comber wind-hounded?/ The sleek-barrelled swell before storm, grey/ foamless, enormous, and growing—Stark calm on the lap of the Line or the crazy-/ eyed hurricane blowing’ (lines 1-8). Rudyard Kipling, ‘The Sea and the Hills,’ in *Rudyard Kipling’s Verse 1885-1932* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1933) p. 110.

⁵⁵ ‘The Sea,’ p. 21.

⁵⁶ ‘The Sea,’ pp. 23-24.

The sense of being behind a glass is frequently mentioned in the story, and it stands for the biggest glass-like surface of all, the sea. As the title of the story suggests, the man feels an intense and urgent longing to go to the sea, which seems to bear a special significance for him. Soon it is revealed that the man experienced a traumatizing near-death event when an enemy plane bombarded the tanker he was serving in as a navy man and his fellow service man Shorty perished tragically: ‘he remembered how the black water towered up and then the thousand-ton icy weight of it smashing down on them like a whale, the freezing, murderous bastard’ (25).

Gazing into the Future

Anticipation for Kavan is linked with visual aesthetics. The man’s gaze is one of the most important tools through which the story is advanced. In the story, the protagonist looks for the man with the scar, looks at his fiancée’s face, looks around his ward, above all looks for the sea, and mostly everything is filtered through his gaze. The reader gets a sense of direction from the man’s gaze and the plot itself follows his gaze as well. As the story progresses, however, it becomes clear that his vision is impaired and that it has been influenced, if not substituted, by anticipation. Just as the plot of the story is anticipatory, the protagonist’s gaze is marked by anticipation as well, in a way that presents the future as already determined. Kavan employs her protagonist’s gaze not only as a story-telling tool, but as a history-telling tool which verges on epic aspects of visuality.

The traumatized man constantly feels that he is behind a glass, where all of his senses but that of vision are dulled:

The sun was crawling weakly across the ward. The man stretched out and held his hand in the sun. He saw the sunshine on the back of his brown strong-fingered hand and felt the warmth. He felt the sunshine and saw it, but it was behind the glass, it was not touching him really [...] He did not feel disappointed or troubled about the glass. He was used to it. It was queer how you got used to things, even to living inside a glass cell. (22-23)

Apart from the glass relating to the sea, the implication of the phrases ‘inside a glass’ and especially ‘behind the glass’ is that there is a position in front of the glass, which is none other than that of the protagonist facing his self. From the experience of this trauma onwards, he finds himself ‘inside the glass’ where he gets visions of a ‘pendulum frantically swinging,

swinging, swinging, perpetually exposed and driven in that transparent tomb' (24). The man, Lennie, clearly identifies himself and his heartbeat with the pendulum's swing and the glass in his case becomes a tomb, not least because of his near-death experience, but also because of the glass's transparency: the present becomes even more traumatic because he can gaze into future traumas. In that sense, the pendulum gives away the incessant anticipation of the next trauma, which is simultaneously the recognition and remembering of his past near-death war experience as well as the possibility of a traumatic experience in the future. The fact that he is 'behind the glass' prevents him from experiencing any other affect and his identity becomes fossilized in time: he can neither remember the past nor move on, and therefore he is neither an individual nor a part of the collectivity.

Lennie's past and future trauma merge in his stereoscopic vision of the present: 'He was looking along the length of the ward, and watching the door' (24). Lennie seems to be tortured by this vision, a vision simultaneously stretching back into his past trauma and forward into the future uncertainty of a definite trauma coming his way. The only time when Lennie feels released from the excruciating affect of anticipation is when he is sitting at the restaurant with his girlfriend and the waitress pulls the blackout curtains closed: 'In the tea place where they sat down together it was half dark already and lamps were lighted [...] he could feel the beginning of comfort after the dusk and the sea wind [...] while the waitress fastened the blackout' (31). For Lennie, anticipation means his seeing into the uncertain future, and with his vision temporarily impaired by the darkness, this affect which has replaced all other emotions is nullified. The glass, the mirror, and the sea are filters through which the traumatizing past seeps into the relentless future and demands an even more traumatizing continuity which both appalls and attracts the individual. In this sense, the anticipatory gaze is the master plot of narrating the individual's delayed transition from traumatized isolation to normalized collectivity.

In the restaurant where the man meets with his fiancée, he acquires a name for the reader and his individual existence starts to take form. Lennie, as his fiancée calls him, is still in fear of the impossible thing he has to do: 'He knew he ought to explain something' (28). The shortened name Lennie is a clear sign of the protagonist's identity, which is incomplete. What Lennie postpones is the articulation of his trauma and to a certain extent the reliving of this trauma and it is an event paired up with the meeting of the man with the ruffled hair and scared face, the man who is none other than his future self, carrying on his body the experience of the trauma in the sea-wind ruffled hair and the scar. Lennie does see the man he is looking for just after he remembers his trauma:

Now he remembered the steady smooth rush of the sailing boat through blue sunlit water [...] He remembered the huge seas marching past the tanker [...] the water bursting endlessly over the catwalk. And for a second he remembered the time on the gun when they brought the plane down [...] and for a second he was that young gunner triumphant [...] Then he remembered [...] Shorty screaming out of the flaming water. (28)

The narrative pattern of this passage with the repetition of 'he remembered' builds up the anticipation for when Lennie will step in front of the glass and into the shoes of his self. The suspension is emphasized more by the expression 'for a second,' which gives the impression of the past pausing so that the future can catch up with it: 'he saw the young man's face in a mirror up the wall, he saw the thick wind-ruffled hair and the little scar on the cheekbone. The face moved in the mirror' (30).

Lennie finally exits the glass box he is in when his past and future self unite, and what was a narration of excruciating anticipation, towards the end of the story becomes an almost ecstatic reunion and a clear vision of the future:

He looked over the sea and [...] there, ahead, bright as day, were all the small islands, Cape Promise, and the bay of Mairangi, wide, still, unbelievably peaceful under the full moon. And then he did know where he was going. (31)

Kavan writes a pessimistic end for Lennie: at the end of the story it is implied that he marches towards the sea to meet his fate, as if unable to bear the anticipation of trauma. Lennie's anticipation for his end comes to a closure when he finally reaches the sea and that is when the plot ends as well, reinforcing the idea that plot and anticipation in Kavan's story are one and the same.

Haunted Horizons

For those traumatized in war, the future is defined by the memory of the past trauma, a memory which, true to traumatic form, is ever-present in obsolete souvenirs, cenotaphs, and war narrations. After the physical wounds on individual bodies heal, war trauma resembles an invisible wound on the collective body that needs to be remembered. It is now time to examine the effects of this remembrance of trauma, in itself traumatic, as it is narrated and to a certain extent reconstructed.

In the last chapter of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the civil war has ended with Biafra's defeat and Olanna, Odenigbo, Baby, and Ugwu return to their destroyed home in Nsukka. After Nigerian soldiers who had remained in Nsukka invade Odenigbo's house looking for food, Olanna decides to burn her Biafran money, since it is not only useless, but potentially dangerous after Nigeria's victory:

Odenigbo watched her. He disapproved, she knew, because he kept his flag folded inside the pocket of a pair of trousers.

'You're burning memory,' he told her.

'I am not.' She would not place her memory on things that strangers could barge in and take away. 'My memory is inside me.'⁵⁷

Olanna refuses to keep a material memento of Biafra's existence, as material can be destroyed; this sentiment mirrors Adichie's intention in writing her novel, as, in the epigraph of the book, she dedicates the novel to the memories of the survivors of the Biafran Independence war.⁵⁸ All of the narratives that I have analyzed in this thesis address the memories of the survivors in one way or another, and they all stress the importance of remembering the war trauma through the cultural artefact that the narrative is. In doing so, the war narratives become textual monuments of the war trauma, drawing from individual stories of the past, but addressing the collectivity in the future.

Monumentalization of trauma takes on various affective guises. We have seen it take the form of nationalization in *Life in the Tomb*; bodily memorialization in *Half of a Yellow Sun*; silence in *Obasan*; digitization in *Gravity's Rainbow*; metaphysics in *Slaughterhouse-5*; institutionalization in *Catch-22*; and the creation of an anticipatory plot in Kavan's short stories. The crucial aspect of these literary works as examples of narrative memory is that they far from tell a story that pertains to the past. On the contrary, this monumentalization of a specific trauma in a specific historical and geographical circumstance causes trauma to be considered as an archetypical plot which inevitably shapes the future. In as early as 1949 Theodor Adorno warned against the trivialization of trauma which may come about through post-traumatic, anticipatory language: 'even the most extreme consciousness of doom threatens to degenerate into idle chatter. Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final

⁵⁷ *HoAYS*, p. 432.

⁵⁸ *HoAYS*, n.p.

stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.’⁵⁹ Adorno qualifies his famous statement later on in life:

In a world whose law is universal individual profit, the individual has nothing but this self that has become indifferent [...] There is no getting out of this, no more than out of the electrified barbed wire around the camps. Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems. But it is not wrong to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living—⁶⁰

In this poignant retraction, Adorno questions the value of individual life in the face of the totality and sweeping collectiveness of trauma, but that is not all. Although Adorno’s statement can be considered as a calling out against the monumentalization of trauma, what has become his refrain for the last half of the twentieth century is a monumental statement on the extermination camp trauma in itself.

When Freud discussed the process of mourning and the necessary replacement of the lost objects by new ones, he was, much like Adorno, warning against the monumentalization of trauma. What has become obvious from the investigation of the seven war trauma narratives in this thesis, is that the replacement of the lost object by a new one is in fact a much slower process than Freud had assumed, and that mourning’s ‘spontaneous end’ is blocked by the trauma’s continuous re-inscription in collective identity and therefore its subsequent revival.⁶¹ As the future both in individual and collective terms becomes more and more uncertain, the past trauma not only becomes a monument for the remembrance of the past, but also a signpost for the future. In that sense, the monumentalization of trauma is an indispensable part of the conception of the future after the occurrence of trauma.

Paul Ricoeur’s work on memory and forgetting sheds light on the complicated relationship between memorialization of a past trauma and anticipation of the future. According to Ricoeur, ‘the insight by which history from this point onward enriches memory is imposed on the anticipated future through the dialectic between memory’s space of experience and the horizon of expectation.’⁶² This means that within the memorialization of war trauma, the lived traumatic experience and the not-yet experienced trauma become fused

⁵⁹ Theodor Adorno, ‘Cultural Criticism and Society,’ in *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1967), pp. 17-34, (p. 34).

⁶⁰ Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973), pp. 362-363.

⁶¹ Freud, ‘On Transience,’ p. 306.

⁶² Paul Ricoeur, ‘From *Memory—History—Forgetting*,’ in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. by Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford UP), pp. 475-481, (p. 475).

in the individual and especially in the collective memory: the work of anticipation shows in the monument. In other words, the role of the continuous remembrance of trauma is on the one hand to construct the past in the symbolic order, but on the other to ensure that the future will somehow exist. In Liam Sprod's words, 'a memorial always requires a survival [...] it is always to that which survives not that which dies.'⁶³ Memorials of past traumatic events, therefore, are indexical of individual and collective affective future states.

According to Andreas Hyussen, 'once embodied in memorial sites as active parts within an urban fabric [or a textual fabric, it can be argued], remembrance of traumatic events seems less susceptible to the vagaries of memory.'⁶⁴ Following this, not only does the memorial preserve a particular version of the traumatic story, it most importantly anticipates individual and collective affective responses. Although there is no doubt that reparation requires memorialization and that memorialization in itself (be it architectural, performative, or narrative, and institutionalized or grassroots) is required for the process of mourning to be referenced and signified, what appears to have happened, is that memorialization has created a seemingly unavoidable echo of never-ending mourning, for which remembering is optional, since the memorial tells the traumatic story again and again. This is logical because every type of memorialization of trauma requires self-reflexivity, and in turn self-reflexivity requires conscious repetition of the traumatic past in some way. In this sense, every kind of memorialization is to a certain extent aberrant as it defeats the purpose it set out to fulfil: to end the mourning. This is shown in the works that have been considered in this thesis, particularly in *Life in the Tomb*, in the form of the aposoma, as it is both a prologue and an epilogue to the war narrative, speaking to the fact that what sets out to bring closure, merely reopens the old, invisible wound.

After all that has been discussed, it seems that the horizon of expectations is filled with ghosts of past traumas, since each narrative memory of collective trauma carries within it an infinite number of personal traumas that transgenerationally memorialize that which is almost impossible to articulate. As much as the narratives under consideration here demonumentalize war trauma in a sense, by shifting the focus from the trauma itself to its interminable affective repercussions, at the same time they bring traumas of the past to a contemporary time, and so the past traumas enter not only the present, but most assuredly the future as well. By narrating the trauma that must not be forgotten, war narratives assert that it will happen again.

⁶³ Liam Sprod, *Nuclear Futurism: The Work of Art in the Age of Remainderless Destruction* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2012), p. 29.

⁶⁴ Andreas Hyussen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003), p. 101.

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