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Malvinas War Poetry: A Comparative Approach to Gustavo Caso Rosendi's *Soldados* and Tony McNally's *Screaming in Silence* from the Perspective of Trauma Studies

Maestrando: Ignacio Lau

Directora: Mg. Susana María Company

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis offers a comparative approach to a selection of poems from two collections, *Screaming in Silence* by Tony McNally and *Soldados* by Gustavo Caso Rosendi, in the light of trauma studies. The productions deal with the subject matter of Malvinas war poetry, i.e., literary texts inspired by or produced as a result of the 1982 military conflict. In overall terms, the corpus centers on the devastating and dehumanizing consequences of war for its participants and the outrage caused by the sense of waste and loss. In order to explore the corpus, the work is organized along two axes of analysis: representations of trauma during the armed conflict and representations of trauma in the aftermath of war. The poetry books will be read under the theoretical framework of comparative literature and trauma studies in order to identify similarities and/or differences in the way the authors construct the soldier personas' war-torn identities. Special emphasis will be placed on the poetical portrayals of symptoms that can be attributed to the conceptual category of PTSD and that show how trauma develops and manifests itself in the first place. By recognizing and analyzing the representations of trauma, it should be possible to identify the determinate values and new meanings attributed to the extreme event that go beyond the traditional idea of trauma as a silencing shock that prevents linguistic representation.

To my father, Carlos María Lau.

CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Approaching literary texts that have been produced or inspired by an extreme experience such as war can prove a challenging task. Poetic expressions on this subject matter can be complex and difficult for some readers as the poems frequently portray situations of severe suffering. On many occasions, the rhetorical devices focus on constructing painful recollections of the conflict; some other times, the poetic persona will be directly involved in the event that causes hurt, such as a face-to-face confrontation with the enemy or the death of a fellow soldier. One possible way of addressing texts like these is through the lens of trauma as a conceptual category and discipline of study. As Roger Kurtz explains, there has been a considerable increase in the interest and study of trauma in the past years. The popularization of the term posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in different media and discourses has drawn attention to trauma as a public health issue and "there is the sense that any understanding of contemporary social problems is only complete to the extent that it is informed by an awareness of the role of trauma in shaping those problems" (Kurtz, 2018, p. 1). Originally, the concept of trauma was used to describe physical wounds but nowadays it is used for "a pathological mental and emotional condition, an injury to the psyche caused by catastrophic events, or by the threat of such events, which overwhelm an individual's normal response mechanisms" (2018, p. 1). In the field of literary studies, trauma has also been established as a theoretical standard, especially since its first formal outset as a discipline in the 1990s with the seminal works of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt*. In its beginnings, trauma studies' focus was recognizing the impact of an extreme event upon an individual and the silencing effects it caused. For academics in this model, trauma defies linguistic representation because the psychological hurt is so strong that it creates a gap in memory. This traditional model has been revised and advanced by scholars like Laurie Vickroy, Michelle Balaev, Roger Kurtz, and Irene Visser, among others. From their perspective, trauma does cause a terrible shock but representation is possible and, more importantly, the self can attribute new values and meanings to the brutalizing event. This variability in the conception of trauma is of great importance for this thesis as it stresses "the diversity of values that change over time to define trauma's impact, rather than revealing an essentialized and indecipherable absence that both marks and remains ambiguously unclaimed by the individual or group (Balaev in Richter, 2018, p. 367).

The main objective of the present thesis is to analyze the representations of trauma in Malvinas war poetry produced by Tony McNally and Gustavo Caso Rosendi from the perspectives of comparative literature and trauma studies. The analysis of the corpus revolves around the poems' recurrent themes and salient motifs about warfare and they have been divided into two moments: representations of trauma during and after wartimes. In other words, the period in which war is in progress and the persona is on the battlefield (preparing for combat or in action), and the aftermath of war for the soldier, who is typically constructed in a state of suffering and pain because of his trauma, which originated during the armed conflict. Studying the texts from a comparative approach might help to support the claim that the poets share the same anti-war stance and that they express outrage against the horrors caused by the military conflict and its consequences. In the same manner, comparing the poems from the perspective of trauma studies might show how war affects the personas' psyche, and how their suffering and poetically constructed traumatic symptoms develop under similar conditions. As regards the specific objectives, they can be stated as follows,

- Justify the use of the theoretical framework of comparative literature and the revised pluralistic model of trauma studies
- Contextualize the literary productions within the historical conflict of the war of Malvinas
- Problematize the taxonomy of Malvinas war poetry within the genre of war poetry
- Recognize the poetic representations of symptoms and sequels of post-traumatic stress disorder in the corpus
- Recognize autobiographical elements of the authors related to traumatic events caused by the war, in order to complement the readings and analysis of how trauma is represented
- Determine which new values are assigned to the traumatic event, establish similarities, differences, and conclusions

In the corpus under consideration, the initial hypothesis of this study is that poetic trauma representations assign new values to the extreme experience that go beyond the traditional conception of trauma as an inaccessible event. The new values re-signify the traumatic event by revisiting the identity of the soldier/veteran personas and establishing

new meanings to the extreme episode. Therefore, the analysis of the texts focuses on the interrelation between poetic representations of war trauma and the different ways of poetically appropriating the traumatic past and redirecting it into new possibilities. Another hypothesis is that approaching these literary texts could foster possible empathic responses as they position readers in situations analogous to those experienced by personas, a process that entails identification and studying the corpus by taking into account the broader sociocultural contexts. In this sense, the historical events that led to the Malvinas War and relevant biographical information will be considered in order to complement the study of the corpus and better inform the readings and subsequent interpretations.

In relation to the methodology and theoretical configurations, this investigation offers a comparative analysis of the texts grounded in a method-driven approach as suggested by Ben Hutchinson. The comparison of the poems will be carried out by recognizing thematic repetitions and recurrent motifs and by articulating them from the theoretical framework of trauma studies. In this model of comparative literature, the corpus is studied from a particular perspective in order to elucidate the internal elements that determine its main similarities, thus stressing the importance of the researcher's choice of literary criticism for the analysis. This means that by employing the conceptual categories of trauma studies, the comparison of *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* can be carried out by delineating elements in common and repeated patterns while examining the way trauma is linguistically coded in both books and the main implications of such representations. For this thesis, the revised model of trauma studies known as the pluralistic model will be implemented, and it is important to say that its proponents favor a less deterministic view of trauma as a universalizing event that is limited to biological factors only (Balaev, 2014). On the contrary, trauma is now conceived as a complex phenomenon that suggests the "assumed unspeakability of trauma is one among many responses to an extreme event rather than its defining feature" (Balaev in Richter, 2018, p. 360). For this reason, the present thesis will follow the pluralistic model of trauma studies as it enables more comprehensive readings of the corpus and contemplates the varied sociocultural and individual elements that shape representations of trauma. In connection to the literary texts, they will be analyzed following the method of close reading, i.e., "the detailed analysis of the complex interrelationships and ambiguities (multiple meanings) of the verbal and figurative components within a work" (Abrams &

Harpham, 2012, p. 242). By framing the readings into semantic, syntactic, thematic, and generic contexts, a thorough analysis can be conducted in order to decode the poetical representations of trauma and determine the authors' personal creative choices.

In relation to the state of the art, the subject matter addressed in this thesis is directly related to the genre of war poetry, on the one hand, and to the fields of comparative literature and trauma studies, on the other. There are numerous works exploring war poetry and studies on First World War poets predominate, such as *Poets of World War* (2002) by Harold Bloom and *The Penguin Book of First World Poetry* (1981) by Jon Silkin. While more recent works such as *The New Oxford Book of War Poetry* (2014), edited by Jon Stallworthy or *Critical Survey of Poetry War Poets* (2012), edited by Rosemary M. Canfield Reisman focus on other wars and conflicts, the First World War still remains central. It is worth noting that in none of these anthologies or reference books can we find war poems related to Malvinas. It is with *Falklands War Poetry* (2012), edited by David Roberts that we find for the first time a work that anthologizes war poems about Malvinas extensively. This compilation features various poets who wrote about the 1982 conflict and although it is in English, it includes not only British authors but also Argentine poets. As regards trauma studies, there is a strong tendency to analyze authors from the First World War like Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, and Ivor Gurney, a fact evidenced in books such as *The Poetry of Shell Shock* (2005) by Daniel Hipp or *Memory, War and Trauma* (2010) by Nigel C. Hunt. It is difficult to find literature that analyzes Malvinas war poetry from the perspective of trauma studies and even more difficult to find works that discuss the authors on which this thesis focuses. Tony McNally was included in the *Falklands War Poetry* anthology mentioned above and has more books published about Malvinas (two novels and an autobiography). In Argentina, Gustavo Caso Rosendi is generally mentioned as one of the most relevant poets who wrote about the conflict, and his book *Soldados* is the Malvinas poetry collection of reference. With respect to these authors and subject matter, we can observe that no research work takes Malvinas war poetry as corpus. Thus, this study could complement the tradition of studying war poetry from a comparative approach in the light of trauma studies and, at the same time, contribute to establishing new relationships, similarities, and connections between Argentine and British literary productions.

The thesis is organized into five main chapters. The first one develops the theoretical configurations of the fields of comparative literature and trauma studies and

related concepts like PTSD, intertextuality, and comparative close reading. The second chapter offers a sociocultural and historical contextualization of the Malvinas War, a problematization of the genre of war poetry, and relevant biographical information of Tony McNally and Gustavo Caso Rosendi and their works. Chapters 3 and 4 account for the comparative analysis of trauma representations in Malvinas war poetry. While the former explores productions that place the persona during an armed conflict and how trauma originates on the battlefield, the latter focuses on traumatic responses in the aftermath of war, where the veteran persona is afflicted by several symptoms that can be attributed to PTSD. Finally, the last chapter delineates the conclusions reached on the basis of the analysis of the corpus.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL CONFIGURATIONS

1.1. Comparative Literature

Taking into account that the aim of the present study is to explore the poetic representations of trauma in two different authors, one of the main theoretical frames to address is the one of comparative literature. In its broadest sense, comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field that studies literary phenomena across national boundaries. According to Henry Remak,

> Comparative Literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of the relationships between literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the (fine) arts, philosophy, history, the social sciences, the sciences, religion, etc. on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression. (Remak, 1980, p. 429)

The essence of this definition has been summarized in the well-known phrase "literature without borders" (Domínguez et al, 2014, xv), where the emphasis is placed on the importance of juxtaposing literary texts from different languages, cultures, and traditions. The comparative approach is inherently interdisciplinary and, in many cases, it extrapolates literature with other social and cultural phenomena like art, history, or war. Considering that the present thesis aims at analyzing Malvinas war poetry from two writers belonging to the two countries involved in the conflict, the socio-political context will be paramount. Consequently, the literary texts have been studied taking into account not only the aesthetic and stylistic elements but also the contextual factors that complement the readings.

The comparative analysis will focus on identifying and establishing similarities in the themes present in the literary texts by comparing the forms of writings and tracing variations in a particular motif, issue, or idea across the range of contexts displayed in the poetry books. As Ben Hutchinson states,

> One of the most widespread forms of comparative literature investigates the recurrence of key images or stories across a range of languages. Understood as a kind of recurring leitmotif or myth, these figures offer a readymade structure for comparison: examples might include the imagery of earthquakes in the Enlightenment, or depictions of the Wandering Jew in 19th-century literature. Such figures serve as helpful hooks for broader reflections on cultural memory and tradition—assuming, that is, that one

asks not just what is being depicted and how, but also why (in our first example, the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 and the consequent loss of faith in God; in the second, paranoia about Jewish conspiracies behind international capitalism). Practised in this fashion, comparative literature can offer a window into how periods and places think, as well as into how they fit into the continuing conversation of cultural history. (Hutchinson, 2018, p.18)

In the case of the books of poems to be analyzed, the main recurrent ideas or themes are connected to warfare and its terrible outcomes, such as the futility of war, the desolating aftermath for the ones who participated, and the first-hand experience of fighting on the battlefield. At the same time, the texts are permeated with images that give evidence of the persona's troubled state of mind as a consequence of his involvement in the conflict. As the main objective of this thesis centers on poetic representations of trauma, the images and motifs discussed will be studied through the field of trauma studies (discussed in the following section). By tracing recurrent motifs, ideas or themes related to trauma and by analyzing them under the theoretical concepts of trauma studies, the main model adopted for this thesis combines what Hutchinson defines as two different but complementary categories of comparison,

If the topic-driven approach to comparative literature is determined by the (supposed) internal coherence of the objects under discussion, such coherence can also be ascribed to the texts by the observer's choice of method. In this model, the critic identifies an argument […] and prosecutes it from a particular perspective (feminist, Marxist, postcolonial, etc.), assembling the evidence to reflect her ideology. (Hutchison, 2018, p.19)

Thus, the method-driven approach of trauma studies becomes the most prominent factor when working with the texts, as the point of comparison is no longer the topic as a standalone element, but rather the way that these themes, ideas, and issues are examined. Studying the poems from this point of view makes it possible to appreciate the diverse ways each writer adopts to give voice and shape to the traumatic experience. It is important to bear in mind that both authors write about the same point of interest but belong to different countries, express themselves in different languages, and from opposing sides within the context of the Malvinas War; however, they position themselves, poetically speaking, in the same place of criticism towards the war and its devastating consequences. For this reason, it might be interesting to think of Tony McNally and Gustavo Caso Rosendi as two sides of the same coin, sharing more similarities than differences as we will see.

1.2. Comparative Close Reading

The analysis of literary texts has been carried out in a variety of styles and ways throughout history, but one of the most relevant methods is the one of close reading, which focuses on scrutinizing the text to find patterns or details that will enable the reader to reach a deep and precise understanding of the text in its entirety. Close reading is not new but has persisted through time as Celena Kusch observes,

> Despite many changes in the field of literary studies, since the early twentieth century, close reading has served as the cornerstone of literary analysis. First developed in the late 1920s and early 1930s by the British scholars of Practical Criticism and the American New Critics, close reading demanded that critics focus their attention on the text alone, using detailed etymologies of words to identify multiple meanings within lines, then exploring the ways that the beauty of the text as a whole held together its complex meanings. Practical Criticism and New Criticism brought literary study into the university system as 'serious criticism' (Green 2012, p. 65), founded on sound, objective intellectual principles rooted exclusively in the words on the page, not on the reader's personal, subjective responses or even the social significance of the text's content. (Kusch, 2016, p.32)

Since its conception, the process of close reading has changed and adapted and nowadays it can be organized into different phases where the reader tackles small, medium, and large issues in the text. In the case of poetry, this thorough methodology for the practice of close reading starts with an initial reading analyzing words alone, lines, stanzas, and then the whole text, finishing with the contextual elements outside of it. In *Close Reading. The Basics*, David Greenham proposes six basic contexts of close reading, summarized in the following box,

> **THE SIX CONTEXTS OF CLOSE READING**
>
> 1 The semantic: what individual words can mean (Chapter 2);
> 2 The syntactic: how words mean things when they are put together (Chapter 3);
> 3 The thematic: how themes emerge and affect meanings when we read (Chapters 3 and 4);
> 4 The iterative: the ways that repetition and patterning affect textual meanings (Chapters 5 and 6);
> 5 The generic: how the kind of work we are reading changes our approach to its meanings (Chapter 7);
> 6 The adversarial: how historical, political and theoretical concerns reshape meanings (Chapter 8).

(2019, p. 7)

These six contexts are the foundation for comparative close reading, i.e., a methodology that applies the techniques of close reading to slowly examine two or more texts belonging to different traditions. Paying close attention to sentence structure, ambiguities, syntax, and imagery "can open up the macro-analysis of contextual significance" (Hutchinson, 2018, p.27). In the case of the present thesis, the examination of both poets' works involves comparing the different ways in which they construct their poetic identity by re-reading the poems multiple times to reach a richer understanding. Semantic ambiguity, syntax, imagery, and contextual factors enact different facets of how trauma is represented throughout the works and it is only by approaching them in this fashion that they can be best understood.

1.3. Intertextuality

Another important concept to bear in mind when analyzing and comparing the poems is intertextuality. Many of the poems contain allusions, literary echoes, and even direct quotations from other authors, among other intertextual figures. Whether intentionally or not, texts are always produced in a context of contact and dialogue with other texts. Following Abrams and Harpham,

> The term intertextuality, popularized especially by Julia Kristeva, is used to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text is in fact made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and allusions, its repetitions and transformations of the formal and substantive features of earlier texts, or simply its unavoidable participation in the common stock of linguistic and literary conventions and procedures that are "always-already" in place and constitute the discourses into which we are born. In Kristeva's formulation, accordingly, any text is in fact an "intertext"—the site of an intersection of numberless other texts, and existing only through its relations to other texts. (2013, p. 401)

The comparison of McNally's *Screaming in Silence* and Caso Rosendi's *Soldados* will be best achieved by taking into account the diverse array of intertexts present in the poetry books. There are instances of citations from other writers, allusions, references to places, and connections to other works of literature. These "intertextual resonances" (Kusch, 2016 p.86) might be purely coincidental or not, but the intertexts are present in the poems, and as such we can read and analyze them into the representations of trauma.

At the same time, it is imperative to delve into the pervasive cultural references that include mainly the war, the soldiers involved, and cultural events that were taking place at the time of the conflict and even after it ended. From this perspective, a comparative approach enriches the interpretation of the literary works and enables a deeper understanding of them by making evident the many ways a text might be interconnected with others. Moreover, the poems also resonate with previous poems produced in the context of war, mainly the War Poets of WWI, where similarities regarding tone, style, and subject matter can be observed. In other words, intertextuality

> […] can also appear indirectly in response to a particular genre or literary movement, an often-used image, or a typical character or archetypal plot (e.g. star-crossed lovers, rival siblings, heroes with a tragic flaw). The indirect forms operate subtly and remind us of the complicated interrelationships among texts, relationships that can be created by writers who produce texts or by readers who use and interpret them. (Kusch, 2016, p.86)

This quotation hints at the importance of tracing back influences and foundational texts belonging, in this case, to the tradition of War Poetry, a genre linked mainly to WWI poets such as Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, and Isaac Rosenberg. These writers were very much interested in subverting the subject matter of previous war poetry, which mainly glorified and romanticized war. On the contrary, they showed the horrors of war and its devastating consequences by denouncing its dehumanizing effects and thus starting a tradition in War Poetry that has persisted the passing of time and that is still relevant nowadays. As a result, Malvinas War Poetry shares this essence of deglorifying war and denouncing its destructive effects and most of the poems have features of this trend originated with the poets of The Great War. Caso Rosendi and McNally's literary productions then can be placed within this context of influence and tradition and as such present more similarities than differences with previous war poems. The genre or taxonomy of War Poetry will be developed in-depth and problematized in chapter 2.

1.4. Trauma Studies and the First Wave

Given that the comparative nature of this thesis has been outlined in the previous section, it is important to develop the theoretical framework of trauma studies, which is alongside comparative literature, the most important discipline that guides the present

research. Trauma studies can be defined as a field of literary criticism that explores the impact of trauma in literature by analyzing its psychological, rhetorical, and cultural significance. In broad terms, trauma studies explores how language shapes the representation of trauma, emphasizing how the subject perceives, revives, and understands, and linguistically codes a traumatic experience. Trauma studies borrows its main theoretical precepts from diverse disciplines,

> An interdisciplinary theoretical body that draws from psychoanalytic, feminist, and poststructuralist discourses and focuses on the study of both personal trauma (e.g. abuse, mental illness) and collective experiences of trauma (e.g. the Holocaust, slavery, genocide). The theory offers a framework for understanding experiences that – by definition – overwhelm the coping mechanisms of individuals, and involves enquiry into the relationship between memory and truth and the ways that testimony can aid the recovery process. (Cuddon, 2013, p. 736)

The main idea behind trauma studies lies in uncovering the relationship between the traumatic event and the victim, trying to mend the broken links of the past coded in the literary text through the use of language, imagery, style, themes, and repetition of ideas or key issues. As a result, memory plays a central role since it can affect individual and cultural identities. In short, trauma studies interprets representations of an extreme experience and its effects upon identity and memory.

The discipline of trauma studies goes back to the 1990s, when it gained considerable momentum and became more relevant after the release of Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* and Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, published in 1995 and 1996 respectively. These seminal works generated significant changes and initiated an academic trend strongly influenced by Freudian psychoanalytic approaches. At the beginning of this interpretative field, and after the contributions of Caruth and other academics like Shoshana Feldman and Geoffrey Hartman, trauma is conceptualized as a severely disruptive event of the unconscious that has no resolution since the inherent contradictions between the traumatic experience and the language used to represent it cannot be accounted for. Following Caruth, "trauma is not located in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature —the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance— returns to haunt the survivor later on" (Caruth, 1996, p.

4). In other terms, as a direct result of having undergone a traumatic experience, the self[1] cannot possibly come to terms with what happened and because the event affected the individual's psyche, it is impossible to talk or represent said traumatic experience. Meaning is ruptured and subsequently challenges the limits of language, limiting or denying linguistic representability altogether. For these academics, a possible way of getting closer insights to the self's inaccessible memory was to study the repetition of recurring words or figures, as they have rhetorical potential and might help to "capture the splintered referentiality that points to the 'knowing and not knowing' of the traumatic past." (Balaev, 2018, p. 364)

These ideas belong to what is now known as the traditional model of trauma studies or the first wave, and its adherents upheld that it was fundamentally impossible to represent through language the suffering originated by a traumatic event since the psyche of the subject was broken or disordered. This more limited vision of trauma is based on Freudian theories to support its ideas by limiting the object of analysis to the individual and the impossibility of representation:

> Freud's theories—that traumatic experiences are repeated compulsively, divide the psyche, influence memory differently than other experiences, and are unable to be experienced initially but only in a narrative reproduction of the past—are key ideas informing the first development in trauma studies scholarship that address the theory of trauma and the ways that trauma influences memory and identity. This criticism and that which would follow employs psychoanalytic theories to analyze emotional suffering in texts as well as the language of loss, disruption, and fragmentation. (Balaev, 2018, p. 363)

In this model, the traumatic experience is followed by a period of temporary inactivity, where the individual has not come to terms with the disruptive event yet and as a result, they appear to be well. It is only after some time has passed that the subject starts to experience the full effects of the traumatic event and symptoms begin to manifest like the compulsion to repeat the memory of the incident, painful flashbacks, and survivor guilt, just to name a few. It is important to bear in mind that memory here is seen as a storehouse that cannot be accessed, thus preventing the self from claiming the traumatic

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[1] Here understood as "[t]he totality of the individual, consisting of all characteristic attributes, conscious and unconscious, mental and physical. Apart from its basic reference to personal identity, being, and experience, the term's use in psychology is wide-ranging. According to William James, self can refer either to the person as the target of appraisal (i.e., one introspectively evaluates how one is doing) or to the person as the source of agency (i.e., one attributes the source of regulation of perception, thought, and behavior to one's body or mind)" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 951).

experience in its entirety. For this reason, the Freudian concept of repetition compulsion[2] is important for this model, as the survivor re-experiences the severe event that originated the trauma in the hopes of grasping it but failing to do so. In this model,

> [t]he traumatic experience exerts a negative and frequently pathological effect on consciousness and memory that prevents the past from becoming incorporated into a life narrative. […] The event is absent in normal consciousness but preserved just beyond the limits of understanding in a timeless, wordless state and continues to inflict pain on the psyche. (Balaev in Richter, 2018, p. 363)

1.5. Trauma

The concept of trauma (from Greek *trauma*, a wound, a hurt), was first used to refer to physical injuries on the body caused by external factors. Trauma is now also understood as a wound inflicted upon the mind, an extreme event that affects the individual's psychological and emotional makeup. *The American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology* defines trauma as

> a disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person's attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning. Traumatic events include those caused by human behavior (e.g., rape, war, industrial accidents) as well as by nature (e.g., earthquakes) and often challenge an individual's view of the world as a just, safe, and predictable place. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 1104)

Traumatic events range from individual to more collective accounts, for example, sexual abuse, rape, racism, war, and postcolonialism. In a similar way, a non-human incident such as a cataclysmic event may also trigger traumatic responses, like an earthquake, a tidal wave, a volcanic eruption. These dimensions of suffering are relevant as the trauma that will be explored in this thesis is a direct result of human behavior. In the case of war trauma, the individual was exposed to extreme and life-threatening situations, yet he was able to survive. The devastating nature of the war was so strong that the soldier's psyche was breached and his identity shattered. "War trauma is concerned with the responses of people to their war experiences" (Hunt, 2010, p. 8) and how they

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[2] "The tendency to repeat unfinished or traumatic events in order to deal with them. The repetition can take the form of daydreams, storytelling, and perception that present relationships are the same as old ones or emotional relations with a therapist that mirror those of childhood". (Matsumoto, 2009, p. 439)

cope with their condition, sometimes reenacting or re-experiencing early traumas in an attempt to master them.

1.6. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Tracing the incorporation of the concept of trauma into the medical discourse can be an extensive task. Nevertheless, in the case of the present thesis, the medical issue of modern war trauma is generally agreed to have been first addressed in 1914, when British Doctor Charles Myers of the Royal Army Medical Corps introduced the term "shell shock" as a clinical diagnosis (Hipp, 2005). The expression makes reference to the damage caused to soldiers' brains as a result of being exposed to nearby exploding shells and subsequently not being able to concentrate, sleep, talk, or just being in a state of panic and fear. At times confusing or simply misleading, its usage started to be supplemented by other nomenclatures such as "combat fatigue", "war shock", "war neuroses", and "hysterical disorders of warfare". All these terms seem to point to a simple fact, namely that exposure to war and its brutal effects have an impact on the soldiers' psychological wellbeing. As Nigel Hunt summarizes, "[w]hatever name is applied, the results are the same. In combat, many soldiers experience a total physical, psychological and emotional breakdown that can have a long-term or permanent effect on their sense of identity" (2010, p. 11). The soldiers who suffered from this condition were in a state of panic, could not sleep well nor talk, and often presented physiological arousal. With the passing of the years and the acknowledgment that these words did not suffice to explain this severe condition, the aforementioned phrases were improved and condensed into the diagnostic category of PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder), introduced by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980. First published in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (3rd ed.),* the term now refers to

> a disorder that may result when an individual lives through or witnesses an event in which he or she believes that there is a threat to life or physical integrity and safety and experiences fear, terror, or helplessness. The symptoms are characterized by (a) re-experiencing the trauma in painful recollections, flashbacks, or recurrent dreams or nightmares; (b) avoidance of activities or places that recall the traumatic event, as well as diminished responsiveness (emotional anesthesia or numbing), with disinterest in significant activities and with feelings of detachment and estrangement from others; and (c) chronic physiological arousal, leading to such symptoms as an exaggerated startle response, disturbed sleep, difficulty in

concentrating or remembering, and guilt about surviving the trauma when others did not. (VandenBos, 2015, p.815)

A key element of this definition lies in the interpretation of the individual: trauma depends on the specific experience of the individual and as such, it can differ greatly from person to person. Events that can be traumatic range from short to long-term phenomena such as rape, severe accidents, floods, child abuse, and war. Again, these possible stressors[3] might have the potential to develop into full-fledged traumas for some individuals and not others, with varying degrees of responses as well. It has been noted that in warfare, "[t]he essentially random nature of the battle – you cannot predict with any accuracy where the bullets and shell components will be travelling – has led many soldiers to acknowledge the instability of life" (Hunt, 2010, p. 16). This idea points to the element of chance and to how soldiers have little to no control over their own lives, which in turn, can lead many of them to states of intense anxiety, fear, and hypervigilance, "a state of abnormally heightened alertness, particularly to threatening or potentially dangerous stimuli" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 512). Paraphrasing Sigmund Freud's *Psycho-Analysis and War Neuroses*, Daniel Hipp (2010) observes that during combat, the individual is in a state of conflict between the identity forged in peacetime and the one reshaped in wartime, where one possible way of protecting the old self from the hazards of war and preventing death, would be to resort to traumatic responses that serve as defense mechanisms of the ego[4], i.e., in classical psychological theory,

> an unconscious reaction pattern employed by the ego to protect itself from the anxiety that arises from psychic conflict […]. In more recent psychological theories, defense mechanisms are seen as normal means of coping with everyday problems and external threats, but excessive use of any one, or the use of immature defenses (e.g., displacement or repression), is still considered pathological. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 289)

Following this thread of thought, it should come as no surprise that so many soldiers develop PTSD-related symptoms during battle, many of them permanently suffering from this condition once the battle ends. In the case of *Screaming in Silence* and *Soldados*, it should be noted that numerous poems deal with this idea of the "instability

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[3] "any event, force, or condition that results in physical or emotional stress. Stressors may be internal or external forces that require adjustment or coping strategies on the part of the affected individual." (VandenBos, 2015, p. 1037).

[4] The term "ego" is here understood as "the self, particularly the conscious sense of self (Latin, "I"). In its popular and quasi-technical sense, ego refers to all the psychological phenomena and processes that are related to the self and that comprise the individual's attitudes, values, and concerns." (VandenBos, 2015, p. 353)

of life", portraying the poetic persona as a soldier who faces the unknown and is subjected to extreme life-threatening situations. As a result, these soldier personas might seem to display symptoms related to PTSD and war neuroses in the context of the poems, where the use of figurative language and recurrent images create and complement the representation of trauma.

The importance of PTSD for this research lies in its rich and broad scope as a concept and theoretical construct and thus will be taken into account for the analysis, especially for the way the poets portray trauma in their literary productions. This category has shown that in order to understand responses to trauma, it is better to see them as a spectrum of conditions rather than as a single disorder (Diedrich in Kurtz, 2018). This array of conditions can be identified in the texts as the writers depict the different symptoms related to PTSD. Throughout their books, McNally and Caso Rosendi use figurative language and create images that describe the soldier's troubled state of mind and suffering. More often than not, the poetic persona might be seen as re-experiencing the disruptive event through a series of flashbacks, nightmares, or even having physiological responses to his trauma. All these coping mechanisms and symptoms permeate the texts and their repetitions in different contexts are the keystone when studying how trauma is represented in the books. It should be pointed out that other key concepts related to trauma studies are explained and defined in the following chapters, especially terms related to PTSD symptomatology such as exaggerated startle response, survivor guilt, hypervigilance, and flashbacks, among others.

1.7. The Pluralistic Model of Trauma Studies

As stated before, Cathy Caruth —alongside other representative scholars that followed and improved the traditional model— mainly regarded trauma as unrepresentable. Rigorous scrutiny of the relationship between the disruptive event and the language used to represent it showed an intrinsic contradiction: "traumatic experience and its inherent dissociation thwart the application of determinate value to that experience because the level of fright destroys the mind's ability to comprehend it and linguistically code it." (Balaev, 2018, p. 364). Even though the first wave presented some limitations, it gave the discipline of trauma studies its formal outset by originating trends of analysis and models of work that still guide the field today.

After some years, especially in the decade of 2010, this model was revised and advanced, giving rise to a more updated model, called pluralistic. Moving beyond its unspeakability, trauma in this paradigm is a complex multi-causal event and, even though the model shares the psychoanalytic basis of the first wave, it takes into account the socio-cultural dimension and the diversity of narrative (or poetic) expression to demonstrate that the representation of trauma is possible. Furthermore, trauma and its representation have the potential of generating new values, understood here as knowledge or meaning attributed to the extreme event without limiting the experience to its ineffability. Michelle Balaev, an American theorist who works and develops this model says that

> In this model trauma is conceptualized as an event that alters perception and identity yet in the wake of such disturbance new knowledge is formed about the self and external world. The reorientation of consciousness caused by traumatic events may include an ambiguous referentiality as well as determinate meaning. Allowing for trauma's variability in terms of its causes, effects, and representative potential demonstrates the diverse values accorded to a traumatic event and its remembrance. (Balaev in Richter, 2018, p. 366)

For theorists adhering to the pluralistic model, trauma does cause a severe impact upon the self and disrupts experience and memory, but the event can be analyzed beyond its linguistic unrepresentability. Given that trauma always takes place within private or communal environments, such contexts inform and give shape to how trauma originates in the individual, on the one hand, and have the potential to attribute determinate value to the experience, on the other. This means that several cultural factors and personal circumstances might guide the disruptive experience into possible different paths by giving new meanings or values to it. Trauma then has multiple meanings in this paradigm and, as a result, there are

> other possibilities regarding the value of trauma in terms of psychological, linguistic, and social mechanisms. The pluralistic model of trauma suggests that criticism may explore trauma as a subject that invites study of the relationship between language, the psyche, and behavior without assuming the classic definition of trauma that asserts an unrepresentable and pathological universalism. (Balaev, 2014, p. 4)

Revising the traditional model enables the researcher to analyze the different ways that language conveys extreme experiences by incorporating the sociocultural, semantic, political, and even personal factors embedded in the traumatic experience. Moreover, if we consider that literary texts have the potential to encapsulate a broad variety of values

that reveal individual and cultural knowledge of the self, memory, and society, then trying to attribute ineffability to trauma might prove counterintuitive. Supporting this claim, Barry Stampfl says that "trauma itself is the name of a realm of experience large and diverse enough to require a pluralistic conception of the unspeakable, one that recognizes the trope's alternative or even antithetical possibilities" (in Balaev, 2014, p. 16). Furthermore, in the case of poetry, representation is often more diverse, as figurative language is highly present in the texts. The use of rhetorical figures, recurrent images, metaphors, and rhythmic structures, among other creative resources, makes poetry present an additional level of complexity and representability. This idea will be explored again in the analysis of the books by comparing the authors' production and trying to reach possible readings regarding the representation of trauma through the use of poetic language.

Another relevant aspect of the pluralistic model is that the concept of memory is not regarded as static anymore, where retrieval of the extreme experience is almost impossible to achieve. On the contrary, for scholars who advance this model, memory is viewed as a "fluid process of reconstruction" (Balaev in Richter, 2018) and as such, it can help in the recovery of the traumatic past and its assimilation into identity. Traumatic memory then also acts together with the contextual factors into providing new values and meanings. In this field of literary criticism, academics generally link memory with the act of narrating and therefore talk about trauma narratives. In *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*, Laurie Vickroy says that

> Trauma narratives —fictional narratives that help readers to access traumatic experience— have taken an important place among diverse artistic, scholarly, and testimonial representations in illuminating the personal and public aspects of trauma and in elucidating our relationship to memory and forgetting within the complex interweavings of social and psychological relationships. (Vickroy, 2002, p. 1)

It is worth noting that Vickroy's definition of trauma narratives places the emphasis in fiction as the main source of representing trauma as, for the most part, literary trauma theorists have focused on novels. However, I believe that it is possible to work with a body of poems in order to analyze its recurrent images, patterns, and ideas, and therefore it might be interesting to think about "trauma poetics" as another way of representing trauma and recording the writer's intent upon coding extreme events.

Another key element in the pluralistic model lies in the possibility of reading trauma into broader contexts of analysis. By taking into account specific periods, places, people, and events, one can reach a multiplicity of readings and meanings. Consequently, when analyzing the poetry books, it is important to contextualize and look into the historical events that had a significant influence upon the productions. If we think about the conflict of Malvinas War, its participants, and what took place geopolitically speaking, we can approach the poems and the representations of trauma from a different perspective. Many of the poems locate the reader on the battlefield and even mention geographical names related to Malvinas, but they also take the reader to the aftermath of the war and the dire consequences it had on its participants. At times, we can follow a soldier's life on the street, or in his house surrounded by his family and friends. Other times, the poems starkly denounce politicians' manipulation tactics by skewing public opinion in favor of violence or question the value of war decorations on soldiers who suffer as a consequence of developing PTSD after combat. The recurrent ideas or issues in the texts are varied and should be read by taking into account the socio-cultural background as it places the representation of trauma within a specific frame. In the traditional model, the specificity of the traumatic event was not really considered and the individual's private experience was often neglected. In this respect, trauma was regarded as a universal experience because any given person that suffered from trauma was inevitably a prisoner to its unspeakability in the end.

Given that the field of trauma studies has been revised in the last years, the theoretical framework for this thesis will follow the pluralistic model as it allows for more comprehensive readings of the texts since it takes into account the cultural and individual factors that shape the representation of trauma through the use of language. In essence, theorists who revise this paradigm "argue for a more culturally sensitive and politically aware understanding of trauma" (Stampfl in Balaev, 2014, p. 37). In the case of war poetry, it is of great importance to emphasize that trauma is related to an event that transcends the individual and inserts him into the shared collective context of warfare. Following this train of thought, it can be observed that the socio-cultural context informs the trauma and the subject (or subjects) in question and allows for new readings and approximations, especially if we think that the authors to be analyzed belong to countries that were enemies within the context of the 1982 armed conflict. McNally and Caso Rosendi are Malvinas War veterans, and this biographical information adds an extra layer

of meaning to the poems, which cannot be overlooked. Their first-hand experience on the battlefield had an impact on their lives and careers as writers and it will be dealt with on the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2. ANTEBELLUM: PREPARING FOR WAR

2.1. Introduction

Before delving into the literary texts and comparing them, it is important to remember that the pluralistic model of trauma studies places critical emphasis on the sociocultural context of the events that enabled the development of trauma. Collective memory and the context inform the ways trauma generates as the consequence of a specific incident, which can be the direct result of human action or natural phenomena. Studying these aspects will shed light on the particularities of trauma in the specific context of the Malvinas War. In the field of trauma studies, war is an extreme situation rooted in a collective effort as opposed to individual accounts of brutalizing events like rape, accidents, or the death of a beloved person. This means that war can be grouped within events that place the individual into broader contexts, for example, natural disasters (floods, earthquakes) or human-made catastrophes like "the Holocaust, the Gulag, American slavery, colonial oppression, and racism" (Balaev in Richter, 2014, p. 367). The main implication behind this idea is that trauma is shaped by the social and cultural dimensions that underlie it and in the case of collective trauma, its impact and reach can be more detrimental:

> The social environment influences the causes and outcomes of traumatic experience in a variety of ways. It forms the circumstances out of which trauma is created, but it can also provide, or decline, needed supports for healing. Although trauma damages the individual psyche, collective trauma has further destructive consequences in that it breaks the attachments of social life, degrades the sense of community and support from that community, and dominates the mood and interactions of the group. (Vickroy, 2002, p. 13).

Laurie Vickroy's statement is pertinent as numerous poems that will be addressed in the present study locate the reader within the private context of the soldier's psyche but also give an account of his troubled post-war life. For instance, there are verses that deal with how the veteran's social integration after the war is compromised because of what he went through, oftentimes secluding himself or resorting to substance abuse. As it has been outlined before, McNally and Caso Rosendi's productions will be compared by following the most prominent themes present in the texts, namely, the representations of trauma on the battlefield, and the representations of trauma after the war. Consequently, in order to examine the collections of poems, it is important first to briefly outline the

sociocultural context of the war, its participants, and the events that led to the conflict itself. After that, the genre or taxonomy of war poetry will be defined and questioned in order to justify the use of Malvinas War Poetry as a category. Lastly, some biographical elements will be taken into account by drawing attention to both writers' status as Malvinas veterans and its relevance for surveying their books.

2.2. Malvinas War

> In war poetry the context is an inescapable impingement, so much so that for the poets it is the subject of the poems and elicits very direct and powerful responses. If this is the case—as Owen claimed it was—then the 'subject' will also need some understanding, just as the poem will itself offer some insight into the context. Ideally, poem and context will generate a reciprocal relationship. (Silkin, 1998, p. 1)

This quotation by Jon Silkin condenses the idea of the intersection between context and text by highlighting the importance of both variables for analysis. Approaching McNally and Caso Rosendi's productions without considering their background information can have many disadvantages. More often than not, the poems contain allusions to the conflict, echoes from other war poems, and cultural references; therefore, the context of production becomes relevant when engaging with texts that deal with warfare as it enhances their understanding. What follows is a summarized account on the main events that led to the conflict and how it unfolded until its end, as recounted by Mario Rapoport, Hugo Quiroga, and Luis A. Romero. Complicated matters have been simplified and long records of the conflict shortened in order to provide a concise explanation that will hopefully suffice for the purposes of the present thesis.

From the perspective of Argentine history, the Malvinas War took place during the period known as the "National Reorganization Process", which after the military coup of March 24, 1976, signaled the most violent and cruel dictatorship in the history of Argentina. The military government —headed in those years by General Jorge Rafael Videla (1976-81), Roberto Eduardo Viola (1981), Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri (1981-82), and Reynaldo Bignone (1982-83) — imposed state terrorism as the norm, and public and individual freedoms were violated as never before. This severe system appealed to the systematic disappearance of people and terror, while its economic policies caused the breakdown of the productive apparatus and serious setbacks in the living conditions of

the population. In the years leading to 1982, the civic-military regime was weakened on several fronts because of economic problems (industrial decline, high debt, inflation, crisis), its own internal confrontations, the unions and political parties resuming their activities, and the strong activism of human rights organizations, like Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo. For these reasons, the military had begun to discuss a possible political solution to appease the generalized feeling of unrest in society. At the end of 1981, Galtieri took office and he unsuccessfully tried to stabilize the economy and had to face social unrest and constant strikes, such as the one that took place on March 30, 1982, which was harshly repressed (Quiroga, 2005, p. 72). It was in this context that the plan to occupy the Islas Malvinas was conceived and set in motion through a military action that would unite the Armed Forces behind a common objective and, at the same, time achieve legitimacy in the face of social discontent.

Since 1833, when the islands were occupied by the British, Argentina had claimed its rights based on historical, territorial, and legal grounds. In 1965, the United Nations resolved that both countries needed to negotiate and set their differences apart, but the British did not give in to the Argentine claims, which coincided with the general trend in the world towards decolonization (Romero; 1994, p. 316). In 1976 and 1977, there were official negotiations between the countries, but they did not prosper because of the inflexibility of the parts involved. On April 2, 1982, the Armed Forces landed and occupied the Islas Malvinas after overcoming the weak resistance of the few British troops stationed in the archipelago. The occupation, which came as a surprise to all the inhabitants of the country, aroused wide support by the Argentines: several people spontaneously turned to Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires and in the rest of the country, in response to the call made by the visit of Alexander Haigh, U.S. Secretary of State and mediator in the conflict. From the historic balcony of the Casa Rosada, President Galtieri appealed to patriotism by bolstering national pride, and practically all social institutions (cultural associations, sports clubs, unions, political parties) expressed their support in favor of the historic claim.

In Great Britain, the pacifists lost the argument and the most conservative groups led by PM Margaret Thatcher decided to send a naval fleet to the South Atlantic; the largest war fleet assembled by Great Britain since World War II. They had the support of the European Community and the United Nations Security Council, which declared Argentina as the aggressor (Tucker, 2010, p. 2549). Argentina had the support of Latin

American countries with little military weight, and as the United States failed in the mediations, the outcome of the conflict was inevitable. Great Britain recovered the Islas Georgias del Sur, sunk the cruiser General Belgrano (with a death toll of more than 300), and engaged in naval air combat, resulting in three attacks to Puerto Argentino. According to Mario Rapoport, in these harsh circumstances, the initial triumphalist stance of the Argentine government turned into demoralization, and the support in favor of the war dropped significantly among the combatants who were on the islands and the population in general (2000, p. 784-785).

With technical and military advantage, the British landed on the islands and, finally, the surrender took place on June 14, 1982 —74 days after the conflict began. For Argentina, it left 649 casualties, around 1082 wounded, and countless veterans who died by suicide[5] while the British suffered 258 deaths and 777 wounded, which marked the consummation of the Argentine defeat in the only war in its history in the 20th century. The immediate consequence was the resignation of Galtieri, the main government authority responsible for the so-called Malvinas "adventure", carried out through poor military preparation and with an erroneous assessment of possible support from the USA—, which turned out to be a UK ally (Romero, 1994, p. 321). The defeat aggravated the fall of the military regime, which could not achieve its goal of legitimacy through war, and after the conflict ended, the unavoidable electoral solution to the crisis took place in the following year.

The war, the main countries involved, and what happened during those months permeate *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence*. Thus, part of this information will be revisited in future chapters as trauma studies benefits from the historical and sociocultural elements in order to better analyze and understand how trauma is represented in literary productions.

2.3. War Poetry

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[5] The official number of Malvinas veterans who died by suicide is not confirmed by official entities. Different sources dispute the validity of the numbers that range from 130 to 500.

Before discussing Malvinas war poetry, it is of utmost importance to develop the literary genre[6] of war poetry, which can be loosely defined as poetic expressions whose subject matter is war; in addition, these literary productions are "implicitly, if not explicitly, anti-war" (Stallworthy, 2014). As obvious as it is, this definition points to warfare as the focus or origin of the texts, and it should be noted that they can be written before, during, or after war by soldiers or civilians alike. More frequently, the term has been used in connection with poets who participated in a conflict as active combatants but it can be extended to noncombatants who were affected by war in some way or another. If we think about the extent to which war affects society and its people, the parameters for classifying what counts for war poetry will vary greatly. David Roberts says that "war poetry is not simply about real life, but it is life lived at extremes— extremes of danger, suffering, trauma, compassion, selflessness, heroism, cruelty, immorality, violence and horror" (2012, p. 8). If we examine this array of themes, we will notice that most tend to gravitate to the negative side of the spectrum of human experience, as they are the result of what history has showed us about the devastating consequences of warfare and how it can change people's lives for the worse. This statement should not be overlooked as in the past, especially before World War I (1914-1918), war poetry was predominantly nationalistic and dealt with quasi-romantic ideals of war by praising the courage and masculinity of soldiers who served their country without hesitation. By way of illustration, even classic works like Homer's *Iliad*, or *Beowulf* typically emphasize the figure of the hero within a context of honor and pride or offer accounts of the tactical side of combat. These texts do not openly question or regard warfare as a horrendous enterprise but as a noble and respectable affair. It was during The Great War that this idea started to be challenged by young soldiers and poets and as a result, the genre of war poetry took different directions. Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, and Robert Graves among others are often known as The War Poets,

> a title ultimately bestowed on, primarily, a number of writers who 'soldiered' in various capacities during the First World War and who recorded very memorably their feelings about their experience […]. The majority expressed varying degrees of disgust, disenchantment, cynicism, revulsion, anger and horror. It was often poetry of protest and it deglamorized war forever. The strongest feelings were often leavened by a grim and laconic humour. (Cuddon, 2013, p. 768)

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[6] Loosely understood here as "a French term for a kind, type or class of literature. Generic classifications are organized in all manner of ways, and may coalesce around an aspect or aspects of a literary work's form, mode or content" (Cuddon, 2013, p. 298).

This group of writers served their country in battle and produced texts that contested previous war poetry. One traditional idea that communicated a pro-war message was summarized in Roman poet Horace's motto "dulce et decorum est pro patria mori", which translates to "it is sweet and glorious to die for the homeland", a line used to promote and justify war in *The Odes*, published in 23 and 13 AD. Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est", published posthumously in 1920, openly criticizes the futility of war and the negative impact it had on soldiers. The poem's title borrows from Horace's motto but subverts the original idea throughout the stanzas: the persona describes men suffering and dying as the result of a gas attack and finishes with the lines "My friend, you would not tell with such high zest / To children ardent for some desperate glory, / The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est / Pro patria mori." By denouncing this idea as "the old lie", the War Poets were able to express outrage at the pain and suffering it caused and address war in less idealistic ways. For example, let us consider Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier", a highly patriotic poem that praises honor in war and romanticizes the idea of serving your country, an element that can be observed from its first lines: "If I should die, think only this of me: / That there's some corner of a foreign field / That is for ever England". Contrary to this, many of the soldier poets offered a realistic and blunt account of war such as first-hand experiences of trench warfare, and traumatic events that cause immense pain. This shift in attitude influenced the war poetry that came afterward by setting a trend so strong that it still guides the genre nowadays. By way of illustration, the anti-war message, the exposure of the horrors of war, and the severe effects on its participants are all aspects present in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence*.

2.4. Malvinas War Poetry

When we discuss literary classifications, it is relevant to remember that it is difficult to find academics today who circumscribe literature to national boundaries. By using Malvinas as a category, we refer to the literary productions written by natives, travelers, and even temporary residents of the islands like the soldiers during the war, both in Spanish or English; the term Malvinas implies an Argentine positioning. In order to analyze the epistemological basis of this taxonomy, David Perkins' essay "Literary Classifications: How Have They Been Made?" will be taken into account, especially some of the organizing principles he proposes:

> Literary classifications have been determined mainly by six factors: tradition, ideological interests, the aesthetic requirements of writing a literary history, the assertions of authors and their contemporaries about their affinities and antipathies, the similarities that the literary historian observes between authors and/or texts, and the needs of professional careers and the politics of power in institutions. (Perkins, 1992, p. 69)

What he rightly observes after establishing these factors is that direct observation of texts is often the least usual method of classification, an idea that is probably contrary to what one might assume when theorizing about classifications. This is so because literary history plays a preponderant role in taxonomies and genres. Thus, from these six guiding principles, the most relevant ones for the present purpose is the one of tradition and the similarities observed between authors and/or texts. In the case of war poetry, tradition is highly tied with the poetry written during WWI by The War Poets. As stated before, these young men introduced new approaches to the genre as a result of being active participants in the war and witnessing its horrors. They had many things in common, namely their stance on war and the fact that they were soldiers and worked contemporarily. Siegfried Sassoon, for instance, met Wilfred Owen in the same military psychiatric hospital in Scotland during the war and developed a friendship where they discussed their poetry and encouraged each other to write. Sadly, another similarity is that many of them died on the battlefield like Charles Sorley (1895-1915), Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918), Edward Thomas (1878-1917), and Wilfred Owen (1893-1918).

As regards similarities among their texts other than the thematic ones, The War Poets can be stylistically related to Romanticism in its modes of expression, where the poet is the center and there is an intense overflow of emotions and feelings. Many Romantic writers followed conventions in form by writing, for example, in fixed rhyme schemes and adhering to specific poetic forms like odes, lyrical ballads, and sonnets. In this regard, the poets of the First World War cannot be grouped into the Modernist movement in literature that was taking place at the time. On the contrary, modernist poets broke away from Victorian and Romantic traditions and tried new, experimental ways to compose their work by adopting free verse, condensing lines (if we think about Imagism), or producing highly intertextual and complex poems, like T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land".

What is relevant about these writers is that their literary productions have found no equal contenders in subsequent wars, at least as regards popularity in the field of Anglophone literature. Their poetry is intense, blunt and moving, and has influenced

every war poet since. As an example, most anthologies about Anglophone war poetry deal with The War Poets, often featuring Wilfred Owen (1893- 1918) as the main representative and talented writer of his generation. Interestingly enough, even newer compilations that deal with more contemporary conflicts like the Afghanistan War or the Iraq War include Owen and Sassoon (just to name a few) but exclude Malvinas war poets altogether, as evidenced in works like *The New Oxford Book of War Poetry* (2014) edited by John Stallworthy or *Critical Survey of Poetry: War Poets* (2012) edited by Rosemary M. Canfield Reisman. It is with *Falklands War Poetry: Poets from Britain, Argentina and the Falklands*, edited by David Roberts in 2012, that war poetry from Malvinas was first anthologized and it must be pointed out that even though the book is written in English, it includes not only British writers but also Argentine authors, such as Martín Raninqueo and José Luis Aparicio, whose poems have been translated into English for the occasion. This collection is a very interesting survey of poems inspired by the 1982 conflict as it presents the reader with poets who were soldiers in the war, civilians from the island and British expatriates living in Argentina at the time.

Lastly, when problematizing the genre of war poetry, it is highly important to mention that the focus should not be placed only on the contribution of The War Poets but also on other voices who wrote war poetry with different subject matter and from different standpoints. Even though the most canonical works are generally associated with writers like Wilfred Owen, Robert Burns, and Siegfried Sassoon, there were civilian men and women who wrote about war during WWI like Vera Brittain, Alice Meynell, and Jessie Pope. Otherwise, we are likely to fall under common stereotypes attributed to the genre, as Carl Plasa states when paraphrasing George A. E. Parfitt,

> Characteristically [war poetry] is seen as solely the product of "a handsome young officer who writes either about country and heroism (Rupert Brooke) or about the horrors of trench and bombardment (Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon)". Parfitt combats and displaces such a restricting view […] by focusing on the wider national, cultural, and literary contexts in which the work of these well-known poets is situated. He thus recovers for the reader a sense of the range of poetic responses to the War—from patriots and propagandists to the non-commissioned, civilians, and women. (Plasa in Hawkings-Dady, 1996, p. 1504)

For this thesis though, the writers under discussion are male veterans who fought in Malvinas, and their poems thematically fit into the tradition of The War Poets, as they explore the same themes and share their pro-peace stance. Their aesthetic choices in the

way they represent trauma might differ from The Poets of the Great War, as their voices are contemporary and show this by embracing free verse, abandoning meter and rhyme, and referencing pop culture elements, for example. Nonetheless, many of the poems still follow conventions that can be traced to Romanticism up to a certain extent. All these subtleties and differences in style will be explored in the analysis of the poems in the following chapters.

To summarize, war poetry as we know it today shares its core defining characteristics with the one produced by The War Poets. In general, most writers make a claim to pacifism as their texts exhibit a marked anti-war consciousness, contrasting with the customary belief that war should be glorified and nationalistic feelings exalted. In the case of Malvinas war, Gustavo Caso Rosendi and Tony McNally's texts continue with the tradition of representing the most negative and severe aspects of warfare, and the persona as a soldier undergoes extreme events that in most of the cases lead to traumatic responses. Finally, yet importantly, the choice of the term Malvinas war poetry and not Falklands war poetry reflects the Argentine identity and ideological stance of the one who writes, and though obvious, the British anthologies that feature poems from the war use the term "Falklands poetry". In this way, the usage of the preferred term shows and supports Argentina's historical claims based on legal and territorial grounds.

2.5. Malvinas War Poets

As proposed by Balaev, Visser, Forster and other scholars, the revised model of trauma studies uses the sociocultural context in conjunction with the particular circumstances of personal accounts of trauma to elucidate new facets and give new meanings to a severe experience that damages the self. As such, biographical elements are not just part of the background but can help in the analysis of how trauma is represented in the texts. Traditionally, purely biographical approaches to literary texts have been criticized and rejected, especially since the influential works by Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" (1968) and Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author?" (1969). The basic ideas of these texts in their most extreme versions state that when facing a literary text, readers should leave identity, biographical elements, and the intention of authors aside, which is highly connected to the notion of the *intentional fallacy*, namely, "the error of criticizing and judging a work of literature by attempting to assess what the

writer's intention was and whether or not he has fulfilled it rather than concentrating on the work itself" (Cuddon, 2013, p. 363). The critics who advance this position claim that intentions are a problematic affair because they are impossible to determine objectively: what an author might intend and then what the reader actually understands are two different things and "no work can have its meaning fixed or in any way limited by intention" (Lennard, 2005, p. 316). In fiction, for example, the views of characters should not be confused with the author's intention and the critic should not try to identify biographical elements from the author's life in the text to further an opinion or analysis. In poetry, the same issue is valid in the sense that there are no characters per se, but poetic personas constructed rhetorically, and first-person pronouns should not be attributed to the author.

On the other hand, this extreme view of limiting and questioning the validity of biographical information and/or intention can prove to have its disadvantages. Authors do have their own agendas, produce texts from experience, have intentions beforehand (even if they do not coincide with the ones attributed to the texts by readers), and therefore they should be taken into account. Interestingly enough, most of the books that analyze war poetry have a strong biographical imprint when dealing with the texts, as evidenced in collections like *The Penguin Book of First World Poetry* (Silkin, 1981), *British Poetry of the Second World* (Shires, 1985), *Poetry of the First World War* (Kendall, 2013), *The New Oxford Book of War Poetry* (Stallworthy, 2014), and *Tumult & Tears: An Anthology of Women's First World War Poetry* (Newman, 2016). In most of the cases, critics begin by providing pertinent details from the author's life and, more often than not, they tend to recognize biographical elements in the poems. This does not necessarily go in detriment of analysis and objectivity because, in the case of war poetry, these elements and facts about the writers are relevant for the reader. As John Lennard states,

> just as with a quotidian contemporary document one necessary part of any professional reading is knowing who wrote it, and allowing for any formal constraints and authorial spin, so biographical knowledge of a poet […] is a very useful approach to the nexus of a poem. From the evident attractions for readers, when available, of audiotapes, photographs, and film, or best of all live performance, as from the peculiar void felt in encountering a work by 'Anon', it is clear that biographical data stimulates reading; if it is terrain strewn with pitfalls, so much the better for our alertness. For all the difficulties and potential abuse of biographical criticism, equally severe problems beset the arguments of those who wish to ignore biography, not least why the manifest difficulties with authorial intention

should ever be thought to justify the wholesale ditching of biographical enquiry. (2005, p. 319).

The main point here is that biography is also significant for some practices of literary criticism, and in the case of the present thesis, it is highly relevant if we remember that trauma studies juxtaposes psychological approaches with the sociocultural background and biographical elements in order to elucidate the new ways trauma is reified. Following this thread of thought, we can argue that a moderate biographically driven approach to the texts in concomitance with the theoretical framework of trauma studies will prove beneficial in the comparative analysis. Moreover, in the case of war poetry, there is a tendency to have more biographical data and sources available, such as photographs, films, letters, military records, newspaper articles, and nowadays the internet and social networks, which can be used to contact the poets themselves if they are still alive and willing to communicate. In the case of our writers, there is ample material online and in their own books. For example, in McNally's Prologue, he includes relevant biographical information about his mental health and involvement in the war. Caso Rosendi's *Soldados* was published with a booklet that includes interviews, essays, and historical facts, among other things in order to study his poems. These complementary texts are significant and show insight into the authors' lives. In short, "if a poem matters, so too does the life that created it." (Lennard, 2005, p. 323).

2.6. The Poets

Argentine poet Gustavo Caso Rosendi was born in Esquel, Chubut (1962) but currently resides in La Plata. He published *Elegía Común* (1987), *Bufón Fúnebre* (1995), *Soldados* (2009) and *Lucía Sin Luz* (2016), and many of his poems have been anthologized, for example in *El Viento También Recuerda* (1996), a collection of poems by Malvinas veterans. It should be pointed out that *Soldados* was brought out in a collective effort by the Ministry of Education, at the time headed by Juan Carlos Tedesco, and the "Education and Memory Program" organized by Federico Lorenz y Ma. Celeste Adamoli. The idea behind this project was to provide teachers and educators with wide-ranging tools that could be used in the classroom in order to foster the implementation, study, and discussion of the War of Malvinas and related topics. The book of poems was uploaded in PDF format on the National Government webpage and it could be

downloaded for free, along with a resource booklet that contained an interview with the writer, historical facts, and analysis of some of the poems. This information is relevant, as the booklet provides many details about the author's life and background in connection to Malvinas. For example, when he was a teenager, Caso Rosendi did compulsory military service and afterward was conscripted into the army during the War of Malvinas. During his training year, he shares that the experience was intense:

> La colimba fue un sufrimiento, porque a esa edad no estás preparado para que te pase algo así; aunque si pedías prórroga sufrías más porque tenías menos resistencia física para los "bailes" que te pegaban. De pendejo no te hace nada que te bailen, pero de grande se complica un poco más. Uno pensaba que la colimba era el peor sufrimiento, pero no: siempre hay algo peor. (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 49)

For the most part, his literary production can be regarded as poetry of the trenches and as such, it takes us back to the tradition of The War Poets. With his verses, he balances out the usual narration of Malvinas, which generally took the form of journalistic or documentary chronicles. Caso Rosendi did not address the Malvinas War poetically until later in his life, mainly with *Soldados*, which was finished 27 years after the conflict. Martín Raninqueo, another Malvinas veteran, musician, and poet observes in the prologue to the 2009 edition:

> Malvinas no fue un tema que Gustavo abordara en sus comienzos como poeta. [...] Probablemente, el poeta ya intuía que no se escribe con el dolor, sino con su recuerdo mismo. Ese dejar decantar el tema, esa distancia en el tiempo hasta llegar a *Soldados*, le permitió transformar un hecho doloroso en un hecho estético, para decirnos que, tal vez, se escriba porque se ha perdido una experiencia inefable, y al escribirla se realiza una experiencia del lenguaje. (Raninqueo in Caso Rosendi, 2009, p. 16)

This quote is connected to the recurrent idea of trauma creating a silencing gap and the issue of using language in order to represent the traumatic experience, an idea that will be explored in the comparative analysis. Another pertinent piece of information from the interview featured in the booklet is connected to the idea of nationalism and we need to remember that War Poetry nowadays is anti-nationalistic and pacifist in essence. The interviewer asks if, at the time of the war, the phrase "Las Malvinas son argentinas" (a well-known phrase still used today at schools, by the media and others) meant something for him. Caso Rosendi replies:

> Nada, yo no soy para nada nacionalista. Sí me acuerdo de que en el Regimiento 7 hicieron una misa antes de irnos y recuerdo que un padre,

que podría haber sido el mío, gritó "Viva la patria". Y para mí fue un golpe terrible. O sea: era un "Viva la patria, mueran los hijos". Es así, hay un libro de Arnaldo Rascovsky que habla sobre esto, se llama *La universalidad del filicidio*. Dice que el filicidio se remonta al mito griego de Kronos, cuando éste se comía a sus hijos porque sabía que en algún momento le iban a ocupar su lugar. La guerra es el filicidio porque los que van a la guerra son los hijos. (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 49)

This statement is in agreement with the intent of many of his poems (and McNally's), where harsh criticism of patriotic attitudes can be observed. The interview can be particularly useful for the present study because, in one of its sections, the poet discusses his creative process and comments upon some biographical elements present in his texts, which will be addressed later on. What we also learn by reading this complementary document is that Caso Rosendi was already a poet or in the process of becoming one at the time of the war. When asked about writing before Malvinas he answered

Algunos poemas de amor, nomás. Uno se enamoraba y canalizaba así. Después de Malvinas, escribí un solo poema de amor pero lo rompí. Yo soy muy autocrítico con lo que escribo. Y ahora detesto los poemas de amor, no me llaman, ya no escribo más poemas de amor. Ahora soy bastante negro para escribir. Escribo mucho sobre la muerte, el tiempo, lo que escriben todos los poetas… No sé si soy poeta en serio, pero lo intento, intento tomármelo en serio. (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 48)

These personal facts contrast with British writer Tony McNally's, as the latter explains that he began writing poetry many years after the war ended in order to express his feelings and thoughts, i.e., in his case, writing first had a therapeutic purpose and then he developed a career as a writer. On the contrary, Caso Rosendi was already trying to express himself through poetry before Malvinas and then by embracing writing as a full-time career.

Tony McNally was also born in 1962 in Barrow-in-Furness, a town in Cumbria, North-West England. Apart from *Screaming in Silence* (2016), he published *Watching Men Burn: A Soldier's Story* (2010), *Still Watching Men Burn: Fighting the PTSD War* (2010), and *Sons of Eirinn Operation Celtic Jihad* (2017). At the young age of 16, he joined the army and endured the ruthless military training in order to serve as a gunner operating a Rapier missile launcher. As he himself describes in the prologue to his book, the army's unnecessary brutality and abuse of power were negative life experiences that began a process of psychological scarring and suffering. All the same, after describing

his months of harsh discipline in the Junior Leaders Royal Artillery, he recognizes that the source of most of his poems can be traced to his involvement in Malvinas: "I have no doubt whatsoever that these poems come from a small frozen windswept place 8,000 miles from England called the Falklands Islands." (McNally, 2016, p. 8). Undeniably, these biographical elements add another layer of significance when reading the poems, especially when analyzing the ways trauma is represented. As mentioned before, many poems display what can be regarded as symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, as the persona suffers from intrusive recurrences, physiological arousal, or survivor guilt. McNally states in the introduction to *Screaming in Silence* that he was diagnosed with PTSD and was advised to write in an attempt to give voice to his suffering and feelings, a creative-writing-oriented treatment called "poetry therapy", "a form of bibliotherapy that uses the reading or writing of poetry to facilitate emotional expression in an individual and foster healing and personal growth" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 804). He even pinpoints the precise moment where his PTSD started to develop:

> at the tender years of nineteen I took the life of two Argentinian pilots when I shot down their multimillion dollar jet aircraft which in all fairness was trying to kill me and my mates and witnessed the fatal bombing of a troop ship the Sir Galahad with the loss of fifty soldiers, many more left with horrific burns, the worst loss of British troops since World War Two, a ship that I was trying to protect, this incident had an extremely detrimental effect on my mental health, the responsibility and the guilt was overwhelming to a teenager. I came home a changed man and I soon began suffering from something I had never heard of called PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) I was diagnosed by a civilian councilor many years after I left the forces. (McNally, 2016, p. 8)

This event has haunted him since, and he took up writing as a sort of expressive therapy, a process or approach in psychology that attempts to reintegrate the traumatic experience into consciousness by writing and processing feelings of emotional trauma (Hunt, 2010, p. 20). In the past years, he has been a resolute campaigner for better understanding and treatment of servicepeople suffering from mental problems by giving interviews in different media and by actively participating in social networks. In his prologue, he states, "My hope is that my work motivates a trauma sufferer to try poetry, it cannot be as damaging as the plethora of medications used to treat trauma" (McNally, 2016, p. 8).

Before finishing this chapter, it is important to mention that even though *Screaming in Silence* is a book of poems, it also includes one short story at the end and

therefore it will not be considered for the analysis as it belongs to the genre of fiction and its subject matter is WWI. Another thing to bear in mind is that for this present thesis some poems have been excluded as they explicitly deal with other armed conflicts, namely, the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War, the Northern Ireland Conflict, and even the Vietnam War. This can be established in most cases, as there are references to those events and place names, for example, the lines "The soldier lay down in Helmand / Low on bullets rations and water" from the poem "The Fusilier" (Helman being a province of Afghanistan) or "The sun switches off in Iraq tonight / Load up your weapons" from "Statistics". In some other cases, the author himself provides information about the poems in footnotes or comments, mostly explaining that a poem is related to (or inspired by) some of the above-mentioned wars. Any other poem that does not state in a clear way its source of inspiration or contain explicit references will be regarded as Malvinas war poetry, especially since the author himself expressed in his prologue that the poems "come from" the islands.

One last important thing to mention is that all the poems from *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* have been read and studied, but not all will be included in this work. The main reason is related to length and repetition, and as a result, the most representative texts have been selected. In other words, even though each poem is different in its own way, many of them present similar ideas or subject matter and it would be very lengthy to analyze them all in one thesis. Therefore, the literary productions have undergone a thorough process of selection by prioritizing the most important texts with the salient motifs of representations of war trauma.

CHAPTER 3. BELLUM: ON THE BATTLEFIELD

3.1. Introduction

As stated in the previous chapters, the comparative approach to *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* will be made possible by focusing on the most salient motifs (being on the battlefield and the aftermath of the conflict) and studying them under the theoretical framework of trauma studies. It is important to remember that the poetry books are unified by the subject matter of warfare trauma and consequently, there is great cohesion among the texts. In *Soldados*, for example, the first set of poems tend to deal with moments of the soldier's life as he goes through his everyday duties, sometimes with verses that focus on small events like sharing food with fellow soldiers, and some other times with situations of dire danger facing the opposing army. The poems that follow, and especially the ones toward the end of the collection, tend to address the soldier's life after the war. In *Screaming in Silence*, the pattern is a little different as the poems are not thematically organized, for instance, the very first poem of the book is called "PTSD", and it deals with traumatic representations of trauma after the conflict that caused it. The poems that follow interpolate different sides or moments of the traumatic experience with some texts that deal with positive representations of war, like bonding with army mates and celebrating.

For the sake of the organization of the present study, the comparative analysis will be carried out first by dealing with the poetic works separately and then by focusing on the similarities and possible conclusions, following Ben Hutchinson's proposed methodology for comparative close reading and articulating the comparison from the conceptual lens of trauma studies as it has been outlined in the theoretical configurations (Chapter 1). Besides the poems that can be located during and after wartime, a group will be briefly discussed in connection to situations that do not display representations of trauma per se but rather comprise different dimensions of trauma. Some texts deal with the daily life of soldiers in service and their companionship among harsh times, mainly pointing to positive moments among the horrors of war. Some others are more sarcastic in intent, denouncing and criticizing politicians or the media and will be addressed in the following chapter. These texts are important because of their sociocultural references within the context of the conflict, and as such, they need to be examined in order to establish a broader framework of referentiality and analysis. These ideas are in agreement

with the pluralistic model of trauma studies, where the "focus on the specificity of trauma is paired with an analysis that assumes greater skepticism of trauma regarding a universal pathological concept of trauma, thus generating more diverse views regarding the relationship between language and experience" (Balaev, 2014, p. 3).

In this chapter, the texts have been grouped by the recurrent pattern of the soldier on the battlefield. By this, we mean instances where the poetic persona[7] can be located on a constructed scenario of combat, whether preparing for battle (minutes, hours or days before), fighting against the "enemy", or dealing with past events that took place in the war zone. In this way, it should be possible to track the similarities in the ways both writers portray the moments when trauma starts to take form and cause possible future traumatic responses.

3.2. *Soldados*

Soldados is Caso Rosendi's only work that exclusively refers to war and its consequences. The book contains 53 poems of various lengths (some consisting of four verses, others more extensive); some have titles while others do not; and, for the most part, the author disregards punctuation, a stylistic choice that will be addressed later on. In this chapter, the texts that deal with representations of trauma during wartime roughly account for more than half of the book's poems. *Soldados'* dedication reads as follows: "Para Analía y Valentín / A mis amigos / Por los que quedaron y por los que quedamos / Por la memoria". These introductory lines provide reading clues by mentioning the fallen soldiers and the role of memory when engaging the topic of Malvinas. The distinction between the ones who are not here anymore and the ones who are still alive already anticipates the subject matter of the book. The soldiers are the protagonists, the fallen ones, the wounded, the ones who could not give voice to their suffering, and the survivors who live with the painful memories of the traumatic event. When asked about this dedication and the role of memory in an interview, the writer explains:

> Este libro es mi aporte para que no se olvide lo que pasó, y es un aporte dicho de determinada manera. No de un modo nacionalista ni vendiendo un imancito con las Malvinas, sino desde un hecho artístico. La memoria queda más a través del arte que en un libro de historia. Y cuando digo

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[7] Persona, poetic persona, soldier persona, soldier, combatant will be used indistinctly from now on.

"memoria" pienso en lo más obvio de todo: lo hice por mis compañeros. En realidad, me salió por mis compañeros. (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 54)

To begin with, the first literary production that locates the reader on the battlefield is aptly called "Trinchera": "Comenzamos cavando como si / Fuera nuestra propia tumba / Pero cuando el cielo escupía fuego / nos dábamos cuenta / que era un buen hogar / después de todo". In this short poem, the poetic persona already portrays the experiences and effects of war in terms of unpredictability and vulnerability. There is an ambivalence towards the trenches as they perform the action of digging them up; they have the potential of becoming either their place of death (by comparing it with a tomb) or their salvation (by giving it the status of home) when under attack expressed with the metaphor of the sky spitting fire. The content of these lines is replicated in "**Se cava un pozo para seguir con vida**"[8], and "Naturaleza Muerta", two short poems that juxtapose the image of the trenches with death. In the second one, for example, the earth is personified as an entity that opens up and eats the soldiers, thus rendering the trenches into graves, "La tierra se abría / y nos iba comiendo / Verdes manzanas machucadas / Verdes manzanas esparcidas / en la turba amarillenta". The trench as setting is highly symbolic in war poetry and we can trace this pattern back to WWI War Poets. In the Great War, trench warfare was extensively used by the Western front, causing "meaningless dying, as experienced by soldiers in trenches on both sides of the rarely changing frontlines" (Bayer in Kurtz, 2018, p. 216). These military tactics only caused more severe consequences and casualties and this aspect was vividly depicted by War Poets, as in Siegfried Sassoon's "Suicide in the Trenches", or Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting", an echo that is still present today not only because of literary tradition but also because trench warfare was implemented during the Malvinas War by both sides. Going back to the literary texts, this element of trench poetry is present throughout the book and evidenced in the poems mentioned above and in "Costumbre" and "Tregua". The former describes a scene during an air attack that took the persona by surprise, "Justo cuando los dragones / vomitaron desde el cielo / yo orinaba hacia el frente / mientras contemplaba la luna / Despreocupadamente feliz", in that moment the soldier rushes back to the safety of his trenches in a humorous way with his helmet "dancing a fox-trot". In this case, the use of humor as an effective poetic device to highlight the situation through contrast can be linked to the use of a mature defense mechanism, where the ego has the capacity to

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[8] In *Soldados*, poems with no titles are identified and listed in the index by the first line and the use of bold font, which will be used here to do the same.

perceive or express the amusing aspects of a situation, even if it is one as terrible as war. The second poem recreates an encounter between combatants belonging to opposing sides, choosing silence instead of confrontation, "Creo que él tampoco me vio / arrastrándome como una culebra / Ambos omitimos pronunciar / una palabra que aclare la cosa / (No siempre hablando se entiende la gente)". These verses construct the soldier personas amid a state of constant stress and anxiety; the war zone and trenches, their physical and emotional locus where a number of stressors are at work even though there is still no direct confrontation with the enemy.

The elements of unpredictability and chance permeate the texts and it should be remembered that they are paramount in relation to how traumas originate. The combatants have no control over the bullets, random explosions, and shell fragments that constantly threaten them. War makes life extreme and constantly reminds the participants of its instability, which in turn triggers possible traumatic responses. Going back to an idea introduced in the theoretical configurations (section 1.5.2), during wartime, the self is trying to protect itself from the hazards of battle by adopting an identity that clashes with the one forged during peace. The two are inherently different and collide in situations that are extraordinary, "not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life" (Diedrich in Kurtz, 2018, p. 88). People who live their everyday life with little worries are subjected to difficult dilemmas during war, summarized many times under the dictum "to kill or die", which posits the intrinsic contradictions between these two selves that coexist during combat. This paradoxical impulse of having to kill someone in order to survive and not do it in order to preserve or defend the peacetime self from the horrors of war is dealt with in the poems "Nevermore" and "Tenía razón Oscar Wilde". In "Nevermore", an obvious reference to E.A. Poe's homonymous poem, the soldier compares the Sea Harrier (a British jet fighter used during the war) with a black raven that wants to peck the soldiers' nests, a poetic construction that symbolizes attack and protection. The persona is ready to pluck the raven's feathers by spitting it (shooting it) showing the soldier's defensive intent. The stark contrast that the military environment creates between civilian and serviceperson causes various responses in the persona, who turns to coping mechanisms to defend himself from such threats to his mind (and body). Moreover, the individual needs to find new ways to adapt to these severe stressors if he wants to survive, in this case, by fighting back and adopting a more aggressive stance. Some other times, the soldier might not choose confrontation;

or rather, he might not even have that option as he displays passivity or dissociation. In trauma studies, this concept refers to a defense mechanism in which conflicting impulses or threatening ideas and feelings are kept apart from the rest of the psyche by overlapping the experience of war with an item that does not fit into that context, thus mixing the representations of both. This is what seems to happen in "Maol-Mhin[9]" as the fighter gazes at snowflakes that slowly fall down in the middle of a bombardment in a deep state of abstraction; a highly dangerous thing to do under attack: "Era terriblemente bello / mirar en pleno bombardeo / la suavidad con que caían / los copos de nieve". This state of paralysis or numbness exemplified with the oxymoronic expression "terriblemente bello" creates an intersection between the enemy attack and the cold weather, the persona suspended in time and mixing both conceptualizations.

The second poem paraphrases Oscar Wilde's "The Ballad of the Reading Gaol" with the lines "Uno siempre termina matando / lo que más ama" [10], which summarize the poem's content, i.e., a soldier's reflection on killing during the heat of combat, pondering on the loss of innocence and "wounding" hope ("pero acabé con la inocencia / pero malherí a la esperanza"). It is interesting to note here that the writer chooses the verb "malherí" to collocate with the abstract noun "esperanza" as if giving physical substance to suffering that originates in the mind. The fact of wounding and not killing hope is relevant because a key element that trauma studies highlights is how the extreme event comes back to haunt the survivor later on, an issue that will be analyzed in the following chapter. As Cathy Caruth observes, "the experience of the soldier faced with sudden and massive death around him, for example, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later on in repeated nightmares, is a central and recurring image of trauma in our century." (1996, p. 11).

A more intense instance of the persona describing his feelings and emotions at the time of fighting can be seen in "Con los ojos bien abiertos", "Cuando cayó el soldado Vojkovic", and "Monte Longdon". These texts illustrate the chaotic nature of battle in different but complementary ways. The former,

> Cuando uno está por matar
> es cuando más quiere la vida

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[9] "Maol-Mhin parece un topónimo oriental pero es gaélico; "la supuesta etimología de Malvina", Daniel Mesa Gancedo, University of Zaragoza, in the epilogue to the first edition of *Soldados* in 2009.
[10] "Yet each man kills the thing he loves".

Se corre se saltan cuerpos
mientras se escucha:
¡Oh! ¡Dios! ¡Ah!
como cuando se hace el amor

Corremos vaya a saber
por qué para qué para dónde
(gritos de parto gritos que parten
hacia el silencio absoluto)
y corremos como la sangre
hacia la oscuridad
sin cordón umbilical
huyendo de las vinchucas rojas
que buscan picarnos la frente

Cuando uno está por matar
puede llegar a hacerlo
o elegir esquivar el silbido
y alejarse a la orden de repliegue
o simplemente morir

Adiós soldados adiós
Ya no se debe mirar hacia atrás
Pero se mira

The first two lines present a paradoxical construction, with an emphasis on the extremes of killing and loving life. The poetic geography is frenzied and visceral with lines vividly depicting what is happening on this battlefield, juxtaposing images of death with lovemaking, giving birth, and fighting for survival. The tension of these verses is resolved to a certain extent in the last two stanzas, with the persona's thoughts regarding choices in a war zone, namely, to kill, escape, or be killed. These options are not really options in themselves, as they all belong to a spectrum of extreme life-threatening situations that involve ethical conundrums about life and death. In the adversity of such terrible scenarios, the individual may be prone to any of these possibilities, some of them more fatal than others. Once more, this takes us to the unpredictability of life in a war zone, and as Nigel Hunt states, "those best able to cope were those who could accept that life and death in battle has a lot to do with chance and one may as well be fatalistic about it. Those who failed to cope may well have developed psychological problems" (2010, p. 16). This writer and poem are pointing to the different mechanisms the ego has in order to preserve itself from the hazards of warfare, especially in connection to the element of randomness and chaos that soldiers face during an attack. At the same time, the last three lines anticipate one of the recurrent tendencies in trauma survivors, i.e., the need to revisit

the extreme even if it causes great pain and suffering, "Adiós soldados adiós / Ya no se debe mirar hacia atrás / Pero se mira".

As an aside, "Cuando cayó el soldado Vojkovic" paints a different setting. The poet decides to leave the action and the heat of battle behind in order to focus on the mainland and the repercussions of Vojkovic's death. At the precise moment when he fell, using the war lingo for soldiers killed in action, all the people and objects connected to the soldier also stopped living, "dejó de vivir el papá de Vojkovic / y la mamá de Vojkovic y la hermana / También la novia que tejía / y destejía desolaciones de lana". The last two lines are a reference to Penelope from *The Odyssey*, an archetype of the female waiting for her husband or companion to come from war. The poem goes on to feature the soldier's neighborhood, pet, friends, schoolmates, and even the trees on the streets. Trauma in this case can be located in a different way, mainly in how the poetic voice witnesses a fellow soldier dying and the consequences it has on the mainland. The poem is relevant for it takes the reader to the sociocultural context of the Malvinas War and the impact it had on the civilians, therefore we need to remember that for trauma studies, war is a collective extreme event that not only affects the soldiers who are at the frontlines but to different degrees, the people left behind. An interesting thing to mention here is the biographical information available in the interview found in *Soldados*' booklet, which reinforces the idea of the poetic persona experiencing guilt, an idea related to the concept of "survivor guilt" and considered in the following chapter,

> Mencionaste a Pedro Vojkovic, a quien le dedicás un poema imaginando qué pasó cuando él cayó en la guerra. ¿Era amigo tuyo del barrio?
>
> A Pedro lo conocía desde antes de la colimba, vivía a media cuadra de mi casa en City Bell. Cuando volví de Malvinas fue bastante tremendo porque veía a los viejos y me agarraba una culpa enorme, me preguntaba "¿Por qué yo estoy acá y el no?". Una de las causas por las que me fui de City Bell fue esa. Era que faltaba algo, una ausencia demasiado presente. A él lo conocía del barrio, no éramos amigos, pero sí conocidos. (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 49)

The last poem of his triad, "Monte Longdon", is probably the one with more potential to analyze in relation to trauma studies. The poem is one long stanza with no line division,

> es como un corso es como si fuera el último febrero desde una vitrola oxidada canta castillo siga el baile una mujer con rostro de ibis pasea en el chingui-chingui llueven serpientes de papel la avenida con lamparitas de colores gualeguaychú todo nevado pero no le parece raro porque sabe que le tocaba mirar hacia el frente y ganas de tomarse una cerveza y un cabeceo

y otro y otro más y ahí está buscando a la marcela entre la gente pero una estatua lo detiene le besa la frente la bufanda se le escapa como un pájaro ciego se va enganchando entre las ramas se deshilacha escocesa en el cielo y llega un frío oscuro oscuro oscuro y ya no puede enterarse de aquel filo que se le apoya en la garganta justo cuando se encienden los primeros alaridos de la noche

First of all, the title is the name of a mountain on Malvinas Islands and also the place where "The Battle of Mount Londgon" took place on the 11th and 12th of June, considered the most important battle of the war because of its intensity, face-to-face confrontations and the significance of the mountain as a strategic point. This text is interesting as it is not visually organized like a traditional poem but rather it looks like a paragraph. The content of the poem is manifold, as the poetic voice goes from one thought to another with no clear indication or punctuation marks to help or guide the reader through the ideas addressed. What is clear though is the fact that the whole poem is a simile where the speaker is trying to put into words what he is experiencing at that place in the islands. The shattered mind is mirrored in the use of fragmented language, with breaks between images, metaphors and memories from the past that are interacting with the present events. The poetic persona seems to be in a state of trance, where he is unable to respond. Brooke (2017) states that traumatic experiences fragment the psyche and the process of recovering them entails non-linear forms of narrative taught by modernism, for example, writers like Virginia Woolf or James Joyce experimented with language in order to represent the subjective mind and imitate how thoughts, feelings and emotions run rampant in pre-discursive stages. The main results were modes of narration known today as interior monologue, free-indirect style, and stream of consciousness—the latter, first introduced by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890). Following this thread of thought, "Monte Longdon" replicates the modernist techniques of turning toward "the interiority that can be shown through focalized consciousness" (Bayer in Kurtz, 2018) by showing how memories from the past are made manifest in relation to objects and events belonging to the soldier's life. This aspect of poems like "Monte Longdon" and others[11] where punctuation also contributes to the idea of representing a fragmented or troubled mind are very much connected to the writers' stylistic preferences. As we will see, McNally also has some poems where the persona is trying to access memory by employing certain techniques that can be linked to experimentation. Reina

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[11] In "Bombardeo" or "Hoy la luna parece", for example, the images used by the poet also seem to imitate how a shattered mind works, but they are organized into stanzas.

van der Wiel states that "the traumatic aesthetic is uncompromisingly avant-garde: experimental, fragmented, refusing the consolations of beautiful form and suspicious of familiar representation and narrative conventions" (2014, p. 16). This statement is probably too categorical for the poems under discussion because most of them do not follow experimental forms in order to represent traumatic situations. Either way, it is important to highlight cases like "Monte Longdon" because by echoing the stream of consciousness mode of writing, this text borrows from psychology's free association, that is

> a basic process in psychoanalysis and other forms of psychodynamic psychotherapy, in which the patient is encouraged to verbalize without censorship or selection whatever thoughts come to mind, no matter how embarrassing, illogical, or irrelevant. The object is to allow unconscious material, such as inhibited thoughts and emotions, traumatic experiences, or threatening impulses, to come to the surface where they can be interpreted. Free association is also posited to help the patient discharge one of the feelings that have given this material excessive control over him or her. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 435)

In light of this definition, one can say that the poetic speaker is somehow following the practice of free association, jumping from one idea or image after the other, trying to put into words the traumatic events he is going through in an effort to minimize the negative effects on his psychological wellbeing. The use of such modes of writing is quite effective at constructing and showing the sudden shifts of perspective, gaps in linearity and dissociation present in the troubled mind, and because of that, analyzing these occurrences can prove beneficial in relation to the role of language and its potential to represent traumatic experiences.

To summarize, Caso Rosendi's poems analyzed so far deal with the portrayal of different facets of extreme conditions that cause intense physical and emotional stress, thus locating the poetic persona in a stage where trauma starts to develop. The scenario of war and violence is a suitable place for the poetic representation of traumatic responses to originate as the soldier constantly tries to adapt to his dangerous environments by resorting to varied coping mechanisms. In the texts analyzed, the poetic voice tries to shield from pain in different ways, sometimes refusing to fight back, others just adopting a more aggressive attitude, or just being unable to respond to his immediate environment. This identity forged by the soldier takes shape throughout the work in poems that refer to

the war experience and which give an account of what it means to live – and survive – in a state of constant stress, anxiety and danger.

3.3. *Screaming in Silence*

McNally's *Screaming in Silence* is made up of 122 poems and a short story. As introduced in the previous chapter, not all of the poems deal with the War of Malvinas, but rather focus on other conflicts like the Afghanistan, Iraq, or Vietnam War. Another group of poems does not fit into the classifications of the recurrent themes, i.e., representations of trauma during and after the war. This set of poems has also been excluded, for example, "My Dad", which deals with family relationships, "Hair Gel", a poetic response to London's 2005 terrorist attacks, or "Over There", where the persona openly criticizes PM Tony Blair and affairs connected to the oil industry. After this process of selection, the poems that remain for analysis amount to 60 approximately, and half of them can be listed under the trope of traumatic representations during war for this chapter.

As we have seen, a common trait of war poetry is firsthand experiences of war and *Screaming in Silence* is not an exception. Most of the texts found under this motif deal with representations of war and its participants as in the case of "Mud", a short poem that immediately bares similarities with Caso Rosendi's trench-warfare verses, "Bastard mud / Human soup / Sucking me down / Losing my boots / Liquid hell / Putrid smell / Cold and heavy / Can you tell / A sea of men / An ocean of shit / Can't seem to swim / I think I've been hit". Once more, poetry that features this physical space describes the dangerous and unsanitary conditions soldiers lived in during a conflict. Far from a place of refuge, they are examples of the combatants' discomfort and uneasiness, as these lines demonstrate. Mud is given several negative connotation words, like "bastard", "putrid", and "liquid hell", a metaphor that is repeated in other texts by the author. "All that Glitters is Not Gold" also has a battlefield as background, and it can be linked to Caso Rosendi's "Mahol-Mhin" in the way they both construct the persona in a state of numbness, unable to act under attack. McNally writes "All that glitters is not gold / Just like enemy tracer rounds / They can hypnotise you as they fly / Seeming to have no sound", perhaps referring to the soldier's senses being compromised in combat and the imminent danger they are subjected to if they are not alert and aware of their surroundings. Another poem

that bears similarities with "Mahol-Mhin" is "When the Snow Fell" but in this case, only the environment is reminiscent of Caso Rosendi's poem, "Open-mouthed / Tingling snow on my tongue / Almost time to advance / When the snow fell". The persona is about to experience combat and combines the refrain "When the snow fell" with praying "Hail Mary mother of Grace / Blessed art thou / When the snow fell". Going back to "All that Glitters is Not Gold", the poem also focuses on snapshots from the battlefield, "Flashes illuminating your mates / Sustained fire to the enemy front / Sending your foe to their fate", a pattern that the writer duplicates many times in poems like "Old Young Men", "My Friend the Dark", "Violence" and "Rubicon".

In "Old Young Men", the poetic speaker depicts an encounter between former army mates. At the beginning, the poetic "I" recognizes signs of unrest in his comrade via identification, i.e., "a defense mechanism in which the individual incorporates aspects of his or her objects inside the ego to alleviate the anxiety associated with object loss or to reduce hostility between himself or herself and the object." (VandenBos, 2015, p. 519). The lines "I saw you smile / But it didn't hide the fear in your eyes / Checking our weapons again / No nasty surprise" point to this identification and make the speaker part of the experience by including himself with the plural possessive pronoun "our". This in turn triggers the shared memory of war that illustrates the fear mentioned in the second line: "In the mist of the chopper did rise / Will we meet again? / Nobody knows / Then it was my turn / Off to war we go / Both of us young men", lines full of uncertainty and questions as war clouds the future. In the last part of the poem, the scene shifts to the present and establishes a stark contrast in the participants' physical and emotional constitutions,

> When the guns fell silent
> We met again
> Not recognizing each other
> As bearded skinny old men
> Our smiles had gone
> A different look in our eyes
> No hugs or handshakes
> Nervously staring at the skies
> We did our duty
> Made it through
> Two young old men
> The class of 82.

These last lines tackle the issue of change and transformation in the soldiers after surviving war, illustrated with the lines "Made it through", which once more support the claim of the unpredictability of war. The fact that the voices cannot smile anymore, or even engage in simple physical contact are indicators of traumatic responses. In the present, they are "two young old men", an oxymoronic phrase that points to how traumas affect memory by constantly resurfacing the traumatic event. Moreover, the line "Nervously staring at the skies" exemplifies a possible symptom that originates as the result of having experienced an extreme event that had a profound impact on the self's psychological make-up. The concepts linked to this situation are hypervigilance, and possibly arousal and will be dealt with in the following chapter, as they can be located in the motif of the consequences of war. In any case, this poem mostly deals with what is happening to the individual on the battlefield and thus is relevant for this chapter, and more importantly, it is thematically linked with "Rubicon". One more thing to consider from "Old Young Men" is the explicit reference to the war with the last line, "The class of 82".

In "My Friend the Dark", the persona is waiting for nighttime on a trench, again a place symbolizing confinement and death instead of protection and comfort, "Misty droplets of rain settle on my face like a wet mask / Slightly to the side of the grave-like trench I lie / Waiting for her to come, my friend the dark". The speaker personifies darkness as a female presence that aids him in such dangerous moments, "When I was but an infant the dark made me scared / Now she is my ally in this game of death". The metaphor of war as a game is very strong within the context of this poem and contrasts with the tension created throughout the lines. This tension reaches a climax in the last part, "I hear a metallic click please let it be my relief / Or could it be someone else / With his friend the dark?" where the persona is uncertain about what is about to happen. Again, this stresses the unpredictability of life military people face and it should be noted that in these cases even death is preferable to extreme suffering and pain. The open ending then, highlights the element of chance during a battle, a stressor that has already been introduced in this chapter and is repeated throughout these collections of poems.

"Violence" differs from the previous poem because, in these lines, the persona creates a soldier who shows no signs of conflict with his peace self. Quite on the contrary, he is depicted as a warrior who seeks empowerment during a battle. The line "Heart beating magazines full adrenaline rush almost ecstatic" clearly position the persona in a

state of excitement and hyperaggressivity, "an increased tendency to express anger and hostility in action, as in violent and assaultive behavior" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 510). He gathers energy from his companions and feels safe among them, "Not alone my brothers here, no fear no fear / I'm in good company, the company of men / My mates my pisshead nut cases / Dance of The Flaming Arseholes / Zulu Warriors / The Sons of Britain". The reference to Zulu Warriors, known for their ferocity in battle indicates the current state of mind of this soldier persona. It would seem that the identity forged by military times is taking over the one forged in civilian life. It is important to note here that poems like "Violence" are highly uncommon in these poetry books because most of them emphasize the extreme situations that harm the soldiers' bodies and minds during combat.

Returning to the theme of change present in "Old Young Men", the idea of transformation pervades the verses of "Rubicon". First of all, the title symbolizes a moment of great importance, a limit or boundary that once crossed indicates a point of no return. The poetic persona finds himself under combat, surrounded by life-threatening situations where even the cold weather tests his strength in the simile "The cold cuts me like a knife / Eyes sealed shut with frosty tears / Shaking with cold and fear". The symbolic replica of the Rubicon River is recreated on the islands ("misty Falklands Mountains"), the geographical place where this change is taking place as the poet himself proclaims "In this hour of transformation / My green military Pupa shedding its innocence / To become a man, a Warrior". The metaphor used here is very interesting if we consider that the external stressors of warfare are enabling future traumatic responses. Like a pupa, trauma is in a dormant state and starting to develop. In this scenario, the soldier is not able to cope or defend himself from the threats of combat, and fear takes over, "But still the boy inside me looks for his Mother / She will never judge / Unlike my peers who will judge how I kill / Or be killed". It is worth noting how McNally capitalizes "Warrior" and "Mother", creating categories of universalism related to the fighter and the maternal figure symbolizing protection and shelter from external menaces. Another thing to mention here is the concept of peer pressure hinted at by the writer. The term refers to

> the influence exerted by a peer group on its individual members to fit in with or conform to the group's norms and expectations. Peer pressure may have positive socialization value but may also have negative consequences for mental or physical health. Also called peer-group pressure, [i.e.], a group of individuals who share one or more characteristics, such as age, social status, economic status, occupation, or education. Members of a peer group typically interact with each other on a level of equality and

exert influence on each other's attitudes, emotions, and behavior. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 773)

In the military, training introduces the prospective soldier into a context of competition and extreme discipline, many times allowing for traumatic responses even before real combat during wartimes. As Tony McNally narrates in the prologue to *Screaming in Silence*,

> Somebody asked me the other day "When were you the most terrified during your military service?" I thought for a second and then it came to me it was during my basic training as a sixteen-year-old Junior Gunner with the Royal Artillery. Most would obviously think it was during the Falklands War or Northern Ireland, but no it was during those informative years straight from a school classroom into the harsh discipline and brutality of the British Army. (McNally, 2016, p. 9)

The abuse of power in the military and the unnecessary brutality tend to desensitize soldiers in order to prepare them for the horrors of war. Many times, the soldiers themselves are the ones who exercise peer pressure as a result of competitive training, tradition, and macho culture,

> Generally, if someone experienced symptoms in battle they were usually seen as cowards, and would often be executed. This applies across cultures and across historical time periods. Breaking down in battle has always been seen as a weakness on the part of the individual rather than as a sensible reaction to extraordinarily frightening events […]. Even now, when we have a hundred years of psychological theory which conclusively proves the general nature of the traumatic response, breaking down in battle is still seen as a weakness. This is perhaps inevitable given that soldiers have to be trained to fight in very dangerous conditions. Without this training, without the macho culture, it would be impossible for anyone to go to battle – a classic paradox for the armed forces. (Hunt, 2010, p. 18)

The fear of looking weak or being judged by other fellow soldiers during military conflicts constitutes a type of peer-group pressure illustrated in "Rubicon" and adds up to the list of stressors found in these extreme scenarios. The "classic paradox for the armed forces" Nigel Hunt talks about is probably the one that creates more conflicts in the soldier's mind. This collision of the peace self and the war self, observed in Caso Rosendi's productions, is evident in *Screaming in Silence* as well. Following this line of reasoning, we can begin to notice that both poets adopt a clear anti-war stance, most of the times constructing poetic expressions that account for the soldier's suffering and intense life experiences during wartime. As the persona stresses the negative effects of battle on his psyche and body, it becomes evident that he is having an inner fight between

his past self and the one forged for armed conflicts, trying to survive by developing a repertoire of defense mechanisms. Going back to "Rubicon", the mechanism put into test here is the one of resilience,

> the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. A number of factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, predominant among them (a) the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world, (b) the availability and quality of social resources, and (c) specific coping strategies. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 910)

The soldier persona in this poem is unsuccessfully coping with his current situation. He is in a state of fright, with added pressure from his peers, in severe cold weather and under life-threatening conditions. He knows he has "To cross the Rubicon / Enter the church of the brotherhood", metaphors that like the "green military Pupa" point to maturing and growing up in this context. In concordance with such extreme traumatic situations, at the end of the poem the persona seems unable to fully mature or cross the Rubicon, "Inky blackness slows my breathing down / For fear my enemies will hear it / As my stag is finished / I crawl back to my chrysalis / To dream of England". Taking the image of the chrysalis, we can say that the soldier goes back to a state of stasis, in the same way his psyche is also developing future traumatic responses. This metaphor is quite relevant in the context of this thesis, as in this chapter we are witnessing how trauma is quiescent or in a state of transformation, i.e., it can be considered to be a Pupa or chrysalis. In the following chapter, where the representations of trauma deal with the aftermath of war, we can say that the chrysalis already metamorphosed into a butterfly or moth; in other words, the extreme situations the soldier went through developed into full-fledge traumas.

It should be noted that the "green military Pupa" in "Rubicon" is also a reference to a soldier's sleeping bag, an object that is addressed in the poem "Green Maggot". In its verses, the persona describes the protective nature of the sleeping bag and the comfort it gives him, "The war rages on and the cold bites my soul / My fingers are numb and I laugh at my blood / But I know I will be ok in the ice tonight / I've got my green maggot". This text includes strong images from the battlefield like "I see my friend die his brains vaporize in the sky / I run I jump and I scream and I cry" and "The cold cuts my face but I care not a jot", but the soldier seems not to care that much because he has a "green maggot" to go back to. Here, the metaphor of the green maggot represents protection and

shelter from the hazards of war, a coping mechanism that the soldier adopts by giving this object a higher protective status than it actually has. This is illustrated with the lines "I'm back in the womb snug cozy and content", an image that goes back to the maternal womb as the symbol of ultimate protection, a state prior to the loss of innocence. This concept is known as womb fantasy, i.e., "in psychoanalytic theory, the regressive fantasy of returning to the womb or existing in the womb, usually expressed in symbolic form, such as living underwater or being alone in a cavern" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 1160). In this case, the fantasy is embodied with the sleeping bag as the place of comfort, protection, and warmth, an idea reinforced with the last lines "I slip into dreamland full of warm pillows and safety / How I love my green maggot". As introduced in the first chapter, this regressive fantasy is part of the individual's defense mechanisms, simply put, usually unconscious strategies that the ego employs in order to prevent anxiety or harm. The reactions range from mature (humor, sublimation, anticipation) to immature ones, like regression, dissociation, displacement, or isolation. In the texts analyzed in this chapter so far, the coping mechanisms the soldier persona adopts tend to be located in the immature spectrum as already discussed with previous poems. Going back to "Rubicon" and "Green Maggot", the images of the "chrysalis" or "womb" indicate that the poetic voice is probably employing regression as the main defense mechanism,

> a return to a prior, lower state of cognitive, emotional, or behavioral functioning. This term is associated particularly with psychoanalytic theory, denoting a situation in which the individual reverts to immature behavior or to an earlier stage of psychosexual development when threatened with overwhelming external problems or internal conflicts. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 995)

Hostility and ego-threatening experiences in war are a constant. Surrounded by dangerous situations and extreme events that remind the participants that they might suddenly die, the persona in these poems constructs the fantasy of protection by going back to a prior state of stability and safety.

One last poem that features change and growing up is aptly named "Coming of Age", which mixes scenes from a battle that recently ended with the theme of loss of innocence,

> The guns fell silent his ears ringing like church bells
> Warm sunlight hit his face like a smile from God
> The mist of battle drifted over his friends, no one spoke
> Filling his lungs with air he could taste the cordite
> Eyes stinging, he thought of nothing

He was alive
He was Twenty years' old
A tear trickled down the side of his face
He wiped it away and pushed on up the hill.

After the battle is over, the soldier surveys the scenario and witnesses its consequences. He is relieved to be alive feeling the warmth of the sun comparing it to "a smile from God", but the aftertaste is bitter and already showing that something is not quite right. His eyes hurt, his mind is devoid of meaning and the smell of cordite is inside his body. At the young age of 22, the soldier has survived a war and condenses these extreme life experiences by shedding a single tear. This text can be read as an example of resilience and surviving but in the context of trauma studies, the persona is displaying resilience up to a certain extent and more probably repression by wiping the tear away and going forward without really questioning what happened on the battlefield and what is taking place in his mind. The coming of age in this case points to the loss of innocence by suppressing thoughts that might be damaging for the mind, a concept known as repression,

> in classical psychoanalytic theory and other forms of depth psychology, the basic defense mechanism that excludes painful experiences and unacceptable impulses from consciousness. Repression operates on an unconscious level as a protection against anxiety produced by objectionable sexual wishes, feelings of hostility, and ego-threatening experiences and memories of all kinds. It also comes into play in many other forms of defense, as in denial, in which individuals avoid unpleasant realities by first trying to repress them and then negating them when repression fails. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 907)

Whether the soldier is actually in denial about what took place on that battlefield is not completely evident but there are signs that indicate he is in a troubled state of mind, even more so if we consider that most of the other poems in this collection tend to show the soldier's psychological wounds during or after war.

Moving forward, in "Tumbledown" and "A British Soldier Died on this Hill Today" the author pays homage to the fallen soldiers. The first poem takes place during the Battle of Mount Tumbledown as the author himself comments on a footnote: "Tumbledown is a mountain in that we saw fierce combat in the Falkland War". In the first lines, the poetic speaker begins using first-person pronouns, "Come keep me company a while / Upon this mountain I lay / I'll make you aware / Of the minefields around / Trip wires and booby traps / I was killed on this hill / There's the hole on my

smock". This speaker is a ghost now but he has the company of his fellow soldiers who also died on that hill, "I am not alone". After this poetic comment, the persona adopts plural pronouns to indicate that he is now speaking for all the soldiers who fell, "We got the top / There's no foe that we fear". Throughout these lines, the persona addresses the reader and asks for company, sharing food, talking, and then remembrance, a common trope in war poems: "Tell your pals about us / We will never leave our post / Do our duty we must / The sun is almost down / Your path downwards is clear / I hope you come back one day / To visit us here". Memory is also the theme of "A British Soldier Died on this Hill Today", and the overall tone, in this case, is of sadness and waste. The persona laments the loss of a young soldier and mentions elements from his life that are affected by his death, "A Mother now weeps / Warrior now rest / He died a soldier / The job he adored / His Grandad so proud / Sister in shock / Oh why at nineteen? / Why wasn't he spared?". This poem reminds us of Caso Rosendi's "Cuando Cayó el Soldado Vojkovic" as the focus lies on what the soldiers leave behind. Verses like these move away from the usual locus of the battlefield as the central space of tension that can eventually lead to traumatic responses. Once more, they take the readers into the sociocultural context by reminding us that the consequences of war do not end with the soldier's death but affect everything related to him.

One last set of poems from *Screaming in Silence* feature soldiers on their last moments or in near-death situations, typically remembering things from their lives, uttering their last words. In "K.I.A.", for example, we know the soldier is dying because of the title, which stands for "killed in action", and the lines "Damp wet grass / Peaty earthy smell / Sleep is flirting with me again / Summer day dreams / Warmth spreading through my body / Tuck me in Mother / I love you too / In the summer of 82". Here, the persona is poetically describing his immediate environment while remembering or dreaming of warmer days, for it is summertime in the Northern hemisphere. The metaphor of sleep flirting with him to indicate that his life is ending is overcome with the tender image of the mother tucking him in on his last moments. Once more, with the last line, the writer clarifies that this moment is taking place on the Islands during the war. "Mother Dear Mother" thematically continues the death of the soldier by depicting him in extreme suffering and fright,

> Mother help me please I'm cold and hurt and bleeding,
> I'm all alone and lost, please take me home dear Mother.

It's getting dark I'm in trouble now,
I'm sorry Mother; I will eat my supper and go to bed,
It's hurting a lot dear Mother
Don't tell Father he will be mad,
My trousers are ripped and my head is bleeding, please sing me a lullaby;
I'm your baby boy dear Mother.
My eyes are open but I cannot see,
Why do you leave me here to cry?
I love you Mother.
The pain is so bad I cannot breathe,
Please bathe my wounds and make it go dear Mother.
I hear you Mother I knew you would come, please dry my tears,
I love you so dear Mother.
"Sergeant you've missed a body over here, bag it and tag it."

The scenario painted in this text is bleak and straightforward; the soldier is in great pain, afraid, and vulnerable. Images from his childhood come to his mind as he suffers, remembering events related to good behavior when he was a kid like eating his supper and going to bed. Once more, the poetic speaker seems to be in a state of regression, reverting to a child-like behavior to protect himself, "I'm your baby boy dear Mother". The soldier is pleading for his mother's help and the repetition of the word "Mother" creates an atmosphere of pity and helplessness. The capitalization of Mother could again highlight a universal category of motherhood as a safe haven or even symbolize Mother Mary in this context. Unfortunately, in this case, the soldier persona passes away, a fact that is brutally summarized in the last line, uttered by a military person probably surveying the aftermath of a battle.

"Angel's Wings" addresses the loss of the soldier by employing the images of the guardian spirit and rising up to heaven, "Tears of pure joy so warm so loving / My Mother welcomes me, I can smell her scent / Rising up above the battlefield / My comrades smile / My enemies smile / Flying home on the wings of Angels." The combatant is in a state of pure happiness and even his enemies smile when they witness him going, for this reason, this poem is very different from the previous ones. Most of the times, McNally and Caso Rosendi's verses depict war from the perspectives discussed so far and not so much from a point of view which could be seen as idealizing death during war. Either way, this poem is the exception and was discussed so because of it.

On a final note, "Kill Die" presents a case of interest for this thesis. The text consists of seven uppercase lines,

COCK RIFLE SET SIGHTS AIM
CENTRE OF THE VISIBLE MASS, `BANG`
CENTRE OF THE VISIBLE MASS `BANG`
CENTRE OF THE VISIBLE MASS `BANG`
CENTRE OF THE VISIBLE MASS `BANG`
CENTRE OF THE VISIBLE MASS `BANG`
CENTRE OF VIS……….

This poem stands out because of its use of punctuation, capitalization, and visual structure (layout), which could be regarded as a shape-poem[12] if we consider that its content is shooting the center of an object and the text is organized into one block stanza. Even more so if we think that the figures or pictures "made by shape-poems are schematic, lacking visual perspective, and subordinate to their constituent words" (Lennard, 2006, p. 93). There is general agreement that capitalized words signal emphasis on part of the speaker and even saying things aloud or shouting, which is what seems to be taking place in "Kill Die". The first line introduces a soldier getting ready for action, locking and loading his weapon. The repetition of the phrase "CENTRE OF THE VISIBLE MASS `BANG`" triggers a kind of obsessive-compulsive behavior in the persona, with the ending onomatopoeia reinforcing this idea. The whole poem could be read as an example of automatization, where the persona developed a skill or habit to a point at which it becomes routine and required little if any conscious effort (VandenBos, 2015). The soldier is closer to the role of a robot (or automaton) and not a human being. The repetition of this phrase and the mentioning of the rifle

> metonymically represent the senseless obedience that enables the subaltern discipline on which military conflicts rely […]. [S]oldiers were badly scarred by the very inhumanity of military routines, which form the basis for all forms of battlefield atrocities. In stressing the principle of automatized drills, the [poem] also evokes trauma's reliance on belatedness and compulsory repetition. (Bayer in Kurtz, 2018, p. 218)

In this case, the routine and numbing repetition of military drills became embedded within the soldier's psyche. This sort of twisted military mantra completely neutralizes the soldier's reasoning processes by turning him into a mindless machine, ready to "kill/die", as the title suggests. There is a connection to Caso Rosendi's "Monte Longdon" in the way the writers use punctuation and layout in order to convey their ideas, but McNally's poem is not an example of a stream-of consciousness-like technique. The

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[12] "one whose text is organised on the page to depict a shape, or otherwise to involve pictorial as well as verbal representation ; also known as *technopaignia*, *carmina figurate*, and concrete poems". (Lennard, 2006, p. 103)

poem bears a resemblance or echo though, as the soldier appears to be in a trance, or stuck at one mental process, pronouncing a phrase repeatedly without an external driving force.

Like *Soldados*, McNally's poems in this section depict soldiers trying to survive and adapt to the extreme circumstances of warfare. Most of the times, the persona is facing imminent danger or is under attack while trying to fight back and resist. These moments of severe psychological shock signal the beginning of trauma, which will fully emerge after a gap in time.

3.4. Other Dimensions of Trauma

This chapter section analyzes and compares poems that can be located during an armed conflict but that deal with different aspects of warfare. The texts listed here tend to focus on the soldiers' daily lives when they are not fighting, opting for activities such as enjoying a drink, having a laugh, and sharing stories.

The first poem from Gustavo Caso Rosendi's *Soldados* is called "Momento". As the name suggests, it depicts a moment where a group of soldiers drink scotch ale while listening to music, "Es el atardecer y en la única radio / de las islas están pasando *Let it Be* / Bebemos y reímos / porque mientras en el continente / lo único que explota es el rock nacional / y Charly pide que no bombardeen Buenos / Aires / ¡aquí los milicos pasan The Beatles!". These lines shed light on the sociocultural context at the time regarding music and introduce a contrast between national and foreign cultural productions. When the war broke out in April, the military government decided to ban playing music in English. In this way, many of the songs that had been censored a few years earlier were played back on the radio, thus fostering national artists like Luis Albert Spinetta, Charly García, and León Gieco, among others. The use of the word "milicos" is important because it is a subtle way of showing the writer is critical of the military by employing a derogative term frequently used in Argentina and it takes the reader to the broader historical context of the dictatorship. The phrase "Charly pide que no bombardeen Buenos / Aires" is a direct reference to the musician's song and an anachronism because it was released in the album *Yendo de la Cama al Living* in October of that year. Either way, Caso Rosendi uses it as a symbol for the change that was taking place in the 80s,

en el libro aparecen otros músicos Charly (García), por ejemplo, por el tema No bombardeen Buenos Aires. Lo elegí como para establecer un ícono, para mostrar lo que estaba pasando con la música en ese momento y desarrollar una idea a partir de eso. […] También aparece Let it be (The Beatles) en un poema donde cuento algo cierto, algo que pasó tal cual está dicho ahí. (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 52)

The poem ends with a bracketed stanza "(Cae una lenta llovizna / una verdad silenciosa / junto a la melancólica metralla / de las latas vacías)". The use of punctuation here is used as a reminder of the broader context the soldiers are immersed in. Even though they can have fun, listen to music, and have a few drinks, they are still in action and danger is a constant threat. Something similar takes place in "The Criac" by Tony McNally, as the persona constructs a gathering of soldiers before a battle. The title is "a term for news, gossip, fun, entertainment, and enjoyable conversation, particularly prominent in Ireland" (Oxford English Dictionary), which is what it is happening as evidenced in the lines "Men together / Hot tea sipped / Tales of romance / Random chat / Football / Fighting / More sex / No eye contact". A tone of intimacy among the soldiers can be perceived as they share stories and drinks but the war intrudes from the beginning to remind them and the reader that this gathering is about to stop, "Subdued mumbled laughter / Weapons held close / Ammo checked / Macho men / Preparing for history / Then it began". These poems contribute to the theme or motif of unpredictability but in a different way, as the servicemen are enjoying themselves or passing the time under such extreme circumstances. "War & Peace" can be regarded as a follow up to "The Criac", but the conversation is strictly warfare, "Salt spray / Fresh air / PT with my mates / GPMG drill / War or peace debates" which ends up being "War or War debates" as they get ready for combat. The acronyms PT stands for physical training and GMPG for general-purpose machine gun, technical terms used by the writer to show his knowledge of military lexicon, an aesthetic choice that will be considered in the following chapter.

"Brew Time" and "Una receta para el Gato Dumas" are very similar, especially in the way both authors poetically describe a situation related to food/beverages. In the former, the poetic voice expresses content with the current situation, "I have never enjoyed a cup of tea more / Than with your mates on a hill when you're knackered and sore / The pain goes away with the jokes and cracks". The stress of combat is mitigated with the help of camaraderie, i.e., "goodwill and lighthearted rapport between friends or members of a social group, especially of a military unit. Camaraderie is an important component of the morale, unit cohesion, and esprit de corps required in forming and

sustaining unit dynamics. It can also serve as a buffer in protecting members of a unit" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 154). This definition points to the importance of bonding with your peers during wartime in order to shield yourself from possible stressors. In this case, the soldier uses tea as a symbol for sharing with others, and he even states that he would like to be at the frontline in order to brew tea first, "How you wish you were at the front like the Corporal speed freak / He'll be first with his hexy[13] when he gets to the peak". In the case of Caso Rosendi's "Una receta para el Gato Dumas", the poem follows the format of a recipe in order to give instructions,

> Primero: robarse un paquete de fideos
> del cuartel "Moody Brook"
> Segundo: ponerlos a hervir en el casco
> con agua de una charca cercana
> El secreto es el condimento
> (la pintura va saltándose del acero
> a medida que se recalienta)
> Tercero: servir en marmita
> preferentemente abollada y tiznada
> Cuarto: sentado sobre una piedra
> comer lentamente como si fuese
> el último bocado que se vaya a saborear

Through irony, the author depicts a humorous situation carried out in four steps, mainly by stealing goods from Moody Brook[14] barracks and then preparing a meal using things from the limited resources available (water from a pond, a secret spice, a run-down pan, etc.). The reference to the famous chef Carlos Alberto Dumas Lagos adds up to the humor found in the main verse. This text shows us that the author's voice "no teme, incluso, recurrir al humor para hablar de aquello que no se deja decir con facilidad; así lo hace en los poemas Costumbre, Momento y Una receta para el gato Dumas (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 22)". This quote is relevant because it makes the use of humor evident, a very important coping mechanism,

> the capacity to perceive or express the amusing aspects of a situation.
> There is little agreement about the essence of humor and the reasons one
> laughs or smiles at jokes or anecdotes […]. U.S. writer Max Eastman
> (1883– 1969) saw humor as "playful pain," a way of taking serious things
> lightly and thereby triumphing over them. Sigmund Freud called attention
> to the many jokes (especially those having to do with sex and hostility)
> that enable individuals to give free expression to forbidden impulses and

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[13] According to McNally's comments in this poem, "a hexy is a small metal stove used for cooking".

[14] Moody Brooks/Arroyo Caprichoso is a watercourse located to the Northeast of Puerto Argentino.

> explained laughter in terms of a release of the energy normally employed in keeping them out of consciousness. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 507)

The use of humor in the books accounts for examples of mature defense mechanisms the persona resorts to in order to diminish harm to his psychological make-up. Together with camaraderie and other coping strategies already discussed, they belong to the repertoire of possibilities an individual can adopt in the face of external stressors in order to lessen the impact of possible traumatic responses.

As we have seen, the poems dealt with in this section show the other side of living in a war zone. As a group, they highlight positive values and experiences shared by soldiers as they undergo the horrors of war together and strengthen their relationships. By having a good time, soldiers create stronger safety nets, reinforce group unity and establish supportive relationships that in many cases outlast the war, an idea expressed in many of the poems analyzed in the following chapter. There are even instances of humor, used mainly as a mature defense mechanism against the extreme experiences that war causes on the individual's psyche, an idea that suggests that trauma can be redirected into new places.

3.5. Conclusions

As we have seen, the texts analyzed in this chapter show how the persona is poetically constructed in a locus of constant vulnerability and imminent danger. It is under these circumstances that the soldier faces life-threatening situations that remind him of the unpredictability of life, not knowing if a comrade or himself will be subject to an untimely death or suffer from a serious injury. As a result, the poetical representations of the soldier undergo a transformation as his pre-war identity clashes with the one reshaped to fight. In this process of radical change, the individual starts to develop defensive responses of the ego in order to survive and preserve his psyche from the devastating consequences of collective violence. Put differently, the poems present external stressors, all of which are products of human efforts encompassing overwhelming experiences for the mind and body. Moreover, even before war, prospective soldiers undergo harsh training that introduces them to severe regimes of pressure and psychological strain. Both McNally and Caso Rosendi commented on the negative impact of training before real combat in the prologue to his book and the interview, respectively. By comparing the

author's literary productions, we were able to identify the several stressors at work in a combat zone and the impact they have on the soldier initially because trauma is a deferred response, as we will see in the following chapter. In the hostile environment of warfare, the soldier can be subject to a wide range of traumatic events like enduring hardships in the trenches, witnessing a fellow soldier die, peer-group pressure, and experiencing life-threatening situations, among others. In the case of the poetry books, Caso Rosendi and McNally's texts present soldiers facing near-death experiences and even fatal ones where the poetic speaker reflects about his life in his last moments, typically going back to childhood memories and the comfort of the maternal figure resorting to the defense mechanism of regression. Some coping responses can be considered more mature than others, for example, the use of humor and irony to transform extreme events and resist them better. Some other times, the combatants are displayed in situations where they bond and share good moments, a very important process where morale is boosted and group cohesion, enhanced. These strategies of survival account for new paths the soldiers can take in order to reorient their traumatic responses and attribute new significance to them.

In conclusion, the poems point to the portrayal of trauma as in embryo, i.e., trauma is still in a developmental stage because the soldier persona is undergoing through a myriad of severe experiences that have the potential to scar his psyche and develop into full-fledged traumas in the future. Stated otherwise, the writers reproduce signs of trauma that deal with the soldier's state of suffering and that will manifest symptoms in his mind and body eventually. Because they are in a state of dormancy or rather, the self cannot yet come to terms with what is happening to him, the symptoms will not come fully into effect until later on, mainly through intrusive thoughts, haunting visions and other coping mechanisms that are analyzed in chapter 4. Traumatic responses then are inactive, and the representations of trauma through poetry suggest the transmission of a latent, traumatogenic significance, an uncomprehended but devastating "meaning" that will lie dormant within the soldier until a second event retrospectively determines its effects (Forter in Balaev, 2014).

CHAPTER 4. POSTBELLUM: THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

4.1. Introduction

The concept of trauma is multilayered and raises many questions in relation to how an extreme event that scarred an individual's psyche can affect his life. Recapitulating, trauma is

> an event so overwhelming and inassimilable that the self responds by absenting itself from direct experience of the event. The trauma therefore lives on (in the subject) only in this lacuna where the self 'was not'. From there it erupts unbidden into consciousness not in the form of narratable story, but as intrusive, belatedly experienced, and achronological memorial shards (flashbacks, nightmares, image-trances, and so forth). (Forter in Balaev, 2014, p. 71)

Thus far, the representations of trauma analyzed in the books under discussion reveal a common point of origin for the development of traumatic responses. In this specific case, the ground zero for war-related traumas is located in the threats of combat and the atrocious experiences that dehumanize its participants. As a result, the focus and subject matter of the poems are the extreme circumstances the persona needs to overcome in order to "transform" into a warrior if he does not want to perish under these severe circumstances. This process entails enduring stressful and dangerous situations, coping and reshaping them into symbolic representations that serve as a shield for the body and mind. In other words, in order to survive, the soldier had to suffer and withstand extreme pain with long-lasting consequences on his future self. These outcomes are the main focus of this chapter, which will contemplate poems that illustrate the persona's troubled state of mind, in most of the cases displaying poetically constructed PTSD symptomatology. This reminds us of the different moments that are active in the process of experiencing and developing trauma, i.e., at the time of the extreme event, the self is not psychologically able to fully comprehend what is happening and consequently, his actual response to trauma is belated or deferred. This is one of the most important aspects of how traumatic experiences affect the human psyche,

> "There is something in trauma that intrinsically invokes a beyond," says Roger Luckhurst (2010: 11). This "beyond" invokes several layers of meaning. On the one hand, Luckhurst is alluding to the time lag between a traumatic event and the onset of trauma symptoms. This is the belatedness that is captured in the "post-" of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and in the inherent deferral or "afterwardsness" of trauma

encapsulated in Freud's evocative term *Nachträglichkeit*, translated by Strachey as "deferred action". (Kurtz, 2018, p. 334)

Following the idea presented in this quotation, the present chapter focuses on the aftermath of war and especially on this afterwardsness, coded through poetry in the way the authors depict soldiers struggling with haunting memories from the past and experiencing PTSD-related symptoms like painful flashbacks, survivor's guilt, and repetition compulsion.

As previously stated, for the comparative analysis the poems in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* have been divided into the two main groups of representations of trauma during wartimes and representations of trauma after the war. In the first set studied in chapter 3, we also classified some texts that dealt with representations of trauma from a different perspective, mainly the strategies and defense mechanisms that can be regarded as mature, deriving from positive experiences within the extreme context of combat. Similarly, in the main group of poems that will be analyzed in this chapter, there will be a subgroup that also deals with other dimensions of trauma. In this case, these literary productions tend to be more sarcastic in tone, denouncing social situations and politics that promote war, and as such, they can be read as being more critical of the enterprise of war and its consequences. One last chapter section will deal with the authors' stylistic preferences because even if the subject matter is the same, each writer employs different rhetorical resources and stylistic choices that contribute to the creation of their personal voice.

4.2. *Soldados*

The first poem that addresses post-war life is also the first poem in *Soldados,* "**Se asoman cada noche**", and it includes a quote from French poet Guillaume Apollinaire, "Las casas flamean porque partiremos / para no volver jamás"[15], a probable reference to the figure of the fallen soldier who returns from the battlefield (Rodriguez, 2012). This poem places the reader on the islands many years after the war and introduces the fallen soldiers as ghostly presences that turn up every night dressed in "moss uniforms",

> Se asoman cada noche
> uniformados de musgo

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[15] "Poema leído en la boda de André Salmón", July 13, 1909.

> desde la tierra parturienta
> Miran las luces del muelle
> y todavía sueñan
> con regresar algún día
> Oler de nuevo el barrio
> y correr hacia la puerta
> de la casa más triste
> y entrar como entran
> los rayos del sol
> por la ventana
> en la que ya nadie
> se detiene a mirar
> donde ya nadie
> espera la alegría

The persona in this poem describes soldiers as images that return from the afterlife, something that can be connected to what trauma sufferers usually experience. In fact, one of the recurrent motifs in literature as regards traumatic representations is the one of intrusive images. In this case, the apparitions originate from the place where they died (the islands) as they rise from "la tierra parturienta", a metaphor that enables the birth of these specters. The rest of the poem points to the sense of loss derived from war, as these soldiers still hope to go back to their homes and reunite with their loved ones who mourn them. This text then, introduces the past-in-the-present motif that permeates the literary productions analyzed in this chapter. The traumatic event serves as a launchpad for the individual's future responses by establishing a severed link between the past and the present self; a break in memory that gives origin to the unspeakability suggested by the theoretical framework of trauma studies. "**Se asoman cada noche**" is followed by "**Yo los saludo** / soldados que salen / marchando de mí mismo / entre temblores de frío y de resaca / Hojas perennes en la rama / Florcitas de ceibo incendiadas con la tarde". This short poem also presents life after the war using images of returning soldiers; in this case, they march from within the persona while he is undergoing a fit, experiencing symptoms that can be attributed to PTSD like shivering with cold and having a hangover. The reference to drinking (or drug abuse) is an aspect that will be observed in McNally's book too as the soldier who suffers from trauma often needs to numb himself in order to ease the pain. The term PTSD has already been dealt with in the theoretical configurations, but we should remember that this disorder could best be understood as part of a spectrum of symptoms and responses an individual can develop after undergoing an extreme event that harmed his psyche. In the case of these two poems, a very important element can be highlighted, namely that memory is compromised. As

seen above, the poems mix present and past images that account for the way flashbacks or intrusive thoughts affect a troubled mind. In other terms, "PTSD disorders a person's experience of temporality. In PTSD, the past is not the past, and thus the present and future are precarious temporalities – the past threatens to crowd out the present and swallow up the future" (Diedrich in Kurtz, 2018, p. 95). This idea of the past taking over and displacing temporalities is very much present in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence*. Incidentally, we have discussed an aspect of this issue in Caso Rosendi's "Monte Longdon" and McNally's "Kill Die", poems that present the traumatic experience in a more experimental way by intertwining different themes and mixing time references. In doing so, the authors illustrate how a shattered mind works by using language structures and rhetorical techniques that imitate these ruptures in the mind.

Other poems that illustrate how the past returns to haunt the survivor are "Cantata", "**A veces en la noche**", "Bolero del Naúfrago", and "Cementerio Darwin". In the first one, the persona describes how a fellow soldier is wounded in action,

> Pasa la esquirla
> y al soldado Martínez
> le salen puentes
> amarillos de la media oreja
> y abajo la sangre
> corre turbulenta
> y Spinetta rema
> sobre su guitarra
> y gira el paisaje
> como un cuadro de Van Gogh
>
> Es por eso que hoy
> cuando alguien le habla
> adopta una postura
> de figura egipcia
> como si el silencio
> de aquel hospital
> le perdurara
>
> (Pero yo sé bien que
> cuando Martínez está solo
> ese oído se le abre
> como una ventana
> y es cuando vuelve
> a escuchar el silbido
> y luego el trueno y luego
> como un viento las voces
> de los muertos que le cantan)

The verses interweave images from the event with references from Luis Alberto Spinetta's song "Cantata de puentes amarillos", released in 1973 in the album *Artaud*. The song is a complex poetical and musical pastiche inspired by Van Gogh's *Langlois Bridge at Arles* painting, Antonin Artaud's *Heliogabalus*, and the surrealist movement. The combatant in the poem is hurt by shrapnel that triggers a succession of images mixing the incident with Spinetta's song as evidenced in the first stanza. The images are primarily visual and the event is symbolically transformed into a surrealist picture by juxtaposing fantastic and bizarre images of the soldier pouring yellow bridges from his ear, and his blood serving as a body of water for the singer to sail, a construction that evokes unconscious and dream-like elements. Drawing inspiration from psychoanalysis and the potential of unconscious thought, the surrealists "attempted to express in art and literature the workings of the unconscious mind and to synthesize these workings with the conscious mind" (Cuddon, 2013, p. 697). It is interesting to note here that by using surrealist modes of expression, the author is alluding to the human mind and the unconscious impulses behind trauma, perhaps supporting the claim of the origin of trauma as a moment where consciousness is suppressed or temporarily in a state of paralysis. In the previous chapter, we have analyzed poems where the soldier persona could not react to what was happening to him as a response to preserve his ego and defend from the dangerous environment of combat. In this case, the extreme event is revisited in the second stanza, which finds the soldier in present times, already deaf because of that combat injury. The mentioning of silence is relevant for trauma studies, as the trope of unspeakability is the most recurrent one, especially for the traditional model of trauma. Going back to this concept, meaning is shattered after a traumatic experience, and because the individual cannot come to terms with what happened, linguistic representation is not possible. The unspeakable and its conception has changed since the '90s and many scholars like Barry Stampfl, Michelle Balaev, Laurie Vickroy, and Irene Visser claim that it is possible to represent the traumatic experience even though there might be linguistic barriers. Moreover, the process of trying to speak already entails positive values and change,

> In the context of the survivor's predicament the unspeakable's potentially positive function as an enabler and enlarger of cognitive/affective response in the aftermath of trauma most clearly comes into focus. For, of course, the traumatized survivor evoking the unspeakable in fact has begun to speak. Expressing the thought that the experience in question cannot be conveyed in words feels like a natural or even necessary first step: how

else break the silence? The rhetorical trope of the unspeakable serves to lower expectations in auditors—who are warned not to expect a snappy, "well-shaped" account—while in the same breath also points to the overwhelming, soul-destroying quality of the experiences that have been undergone: compared to which, what could be more salient? Moreover, the assertion that language cannot possibly do justice to the enormity of atrocity in itself creates a tension likely to summon forth further attempts at exploration and communication. (Stampfl in Balaev, 2014, p. 21)

The main idea behind this quotation is that trying to linguistically code a traumatic experience opens up as a process of reconfiguration. Dealing with the indescribable event puts into motion a different set of resources that will enable new values and responses to trauma, ones that have the potential to re-signify it beyond its unrepresentability. Again, for the pluralistic model of trauma, the extreme event is multicausal and context-dependent, preventing oversimplifications of trauma as a universalism by isolating it to the private experience of the individual. Going back to "Cantata", the third stanza can be read as an aside signaled by the use of brackets, where the persona comments on veteran Martínez's situation. His silence is given voice by the persona who claims that when the man is alone, visions from the past haunt him, for example, he can hear again and songs from the dead torment him. Martinez is having a flashback, i.e., "the reliving of a traumatic event after at least some initial adjustment to the trauma appears to have been made. Memories may be triggered by words, sounds, smells, or scenes that are reminiscent of the original trauma" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 425). In this instance, the soldier's deafness when alone activates memories that make his disability disappear as he can listen to the sounds of war again. To finish with "Cantatas", the creative ideas and inspiration behind these verses are explained in Caso Rosendi's interview,

> Después está mencionado el tema de Spinetta, Cantatas de puentes amarillos. Lo elegí porque cuando -previo a Malvinas- nos juntábamos en las peñas con mi amigo el Sapo, el soldado Martínez del poema, él siempre decía: "El día que me muera quiero que me pasen Cantatas de puentes amarillos" y yo me acordé de eso. Establecí un vínculo entre esa frase y lo que le pasó a él, que quedó sordo de un oído. (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 52)

The lines "**A veces en la noche** / entre las sábanas del deseo / cavo de nuevo una trinchera / para resguardarme del dolor" briefly describe a veteran during an intimate moment in bed. The persona compares lovemaking to digging up a trench, an image that casts the female genitalia as a place of protection. Recreating the trenches in such a moment can be symbolically read as an act of repetition compulsion, i.e., "an unconscious

need to reenact early traumas in the attempt to overcome or master them. Such traumas are repeated in a new situation symbolic of the repressed prototype" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 906). The repressed prototype in the case of these poems can be traced to wartimes and the experiences the soldiers underwent, and the new symbolic situation in the case of "**A veces en la noche**" is sexual intercourse. Repeating the traumatic event in an effort to conquer it is a pattern present throughout *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence*, especially in the poems selected for this chapter.

"Bolero del naúfrago" and "Cementerio Darwin" deal with the theme of absence, another side of the trope of silence and the past in the present. The former begins with, "A veces la ausencia / se nos instala en la orilla / cargada de gestos / facciones y nombres / que ya no pueden juntarse", lines that set a tone of melancholy. Through the use of personification, the poetic voice constructs this absence as a presence, constantly reminding him of the fallen soldiers. The persona cannot help but look back, as if the past would call and hypnotize him, illustrated with the metaphor "A veces la ausencia / es una sirena que canta". The use of the mythological creature highlights the fact that the veteran has little to no choice in revisiting the past; he is numbed and drawn to it by its singing. It is relevant to say that even though the persona revisits the traumatic past and suffers because of it, by doing so, he is trying to reclaim that experience and give it a new meaning. In the case of these poems, the persona is showing how important memory is in the case of war; he remembers his fallen fellow soldiers and honors them, even if it means reliving painful experiences.

"Cementerio Darwin" begins with a quotation from poet Juan Gelman, "muertos que hablo y que me hablan / en las palabras que palabro / estas mismas palabras que / cierran mi voz como una noche". Once more, this epigraph suggests the motif of absence and silence, and this time the setting is the Argentine military cemetery in Isla Soledad,

> Espectrales moais que aguardan
> no sé qué del horizonte
> Pajaritos muertos volando todavía
> en el silencio que escarbo
> con desesperación de perro
> Compañeros que vienen a posarse
> en los omóplatos de mi sombra

The cemetery holds the remains of 237 fallen Argentine soldiers and the persona seems to be observing the resting place, comparing the graves with Rapa Nui's iconic

human figures. The phrase "en el silencio que escarbo" reinforces the pervasive motif of looking back to painful memories and the last two lines continue the idea of the past haunting the persona as dead soldiers loom like shadows within his own shadow. It is important to say that the use of the word "compañeros" immediately places the persona in the role of a veteran revisiting the islands. Going back to the war zone is a very common motif in war poetry, and in many cases, the soldier poets themselves tend to return or at least want to. When asked if he would like to go back, Caso Rosendi answered,

> Sí, porque es una historia que, como dice todo el mundo, tiene que cerrar. Nosotros cuando estábamos en las islas, decíamos: "Ya vamos a volver, nos vamos a mamar acá, nos vamos a cagar de risa". Y más que nada, uno quiere volver para eso, para ver las cosas desde otro punto de vista, y ver qué pasa después de tantos años, si te podés o no traer algo de allá. Me parece que es algo que uno se debe. Más como un deber que como un deseo. Yo tengo la sensación de que la tierra no nos pertenece, nada es nuestro. En todo caso, nosotros pertenecemos a la tierra. Lo único nuestro, que nadie puede quitarnos, es la propia muerte, como diría Heidegger.

In the case of Tony McNally, he was able to return to the islands, and he said in an interview[16], "I went back too, to Fitzroy, where the Galahad was hit. There was a guy there whose father had been killed on the ship, and another lad with false legs. These guys came up to me and said, "It wasn't your fault". He also addresses his return with the poem "Rear Entry", which has this author's comment, "This poem was written when I returned from a pilgrimage in 2007 back to the Falkland Islands. We were told we had to use the back entrance of Government house when the politicians used the front door. In memory of Mickey Quinn who is another victim of War and PTSD" (McNally, 2016).

Two more poems that address the motifs discussed so far are "En el camarote del Canberra" and "**¡Fiiiirrrmes!**". In the first one, the title is a reference to the British vessel that served as a troop ship in the war and that took Argentine prisoners when the fight ended,

> El crucero de lujo inglés Canberra arribó a Puerto Madryn el 19 de junio de 1982 con 4136 soldados. El 25 de mayo la prensa argentina había anunciado su hundimiento por parte de las fuerzas argentinas, sin embargo fue ese barco, que se encontraba en perfectas condiciones, el que más soldados trajo al continente una vez finalizada la guerra […]. La organización de la llegada del Canberra muestra tanto el intento de ocultamiento por parte de las Fuerzas Armadas argentinas como la

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[16] "Argentinian and British Veterans on their Falklands War Experiences", *The Guardian Online*, March 2, 2012.

impericia para lograrlo y el desborde de la población que quería brindarles un cálido recibimiento a los combatientes. (Agostini et al, 2019, p. 5)

This relevant piece of historical information serves to understand the background circumstances of the soldier in the Canberra while taking a shower, "Se fregó y se fregó / bajo una lluvia caliente / Consiguió sacarse la mugre / pero no la angustia / pero no la desolación". The physical act of sanitizing himself but not being able to get rid of his negative feelings stresses the symbolic importance of the war scarring his ego. The psychological wounds will not be removed like the dirt; on the contrary, they will be a part of him and he knows it, "Se miró al espejo / y supo que ya no era / y supo que nunca / se marcharía del todo / de esas dos islas rojas / como mordida de vampiro". The simile in the last line reinforces the idea expressed throughout the stanzas, even more so if we think that traditionally a vampire bite transforms the victim into an undead creature that needs blood and darkness to survive, a quite fitting image for the development of traumas. This reference to an undead entity is very important for Gustavo Caso Rosendi because he coins a term related to it, as we will see. "En el camarote del Canberra" is linked with "Puerto Madryn", which poetically narrates the moment when the soldiers arrived in that city after the ceasefire,

Como una Moby Dick de acero
el Canberra nos derramó en la explanada

Luego el abrazo de la gente el griterío
un hogar un plato de guiso un poco de vino
el ruido del chorro del sifón y los ojos
encendidos de una chica

Partimos al atardecer
Lentas algas se amontonaban en la orilla

In a way, the poem continues the moment depicted in the previous one, and the writer (or editor) decided to support this idea by having them printed in succession. Furthermore, the poetic speaker is depicting what actually happened that day,

Una vez que descendían del barco, los soldados volvían a quedar en manos de los oficiales argentinos. La población de Puerto Madryn no fue informada de su llegada, pero el inusual despliegue de militares y la prohibición de acercarse al puerto dejaba en claro que algo especial sucedería […] Según contaron luego los propios soldados, antes de arribar a Puerto Madryn habían recibido una arenga por parte de militares argentinos que les dijeron que el pueblo los estaba esperando para castigarlos por haber perdido la guerra. "En realidad fue todo lo contrario

– señala Outeda –, el pueblo los esperaba con ansiedad; queríamos verlos, tocarlos, aplaudirlos y hablar con ellos". (Agostini et al, 2019, p. 6)

In the first line of the poem, the writer employs a simile to compare the ship with Moby Dick, a very suitable comparison, as the Canberra was also known as the Great White Whale. The second stanza deals with the events mentioned in the quote above, i.e., the citizens of Puerto Madryn welcoming, feeding, and thanking the soldiers who left on that same day. The last line introduces a break from the tone expressed in the previous stanzas; there is a sort of detachment between the events in the city and the soldier's mind as he observes the seaweeds piling up on the shore. The sea plants are described as slow, perhaps suggesting that something else is taking place on the persona's psyche, maybe a reminder of the fallen soldiers or his own dormant traumatic responses gradually becoming active.

To continue, in "**¡Fiiiirrrmes!**" the poet uses intrusive images to portray the psychological effects of war in the daily life of a Lieutenant. The first line begins with an emphatic military command uttered by the officer and as a response, dead soldiers rise next to his bed, "grita el teniente / y los soldados se levantan / en magrullos de huesos / y se paran frente a la cama / del teniente que duerme / y lo miran". The idea expressed in this stanza is repeated throughout the poem, emphasizing the role of the soldiers in haunting this man by simply standing next to him and staring. The whole process is taking over in recurrent nightmares, a common PTSD symptom that affects trauma survivors who tend to waken suddenly and be immediately alert and aware of their surroundings. The mental representations of the soldiers torment the man every night and leave him in a helpless state as his only response when he wakes up is to ask "¿Qué quieren de mí / estos tagarnas?" in the hopes of making them go away: "con la esperanza de que / alguna vez los Soldados se / cansen de estar muertos". The word "tagarnas" is derogative and used as an insult for soldiers who are useless, slow, and dumb. It is a probable reference to higher rank officers abusing their power and mistreating soldiers under their commands, here used as a subtle way of criticizing the military as the one being tormented is the Lieutenant. It is important to remember that the war was a desperate attempt from the military government in order to stay in power and gain popularity, but it only made things worse and paved the way to the return of democracy on the following year. "**¡Fiiiirrrmes!**" ends up with "Pero cada noche de todos los / días de la vida del teniente / ellos están ahí puntualmente / firmes / parados frente a su cama / y lo miran / y esperan",

images which stress the idea of the officer not being able to escape from this nightmare. In addition, the last line implies that not even death can free the man from his misery as the dead soldiers are waiting for him. As we have seen before, warfare is a collective human effort that enables several stressors that can lead to traumatic responses. It does not matter if the participants were high or low-rank soldiers; trauma and PTSD can affect everybody. The idea of the suffering Lieutenant can be seen as a kind of psychological torture, again a direct way of criticizing the military in this specific case. In the rest of *Soldados*, it is very hard to find other examples where the persona uses words to refer to military ranks, this is so because the soldiers are always referred to as friends, comrades, and mates denoting a symmetrical relationship whereas in the case of "**¡Fiiiirrrmes!**", the poetic speaker makes a distinction by repeating the word Lieutenant.

Three last poems that deal with the aftermath of war are "Observando el acercamiento de Marte", "Sanos y salvos", and "El último enemigo". In the first one, the poetic voice addresses the Roman/Greek god of war, destruction, and violence with a rhetorical question, "¿Qué viniste a buscar viejo Ares / que ya no tengas de nosotros?", complaining about the things soldiers gave up in war. There is a feeling of possession between war personified in the god and his subjects, the soldiers. The text can be read as an attempt to resist and conquer war traumas, as the veterans are trying to restore some of the lost power. In these lines, the author uses plural pronouns to include himself in the soldiers' experience, something very common in war poetry and in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence*. At the same time, the title suggests that intrusive thoughts are entering the soldiers' heads as they observe how this god is approaching, a sign of a bad omen and an indication that they cannot control his actions. Even though the god already has everything that belongs to them, they still hope to take it back one day, as evidenced with the metaphor "Algún día te encerraremos / en una vasija de bronce", an intertext to the myth of Ares when he was imprisoned in a bronze jar by Aloadae giants. This image evokes a sense of hope as the ex-servicemen have the potential to transform into strong beings and capture a powerful god, an idea that suggests that positive change after undergoing a traumatic situation is still possible. In "Sanos y salvos", the trauma comes from the experience of war once more, illustrated by how the verses reflect the inner turmoil of the poetic subject caused by the catastrophe, posing the inability of the veterans to live in the present. It is the battlefield and its atrocities the soldiers constantly return to, again the repetition compulsion found in other poems. The writer expresses this condition

through a rhetorical question, "¿O acaso hemos regresado / hemos salido del infierno o acaso / el amor anduvo haciendo el odio / para que nazca esta ternura de añorar / a lo monstruoso?", a question that alludes to the past as hell, a construction that is enlarged with more images in the following lines, "Porque están crepitando sombras / en el crepúsculo de la salamandra / Fantasmas de humo que nos nombran / Llamas que nos llaman". While experiencing this flashback and repeating the past, the veteran is suddenly interrupted by an external stimulus, a hand that touches his shoulder, "Hasta que una mano nos toca el hombro / y nos rescata y nos hace darnos cuenta / que el café está frío y afuera / llueve y la gente va y viene / como si nada". The physical contact brings the soldier back to present times and saves him from being completely absorbed by his war experiences. Other common PTSD symptoms are "disinterest in significant activities and with feelings of detachment and estrangement from others" (VandenBos, 2015), detachment from social situations or your own feelings, which is what happens in "Sanos y salvos". Here, coming back points to the idea of not really coming back, put differently, the persona survived war and is alive but at the same time, he died on that battlefield. Memory does not allow one to forget such a devastating and inhuman experience, and as a result, the individual's psychological make-up is severely affected. This idea is present in Caso Rosendi's "Después del horror",

> Lo hemos aprendido
> Nosotros los sobremurientes
> sabemos muy bien que tras el silencio
> viene otro silencio atronador
> Siempre será así

This short poem is very interesting for the present thesis because of two reasons. The first one is the motif of unspeakability discussed in this chapter, a recurrent pattern found in literatures of trauma. In this text, the mentioning of silence is the impossibility of representing extreme events but at the same time, the persona is trying to code his experience using language and different rhetorical devices. Even the oxymoronic "silencio atronador" is conveying that linguistic representability is possible. As we have discussed before, the pluralistic model of trauma studies opened up the possibilities as regards the trope of unrepresentability. The second reason is the neologism "sobremuriente", which synthesizes the idea of the past in the present perfectly. The trauma sufferer experiences breaks in memory, intrusive thoughts, and flashbacks, conditions attributed to posttraumatic stress disorder, as we have seen with several poems

in *Soldados*. The coinage plays with the Spanish word "sobreviviente" and the use of the preposition "sobre", which in this case can mean over, beyond, and the adjective "muriente", which suggests that the survivor is not living, but dying, a strong idea when applied to war and its participants.

The last poem in this triad is "El último enemigo", where poetically-constructed-PTSD symptoms can be observed,

> Jorge se despertaba
> entre la tempestad del fuego
> con esa tos de cañoneo
> que no se le iba nunca
> y antes del desayuno
> se afeitaba en un pedazo
> de espejo que latía
>
> Esa mañana besó
> a sus hijos a su mujer
> besó como el sueño
> profundo y suave
> besó de una manera
> imperdonable y dulce
>
> Más tarde en el baño de un bar
> sacó un revólver y disparó
> justo en el lugar donde
> se apostaba la tristeza

The first stanza intermingles pictures from the veteran's daily life with antagonistic representations of warfare. The persona gives linguistic shape to the memory of the horrors of war; an overwhelming experience that torments Jorge every day as he performs basic routine activities like shaving. Every action he performs is tainted by echoes from the battlefield, which are presented as intrusive images, i.e., "mental events that interrupt the flow of task-related thoughts in spite of efforts to avoid them […]. Upsetting intrusions are common after trauma and in obsessive-compulsive disorder" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 561). In this case, the act of waking up already displays signs that undermine the man's perception of reality, illustrated by the second and third lines, where a firestorm and cannon are used to describe how his traumas are taking control of his life. The terrible memories from the past are ever-present, he cannot get rid of them, and they manifest as PTSD symptoms. For example, the last line can be seen as an extreme trauma indicator, where the individual's self-perception is greatly compromised; a condition

closely associated with psychosis or hallucinations typically found in schizophrenic patients. The fact that the veteran is standing in front of a beating mirror is relevant because it points to the fact that his present self is fragmented, as he cannot recognize who he is anymore. His mind is shattered as the direct result of the extreme events that took place during combat and his identity is distorted. This idea can be linked with the one presented in the previous chapter, namely that the soldier forges a new identity that collides with his peace self and helps him cope with the hazards of war. What seems to be taking place in this poem is that as part of that reorientation process, the self was not able to adapt to his postwar identity. On the contrary, the stressors of the battlefield affected him permanently as he relives the past through painful flashbacks and hallucinogenic-like moments. Unfortunately, the only solution for Jorge is suicide,

> there is an emphatic tendency to focus on the destructive repetition of the trauma that governs a person's life. As modern neurobiologists point out, the repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be retraumatizing; if not life-threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration. And this would also seem to explain the high suicide rate of survivors, for example, survivors of Vietnam or of concentration camps, who commit suicide only after they have found themselves completely in safety. (Caruth, 1996, p. 63)

Caruth's quote is central for this study, as the theme of veteran's suicide in war poetry is frequent and dealt with in this poem. As noted in chapter 2, there are no official numbers of deaths by suicide among Argentine Malvinas veterans (numbers range from 130 to 500). In the same manner, in the U.K. the numbers have not been officially confirmed though some sources[17] estimate that about 100 had died by suicide. Tony McNally himself states in his prologue that he has tried to commit suicide, "three marriages down the line, suicide attempts and I'm still writing" (McNally, 2016), and many of his literary productions address this topic, as we will see in the following section. This information shows us an aspect that is present in both poetry books: soldiers can die on the battlefield but they can also die far away from it, many years after the conflict ends if their traumas are left unattended and free to grow. Going back to "El último enemigo", the issue of taking one's life permeates its verses and in this specific case, the ex-combatant is unable to endure the painful memories that haunt him today. This concept

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[17] "Fewer Falklands War suicides than feared, study suggests", 14 May 2013. BBC online (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-22523317).

is the one expressed in the title because after facing enemy soldiers in the war, the last real enemy was himself. There is a stark contrast between the sextet and the quatrain marked by a great tenderness, as the veteran bids farewell to his children and wife and then shoots himself in a bar. The choice of words is very important in these lines because they express his love for his family, "besó de una manera / imperdonable y dulce". The caesura creates a break between the action of kissing and the words used to describe it, adding extra suspense and signaling the climax of the poem, which is resolved by the blunt ending. The last two lines posit the question of where sadness resides, is it the heart or the head? This ambiguous ending makes the reader think about the concept of sadness as a sickness of the soul, or in the case of trauma studies, a wound of the mind. To finish with "El ultimo enemigo", it is relevant to mention that the veteran in the poem is "Jorge Mártire, ex combatiente que se suicidó en la década del noventa" (Flachsland et al, 2009, p. 12). Once more, Gustavo Caso Rosendi tells the story of a soldier who cannot speak anymore, like with "Cuando cayó el soldado Vojkovic", analyzed in the previous chapter. Here, the author takes facts from Jorge's life story and constructs a poetical counterpart to pay homage to him and raise awareness of the issue of suicide in war veterans. This seems to point to the possible conclusion of the poetic persona reconfiguring his own traumatic responses and taking them into new paths by remembering his fallen comrades and speaking through them.

To sum up, Caso Rosendi's productions analyzed in this chapter show the difficult situation many soldiers face after the war. Most of the texts place the veteran several years after the armed conflict ended, supporting the claim of afterwardsness, i.e., the period of time that elapses between the extreme event and the onset of the traumatic responses. Put differently, the gap in memory evidenced in most of the poems is accounted for by this belatedness, indicating that a certain amount of time is needed in order for traumas to develop and manifest themselves at full capacity. Sometimes, the veteran in the poems has the compulsion to repeat the traumatic event in the hopes of mastering it or lessening its harm. Other times, the past and the present are mixed into a single representation, an example of how the shattered mind works, mirrored in the use of language as the persona experiences PTSD symptoms coded through poetry. Finally, there are poems that in a way pay homage to fallen soldiers by giving them voice to tell their own story, a positive transformation of traumatic impulses into new directions.

4.3. *Screaming in Silence*

Tony McNally's literary productions analyzed in this chapter deal with representations of trauma in the aftermath of war, therefore most of the texts illustrate how the veteran is battling with his traumatic symptoms in the present. The first poem that illustrates this is "Solace". Constructed in rhyming couplets, the poetic speaker starts by going back to wartimes while longing for peace, "I yearn for emptiness off the beaten track / I'm forty now was nineteen then / From boys to soldiers from soldiers to men /", lines that reinforce the idea of the self adopting new identities during combat. The following images are examples of what the soldier had to endure since the war ended and they illustrate how people react differently to warfare according to their ideologies, religion, and personal circumstances, "Some judge some pity some laugh some hate / Some threaten me with God and the pearly gate / The left say killer the right say hero". These contrasting ideas also show the veteran's troubled state of mind as they are presented in extremes and push the persona towards confusion and anxiety, so much so that his response is to isolate himself, "I say LEAVE ME my tolerance zero / I walk through the forest then sit all alone". The use of capitalization signals emphasis, indicating the individual reached his limit and is unable to withstand further social pressure. The way the persona feels is connected to PTSD symptoms like irritability, hostility, anxiety, and especially social isolation, which is the main subject matter of this text. Like the title suggests, he decides to seek solace from external stressors and fortunately, he succeeds, "For a minute I feel peace away from human scorn / I watch a small bird with grass in its beak / It lands by my foot so beautiful and meek / It fluffs put its feathers and looks straight in my eye / Why can such an innocence cause a grown man to cry?". The veteran's feelings are on edge as a simple bird makes him cry; an element of nature to which he attributes innocence. The horrors of war leave many of its participants devoid of emotions or unable to respond to external elements, a type of loss of innocence already discussed in poems like "Rubicon" and "Coming of Age". In this case, the veteran seems to be experiencing heightened reactivity to stimuli, in other words, a simple interaction with an animal triggers dormant impulses and hidden emotions from the traumatic past. This idea is reinforced by the lines that follow, "I'm assaulted back to reality by two low flying planes / Curled up in a ball back at Fitzroy again", where a sound stimulus brings him back to reality and makes him transition into a defensive state. This poem can be linked to Caso Rosendi's "**Nosotros que escuchamos**" because the veteran is battling with his

past and a physical stimulus breaks his dark reverie and reminds him that he is in a social interaction in a bar. In McNally's verses, the persona is alone but the process of coming back to reality makes him aware of his painful present. The name Fitzroy is relevant as it refers to a settlement in Isla Soledad and the place where two ships were bombed during the Malvinas War. This event is the one mentioned in the prologue to *Screaming in Silence*, when the RFA *Sir Galahad* was destroyed by Argentine aircraft resulting in 50 deaths and 150 wounded[18]. According to McNally (2016), this incident had an extremely detrimental effect on his mental health and led to his development of PTSD, a fact alluded to in other poems. Going back to "Solace", the veteran's escape from social situations that stress him out end well this time, "As I trudge back to my car a bird chirps from the mist / A smile cracks my lips while clutching the grass in my first". Prolonged social isolation often produces abnormal behavioral and physiological changes resulting in further traumatic responses and PTSD symptoms (VandenBos, 2015), but the isolation in this case, lasted for a few moments and as a result, it was effective in momentarily soothing his pain.

From the title, "Then it Began" anticipates the motif of repeating the past. The first lines serve as an introduction to war, "Then it began….. / I'd read about it / Watched it on TV / Dreamt about it / Here is yours / WAR….". This first part creates a sense of expectancy related to confrontation but it ends abruptly, "Then it was over / I stopped reading about it / Watching it on TV / Dreaming about it?". This construction plays with parallelism to express a contrast; war was only the beginning of something different, i.e., the past haunting the survivor. The last lines of the text confirm this idea, "Then it began / Again / Again / Again / Again….. / When will it end?". The rhetorical question at the end suggests that the ex-combatant has no control over these intrusive thoughts from the past and the repetition of the word "again" shows that he is experiencing repetition compulsion, "in which the subject constantly relives traumatic scenes in the hope of belatedly processing unassimilable experiences" (Vermeulen in Buelens et al, 2014 p.150).

"Healing" and "Nothingness" are two short poems that continue the motif of revisiting the past. In the former, "Freedoms Incalculable cost / Is a price worth paying? / I feel so very alone / Amongst my comrades in arms / To pick at a scab / Make it bleed

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[18] "Falklands War: Disaster for British at Bluff Cove", BBC online. First broadcast 24 June 1982.

then scab again / One scab should suffice / I will never pick again.", the poetic speaker feels alone and decides to repeat the traumatic past through the metaphor of the scab. His wounds are psychological and by picking them, he reenacts the horrors lived on the battlefield; the act of bleeding embodying the most important part of his repetition compulsion. Put differently, the metaphor stresses the idea of trauma as an open wound that cannot close properly and the interesting part is that the veteran himself is the one picking at it, therefore preventing healing and creating a contradiction with the title. This seems to highlight the fact that trauma makes the individual adopt different defense mechanisms that might seem contradictory first, but that on closer inspection show that he is resorting to repetition compulsion in an effort to control his trauma. In "Nothingness", the poetic speaker expresses how he feels, "I was happy once / Sad last year / Sad last week / Crying in my beer / Sad today / Will be sad next week / Full of self-pit / It's nothingness I seek." The images in this text depict sadness as a permanent state of negativity as it is used to describe the persona's feelings in the past, present, and future. The reference to beer introduces the common theme of substance dependence in trauma survivors, who many times develop an addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. In this specific case, there are no further indications that the persona has a drinking problem (just a hint) but there are other poems in *Screaming in Silence* that deal more openly with this motif, like "Tinsel & Beer" or "PTSD". It should be noted that in *Soldados*, alcohol is hardly ever referred to as an addiction, but instead as an element used in celebrations and meetings. The only time it is used in the sense of compulsive craving is in the poem "**Yo los saludo**" and the use of the word "resaca", which was analyzed above. Going back to McNally's poem, the title evokes a sense of numbness and detachment on the part of the speaker, who is probably suffering from depression,

> a negative affective state, ranging from unhappiness and discontent to an extreme feeling of sadness, pessimism, and despondency, that interferes with daily life. Various physical, cognitive, and social changes also tend to co-occur, including altered eating or sleeping habits, lack of energy or motivation, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, and withdrawal from social activities. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 298)

The idea of seeking "nothingness" indicates that the veteran desires to put an end to his sadness by reaching a neutral state of mind. He wants isolation and numbness in order to prevent further suffering from the traumatic past, manifested here in a depressive episode, which, according to Nigel Hunt (2010), can be typically found in cases of PTSD: "most research into PTSD has shown that there is nearly always a comorbid disorder –

often depression, sometimes generalised anxiety, substance abuse, or aggression and violence-related problems."

In "Diablo", the horrors of the past are personified in the figure of the devil. For this text, the author decided to use the Spanish name, a possible reference to the language spoken by the Argentines in the war. Throughout these verses, the poetic voice depicts his relationship with this devil, how he took his fellow soldiers during battle but spared him,

> I saw El Diablo's grin
> Smelt the sulphur on his breath
> He was in ecstasy
> The battlefield spoilt him for choice
> He never chose me that cold day in June
> Greedily he ate up my brother's souls
> Not a few hundred yards in front of me
> Gone in a fiery holocaust of flames and screams

The extreme experience of war is transposed into metaphors of hell and related images like fire, sulphur, suffering, and pain. In this instance, the writer seems to be referring to the *Sir Galahad* again, as the ship was attacked in June and caught on fire causing many people to die, as mentioned before. The persona was able to survive these life-threatening events but he could not cope with the harsh circumstances of combat, thus resulting in traumatic responses in the present. Many years after active combat, he still has a relationship with the devil as the last lines of the poem indicate,

> Thirty years have passed
> I have traded insults with him
> He left me not out of pity
> But to further punish me
> Waking in a sweat filled nightmare
> I scream for him to take me
> He wags his finger at me like a lap dog
> "Not yet, Not yet…"
> I envy my fallen brothers.

In the aftermath of war, this veteran has developed PTSD symptoms that severely affect his everyday life. He feels he is alive just to suffer and be punished by the horrors of the past personified by the devil, a very strong assertion reinforced by the last four lines. The feeling of envy here can be connected to the veteran's perception of death as

something better than his life and the desire to be with his fallen comrades. In psychoanalysis, envy can be defined as

> a negative emotion of discontent and resentment generated by desire for the possessions, attributes, qualities, or achievements of another (the target of the envy). Unlike jealousy, with which it shares certain similarities and with which it is often confused, envy need involve only two individuals—the envious person and the person envied—whereas jealousy always involves a threesome. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 375)

It is clear that dying on the battlefield is not an achievement or attribute to be desired but the current detrimental state of the persona's psyche makes him feel that way. The negativity of such a statement clearly shows he is in a deep state of suffering, and at the same time, it can be linked to other negative feelings like guilt, a counterpart to the envy felt in "Diablo". This is one important aspect of the poem "The Schizophrenia of War",

> The disgustingly beautiful soldiering
> The abhorrently peaceful peace
> The exhilarating intoxicating Fire fight
> The stomach churning smell of the deceased
> The loneliness of being back home
> The need to be back with your mates
> The buzz of being paid to kill
> The grin on a dead soldier's face
> The guilt of being a survivor
> The odd need to do it all again
> The faces of men you would die for
> The comrades who would never give in
> The old man I've become please forgive me
> The ones that died still in their teens
> The soldiers now smiling in Valhalla
> The ones I will see tonight in my dream

The way this text is constructed is very interesting, as the writer begins each line with noun phrases expressing the negative effects of war in the persona's psyche, for example, the first lines present oxymoronic ideas, where the act of fighting and being a soldier is simultaneously beautiful and disgusting. The use of overlapping adjectives serves as indicators of his fragmented mind and depict the shifts and changes in mood and attitude towards warfare, at times showing he is drawn to it and other times being repelled by the idea. Thus, the focus is placed on thought processes that show he still lives in a state of schizophrenia, like the title states,

a psychotic disorder characterized by disturbances in thinking (cognition), emotional responsiveness, and behavior, with an age of onset typically between the late teens and mid-30s […]. According to DSM–IV–TR, the characteristic disturbances must last for at least 6 months and include at least 1 month of active-phase symptoms comprising two or more of the following: delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior, or negative symptoms (e.g., lack of emotional responsiveness, extreme apathy). (VandenBos, 2015, p. 938)

The use of this specific disorder to characterize war trauma is relevant because it illustrates the extent to which the persona's psychological state has been compromised. Once more, after the horrors of war, the symptoms of PTSD start to manifest in every sphere of the veteran's life. He feels lonely at home, misses his army mates, and feels the need to go back and "do it all again", a clear example of repetition compulsion as re-experiencing the events that gave origin to his traumas is one way of dealing with them. The line "The guilt of being a survivor" is a direct reference to survivor's guilt, i.e.,

remorse or guilt for having survived a catastrophic event when others did not or for not suffering the ills that others had to endure. It is a common reaction stemming in part from a feeling of having failed to do enough to prevent the event or to save those who did not survive. Survivor guilt is also experienced by family members who are found not to carry deleterious genetic mutations that have led to disease and, often, death in other family members, or by family or friends who feel that they did not do enough to succor their loved ones prior to death. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 1054)

Survivor's guilt in war poetry is a very common motif because the soldier who outlived his comrades often feels it was his responsibility to protect them at all costs. If we consider that the background of trauma, in this case, is warfare, the feeling of guilt is probably higher because, during combat, the element of unpredictability is central. The possibility of life ending abruptly during wartimes was one of the most important stressors discussed in the last chapter, and given the case of a soldier who acknowledges this after the conflict, it should come as no surprise that he feels guilty because "most such persons ask the question 'Why me?' repeatedly without finding a satisfactory answer" (Matsumoto, 2009, p. 530). Incidentally, Gustavo Caso Rosendi asks the same question in the interview mentioned before, "¿Por qué yo estoy acá y él no?", making reference to Pedro Vojkovik, a fallen fellow soldier and subject of his poem "Cando cayó el soldado Vojkovik". McNally's lines, "The old man I've become please forgive me / The ones that died still in their teens" reinforce the feeling of guilt felt by the veteran as he was able to outlive his friends and grow to an old age. In the last part of "The Schizophrenia of War"

the poetic voice evokes images that portray the soldiers at peace, smiling and waiting for him in Valhalla, the idyllic hall from Norse mythology, an idea related to the fallen soldiers being chosen by a powerful deity and not dying in vain. By joining the ranks of legendary heroes, the soldiers are symbolically saved and their deaths given a new purpose. Backtracking, the different images and metaphors used throughout the poem depict how the traumatic mind works, at times expressing thought processes that are contradictory, reenacting the traumatic past, having intrusive memory shards from the battlefield, or jumping from a positive to a negative emotion. These poetic constructions show that representing trauma can be a challenging task and that the individual addressing his own traumatic symptoms might reach linguistic barriers when doing so but in this case, it is important to comment on the use of short noun phrases as an effective way to showcase the different symptoms and feelings present in a shattered mind. In short, the writer poetically summarized the schizophrenia mentioned in the title.

So far, most of the poems analyzed deal with traumatic representations that offer an account of how a mind affected by the horrors of war works. In most cases, the author places the veteran revisiting the past while displaying symptoms attributed to posttraumatic stress disorder like flashbacks, survivor guilt, and numbing of responsiveness. In the case of "Alone", the ex-combatant goes even further in his symbolic representations of the past in the present by mixing them both. On the first part, the poetic geography of the poem seems to be a battlefield where a soldier is frightened and alone, waiting for his death as a group of enemy soldiers approach him,

> The soldier was alone and frightened
> He wished his comrades were with him now
> Hardly breathing for fear that they could hear his heart beat
> Why has it ended like this?
> His body pressed harder and deeper into his cold dark hiding place
> They were getting closer
> Shaking with cold and terror he said a prayer
> Please do not forsake me now God
> This must be the end
> They were almost upon him
> He could smell their breath
> He could hear someone taking a piss
> A cigarette butt landed by his head
> There were at least three of them
> He had no weapons
> Laying like a corpse it was unbearable
> How can they not see him trembling?

The soldier's mental state is very fragile and he constantly fears for his life, displaying physical responses to his state of fright, like pressing his body "deeper into his cold dark hiding place" and "shaking with cold and terror". He is in a vulnerable place and prays to God for help, as his comrades are not with him and the enemies are getting closer. The line "He had no weapons", stresses the idea of the combatant's helplessness because he has no weapons, or rather tools at his disposal in order to defend himself in this hazardous situation. The last two lines from this first part indicate the poem's climax but the situation changes,

> Then they were gone
> He let out his breath
> Quietly sobbing he felt his crutch was warm
> He had pissed himself
> I miss my family and friends
> I miss my Regiment and the lads
> The soldier ate a rotting apple core he found
> He pulled another piece of cardboard over his thin body
> Exhaustion overcame him and he fell asleep
> Another homeless veteran on the streets of Britain in 2016.

The last part of this literary production explains what is truly taking place, i.e., the veteran was having an intense episode of dissociation from his present reality. Alternatively stated, he was reliving his painful past as a soldier and mixed it with his present as a homeless veteran. The parallelism set by both situations is very effective in displaying his extreme state of vulnerability and constant suffering as he transposed war images into civilians walking by him in the streets. It is important to note that the writer uses the third person to tell this veteran's story, but toward the end, the ex-combatant can express himself with the lines "I miss my family and friends / I miss my Regiment and the lads", statements that can be related to the line "He had no weapons" because he does not have psychological or material resources to change his current state. Similar to Caso Rosendi, McNally also gives voice to other veterans and tells their stories, either because they are dead or unable to do so like this helpless veteran who is suffering because of his traumatic responses worsened by his homelessness. In short, "Alone" provides "a picture of the variety of ways that the traumatic event might be reexperienced. In particular, the discussion foregrounds the intrusiveness of the past event into the present moment, sometimes to the point that the person dissociates from the present reality and components of the event are relived and the individual behaves as though experiencing the event at that moment" (Diedrich in Kurtz, 2018, p. 86).

Two last poems that exemplify and expand the motifs discussed so far are "Screaming in Silence", and "PTSD". The one that gives McNally's book its title constructs a persona engaging in social interaction,

> I'm screaming in silence it's deafening me
> You cannot hear me yet you're talking to me
> I see your lips moving and the blink of your eyes
> It's just a blur and a buzzing like a corpse full of flies
> In this bubble of pain, I cannot escape
> You're smiling at me now my smile back a fake
> I want to run but I'm glued to my seat
> Sweating and shaking and tapping my feet
> A pain in my chest and my mouth bone dry
> I grin and I nod but I just want to cry
> Pull yourself together I hear some say
> But I'm stuck in 1982 on a cold sunny day
> I'm no longer a soldier but my mind disagrees
> It keeps sending me back to those terrible seas
> You finish your talk and then smile and leave
> Leave me back in my bubble with the dead that I grieve.

The oxymoron in the title evokes the trope of unspeakability because even though the veteran is in pain he cannot translate his trauma into words. The use of this rhetorical figure is enhanced in the first line and it sets the tone of the whole poem as the persona expresses what he feels in this social interaction, for example, observing the other person's facial expressions but seeing "a blur and a buzzing like a corpse full of flies". The use of rhyming couplets, in this case, helps to create a feeling of consistency and tends "to sound assertive and epigrammatic" (Lennard, 2008, p. 38). The images that follow show the veteran's troubled state of mind and also his physical responses to his trauma which can be attributed to PTSD, like shaking, sweating, wanting to cry, and chest pain, among others. The ex-combatant is still battling with the extreme events that took place during wartimes that now have reshaped into traumatic responses that interfere with his everyday life. He knows he is not a soldier anymore but his "mind disagrees", a fitting image that again provides a depiction of how repetition compulsion works, as he explicitly details the traumatic event that originated his current condition and makes him come back to "those terrible seas" in 1982.

"PTSD" is the first poem included in *Screaming in Silence*. Although not regular, the poem is mostly made up of iambic meter that varies in feet, but which is never longer than a tetrameter. For example, in most lines, the author uses dimeter and trimeter, feet

that when read aloud helps in creating a style associated with the oral speech patterns of hip-hop or rap,

> I'm happy and sad
> Compassionate and bad
> Can't sleep at night
> Can't do anything right
> I want to be alone
> But not on my own
> I'm in love but I hate
> I'm a burden on the state
> I'm possessed by the war
> I killed what for?
> I see shrinks
> I see docs
> Remember my Arctic socks
> I'm disloyal cause I'm ill
> Is it right to kill
> I can hide in a crowd
> My face a grey shroud
> I cry for no reason
> My country shouts treason
> All the pills and the booze
> Make bad memories ooze
> I was 19 in June
> Under a bright crystal moon
> I died that day
> But I'm still here to say
> For the brave and the free
> My award PTSD.

There is a strong autobiographical imprint throughout these verses, especially since the author was diagnosed with PTSD, as he shared in the prologue to his poetry book. Consequently, the poem is constructed on the basis of contrasts that account for the symptoms of his disorder like "I'm happy and sad / Compassionate and bad / I love but I hate". The poet refers to the aftermath of war and the disruption caused by the traumatic experience embodied in his pathology and poetically coded symptoms. In that sense, the poetic voice reflects his contemporary conscience, knowing that he was diagnosed with the disorder that affects countless former war combatants. This fact is relevant if we remember that war poetry in the past did not have PTSD as a diagnostic category because the term was first introduced in 1980. As a result, soldiers and writers alike alluded to their symptoms and traumatic experiences in less specific ways or employing misnomers like shell-shock or war neurosis, as we have seen in the first chapter. This shows the importance of PTSD as a clinical but also theoretical concept that can be incorporated

into trauma studies and related disciplines, an issue discussed thoroughly in "PTSD: A New Trauma Paradigm" by Lisa Diedrich,

> The new diagnostic category has had a profound impact not just in psychiatry but also in culture at large, with the result that PTSD is a multiple and complex object that is enacted in a variety of discourses, practices, and institutional spaces. Although PTSD first emerged as a diagnostic category and as part of a classification system within the clinical context of the institution and discourses of American psychiatry, historicizing the category reveals continuities and discontinuities between PTSD and other historical trauma paradigms. (Diedrich in Kurtz, 2018, p. 38)

Diedrich suggests that PTSD is not only a clinical diagnosis that can be detected in an individual but also an event that reflects complex cultural categories in a variety of spheres and disciplines like politics, art, gender, and biology. At the same time, she proposes to view PTSD as a performative act (studied through speech act theories) where the naming of the condition brings it into being, and that "being diagnosed leads to becoming something new or someone else; it is an estranging experience that can be both painful and productive" (Diedrich in Kurtz, 2018, p. 90). This statement is very important in connection to *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* since the poems can be seen as enacting traumatic representations of PTSD that operate on different levels, especially if we consider that literary texts are in a direct relationship with sociocultural, historical, psychological, and biographical elements, among others. As we have discussed earlier, the pluralistic model of trauma studies is concerned with the contextual factors that are at work in literary representations of trauma. Therefore, the texts have been analyzed in relation to their context of production, authors who created them, cultural references, and relevant historical events that inform how trauma originates in the first place and then is taken into new paths. Returning to "PTSD", the broken verses constructed in uneven lines seem to reflect the inner disturbance of the poetic speaker, who is in a state of despair and terror. The persona also questions the usefulness of war from an ironic point of view and mentions the issue of trauma treatment with the lines "I see shrinks / I see docs / All the pills and the booze / Make bad memories ooze", which seem to suggest that psychiatrists' prescription drugs, in this case, are not helping improve the veteran's condition. This issue is addressed by McNally in his prologue, commenting that writing poetry "cannot be as damaging as the plethora of medication used to treat trauma the only winners there are the drugs companies" (2016). The reference to booze is connected to the use of alcohol as a negative coping mechanism because the persona can numb himself by drinking but

when he does "bad memories ooze", a clear indication that the traumatic past comes back to haunt him nonetheless. The poem closes with a reference to his condition as a wartime honor, "My award PTSD", a clear ironic statement that can also be observed in Caso Rosendi's "Condecoración", analyzed in the following section.

Before concluding with this section, it might be important to deal with "Darkness" and "Human Waste", two texts that place the persona in more extreme mental states. The first poem depicts how the poetic voice is struggling with his demons,

> Darkness fills my skull like sewerage
> Pouring its stench into my colourless abyss
> Tears will not come any-more
> War has sucked the life and soul from within
> Black Back pain crushed me remorselessly
> Walking this earth like a pitiful zombie
> Look into my eyes and see the Devil's smile
> He likes my pain
> Stay clear of me and all I say
> I will poison your day with grief
> Just laugh and move on
> This creature can smile
> Watch its grimace
> Ha Ha Ha Ha …

These verses are permeated by rhetorical devices constructing representations of trauma that set a tone of negativity and pessimism. The simile of darkness invading his skull is a very interesting one from the perspective of trauma studies, as it is describing an abstract entity taking over his mind, a poetic way of describing how trauma is taking control over his psyche. Diction in this case is especially important as the writer uses mostly words with negative connotation like abyss, sewerage, stench, pain, poison, and Devil. There is a probable reference to the process of desensitization in the lines "Tears will not come anymore / War has sucked the life and soul from within" as the persona is devoid of emotions and cannot shed a tear, suggesting "a reduction in emotional or physical reactivity to stimuli" (VandeBos, 2015). The phrase "pitiful zombie" is reminiscent of Caso Rosendi's neologism "sobremuriente" in the sense that they both describe a person who is undead, stressing the idea of the soldier dying in the battlefield and living as a mindless creature afterward. The last part of the poem uses the recurrent image of the Devil inside, suggesting he is possessed by the war, an idea expressed in many poems, especially in "PTSD" ("I am possessed by the war / I killed what for?"). In the last six lines, the veteran gives people a warning about interacting with him, implying

that he is somehow toxic and can infect them with grief, an idea that points to voluntary social isolation on the part of the speaker and possible further detrimental effects on the persona's psyche as a result. The poem closes with an interjection typically used to express laughter and joy but in this case, it amplifies the image of the persona's grimace showing something is not quite right. In the writer's own words, "As you may have guessed I wrote this on a particularly bad day." (McNally, 2016). This dark atmosphere set in this text is advanced in "Human Waste",

> A murder of crows lands by the landfill site
> I know the meaning of life
> Smiling I feel slightly foolish
> "What's your problem?" I giggle to a crow
> Energised beyond belief
> Adrenaline surge
> The 9mm Browning feels cold to touch
> Staring at the hand I wonder if it knows how to use it
> The knuckles are hairy
> White mark totally gone from the wedding finger
> I'm now in love with something beyond the boundaries of this world
> Don't f*** with the safety you idiot
> Ha Ha Ha
> Keep the weapon pointed down the range
> Or inside your mouth
> One of the crows looks my way
> Can he see my gun?
> Do crows ever commit suicide?
> You're all collectively repulsive to me
> I am part of the bacteria of human filth
> But I'm happy truly happy for the first time in my life

The subject matter of this text is suicidal thoughts as the persona goes through different emotions and ideas while contemplating taking his own life. For example, he feels full of energy and adrenaline, holds a gun, and talks to himself. The use of crows here might symbolize a bad omen, especially if we think that the collective noun for a group of crows is a murder and they land close to him. This might be a distant echo to E.A. Poe's "The Raven", as the persona interacts with a black bird but gets no answers, for example, "What's your problem? I giggle to a crow" and "One of the crows looks my way / Can he see my gun?". The line "White mark totally gone from the wedding ring" is a reference to a failed marriage, a theme the writer also addresses in poems like "War Creates Whores" and "The Motherland", texts with sexist overtones and offensive words for women but that still construct past traumas as the main forces behind such failures. The closing lines of "Human Waste" go back to its title, stating that the veteran is "part

of the bacteria of human filth" but that he is "happy truly happy for the first time" hinting at the act of committing suicide as a way of ending his suffering. Hunt suggests "there is often a whole series of psychological symptoms of anxiety and depression, what we recognize as PTSD, and problems related to drugs, violence or suicidal tendencies" (2010, p. 11). In this case, the different mind states the individual experiences illustrate the reach of his traumatic responses, i.e., a possible suicide. This poem is similar to "El último enemigo" as they both deal with the theme of ending one's life but they approach the subject matter in very different ways. As a reminder, Caso Rosendi's text is constructed from a third-person perspective, the traumatic symptoms are displayed in metaphors and images that mix the veteran's daily life with his past, and there is a transitional verse that highly contrasts with the rest of the text. The key difference is also the ending, McNally's lyrical I is contemplating suicide and although highly probable, the reader is left with an open ending. In "El último enemigo", the veteran sadly commits suicide in the last lines. One more time, the writer includes an author's comment in this poem summarizing the creative impulses behind "Human Waste",

> Some of my poetry is obviously very dark and depressing but they were written at a time when I was in a very bad place psychologically and in no way does this poem encourage or justify suicide, it's written in the hope that the reader can to a degree understand how this condition can affect the victim. (McNally, 2016)

As a way of summarizing most of the issues discussed so far, "Missing My Feet" will be analyzed. The poem mentions the different scenarios soldiers can find themselves in after serving in the military and how their paths can differ but they have the common motif of shared trauma and the impossibility of adapting to civilian life. The first part indicates war is over, "The Union flag comes down once more / Another job done in a foreign War / Let's salute and march and take home our dead", lines that go through the process of ending a war in an almost mechanical meaningless way as the focus of the text is the veteran. The images presented in the lines "Come home to start again / Some go straight to jail / Others languish on the streets / One takes his life coz he is missing his feet" condense some of the veteran's life stories in the aftermath of war, namely, crime, homelessness or suicide. These possibilities give an example of the extreme life circumstances the ex-combatant might be in, most of the times as a direct consequence of readjusting to civilian life,

> Soldiers leaving the armed forces always have problems. They have to learn to adapt to civilian life, and they leave the 'family' they may have known for many years. For some, this may be the only family they have, one which has provided them with effective support, or comradeship. Whatever the circumstances, the ex-soldier has to adapt to a new identity. For some, this is a difficult time, which may lead to them experiencing a form of war trauma, resulting not necessarily from particular combat experiences, but from the novel experience of being a civilian and being unable to adapt. (Hunt, 2010, p. 11)

In the poems analyzed so far, the figure of the veteran after the war is depicted in vulnerable situations. He cannot adapt to civilian life because he is battling with PTSD and might withdraw from social interactions, suffer from anxiety, survivor guilt, depression, and even commit suicide, like in Caso Rosendi's "El ultimo enemigo" or McNally's "Human Waste'". In the last part of "Missing My Feet", the persona mentions a marine who lost his feet, "The dead are still the dead / The Fakes still cheat / A Royal Marine's toes still itch on his missing feet", a syndrome known as phantom limb,

> the feeling that an amputated limb is still present, often manifested as a tingling or, occasionally, painful sensation in the area of the missing limb (phantom limb pain). It is thought that the brain's cortical representation of the limb remains intact and continues to signal the presence of the amputated limb in the absence of normal somesthetic stimulation. (VandenBos, 2015, p. 788)

In the previous chapter, the metaphor of the chrysalis or pupa was useful in order to illustrate how trauma was in a developmental stage with the potential of transforming into full traumatic responses. Similarly, the image of the phantom limb is very interesting in relation to trauma studies as it shows how trauma operates in the aftermath of war. In other terms, the missing body part represents that which is lost, the absence, the silence, the unspeakable that in many cases still prevails as the recurrent trope in trauma studies. The phantom limb is the reaction to that absence, a response expressed in the feeling of itching or pain, confirming the claim that at a first glance the traumatic experience can be regarded as something irretrievable, but that on closer inspection, it actually shows signs that the traumatic event is being claimed, retaken, and reshaped. The response to trauma in this metaphor signals just the beginning of the reorientation process, as the tingling of the lost limb suggests, but it is important symbolically speaking because it suggests that there are other possibilities other than not knowing the extreme event and being unable to access it in the first place. To finish with this text, it is noteworthy to say that the title

plays with the meaning of the word "missing", implying that his feet are gone because of a war injury and also that he misses them and wants them back.

To conclude, the poems analyzed in this chapter section construct representations of trauma from varied perspectives. Like in *Soldados*, the texts in *Screaming in Silence* show how the veteran struggles with a past that torments him repeatedly, typically many years after the war as traumatic responses need time in order to develop and then emerge through different mechanisms, i.e., "trauma as aftermath finds expression in a variety of long-lasting effects or symptoms well known as post- traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD" (Visser in Kurtz, 2018, p. 126). Otherwise stated, the intrusive past may manifest itself through painful flashbacks, splintered memories, survivor guilt, and image trances, symptoms that can be read as belonging to PTSD, and that permeate the poetical representations of trauma in the texts. In some cases, the persona's indescribable experience causes more severe psychological hurt and reactions like anxiety, depression, and suicidal tendencies. There are also instances where the poet gives voice to soldiers who are unable to act on their own and tell their stories, another similarity with *Soldados*.

4.4. Other Dimensions of Trauma

We have seen that representations of trauma in the texts are carried out in different ways and scenarios, illustrating the idea of trauma as having many faces and ways of manifesting itself. In this chapter section, the poems tend to address issues related to politics, the state, the media, and remembering. To begin with, Caso Rosendi's "Condecoración" includes an epigraph by William Blake, "¿Puede concebirse algo más ruin, / más maliciosamente disimulado / que elogiar a un hombre por aquello / que dicho hombre más desprecia?". The text employs the rhetorical figure of irony established between the title and the two stanzas, where the persona highlights that there is no honor in war as nobody truly wins. On the contrary, war survivors are prone to further hazards that take the shape of traumatic responses. In most cases, the veteran's days are plagued by dark memories of the battlefield and the last thing he needs is a "cheap medal" to falsely commemorate his honor, "Prendieron en su pecho / una medalla barata / donde alguna vez / estuvo la esperanza / de trabajar para vivir / dignamente -por ejemplo-". This sextet is followed by a tercet that criticizes politicians and representatives, "Y no ver por

la vidriera / cómo cena el senador / cómo putañea el diputado". The idea underlying these verses is that political leaders are the ones who decide when military conflicts start and they do so from a place of privilege and protection. That is to say, they do not fight in the trenches and after the war ends, they continue their lives in the same way, enjoying the pleasures of life while the veteran watches from the outside. This idea is emphasized by the last couplet's homophonic paronomasia, a sound play that collocates the words "cena" with "senador" and "putañea" with "diputado". McNally's "Men Who Sit on Chairs" is similar to "Condecoración" as the poetic voice blames politicians for the soldiers' fate, "Men who sit on chairs send us to war / They tell us how to fight / They add up the score / Men who sit on chairs send us back home / Minus one or two or three or four or more". Once more, the ones who decide do not fight on the battlefield but sit on chairs and do not really care about the veterans, "Men who sit on chairs send letters to the bereaved / They tell of the heroism of what they have achieved", lines that suggest they do so just as a formality. In this text, Caso Rosendi's image of the politician having a meal in a restaurant is substituted with the image of men sitting on chairs, reinforcing the idea of passivity and comfort. The last two lines introduce a stark contrast, "Men who sit on chairs sleep soundly in their beds / Unlike the men in psyche wards being force-fed on the meds", pointing to the fact that many veterans suffer from psychological problems and that politicians do not do enough to treat them with the healthcare and respect they need and deserve. This issue is also addressed in poems like "They Don't Shoot Us at Dawn Any-more" and "What Should We Do With the Drunken Soldier?", where McNally denounces the medical system and the way veterans are treated by doctors. Another literary production from *Screaming in Silence* where politicians are criticized is "Can't Vote Won't Vote". The poetic voice bluntly states from the first lines that, "I won't be voting Mr. politician / Because I've got no fixed abode / Once a proud British soldier / Now I walk a lonely road / I swapped the medals on my chest / For a blanket and some food / I no longer guard the Queen". These images show the veteran renouncing his former role as protector of his country and giving up his military awards and decorations in exchange for food and shelter, a probable reference to homelessness. The last part of this text introduces openly critical phrases about politicians like "Politicians I despise / Some say that not to vote / Would be an awful shame / But we veterans know the truth / You're all the bloody same", lines that exemplify the persona's distrust and lack of hope in political matters.

"Gurkas" is a poem from *Soldados* that takes the idea of criticizing the state further by exposing the de facto government,

> Mercenarios de perfil bajo
> (los únicos que los vieron
> ya no están)
>
> Cuchillos fantasmales
> Cortando los sueños
>
> ¿Pero acaso nosotros
> no veníamos del país de
> las picanas sobre panzas
> embarazadas?
>
> ¿Quién le tenía que tener
> miedo a quién?

In this case, by drawing a parallelism between both countries' scare tactics, the persona explicitly and forcefully poses the relationship between state terrorism and the experience in Malvinas. The Nepali mercenaries known as Gurkhas, considered by many one of the best stealth infantry soldiers, infused fear in the Argentine militia, a fact illustrated in the first tercet and couplet, where there is a reference to their infamous kukri knives. The perspective then changes to express the link between the dictatorship and the war, and the history of torture in Argentina with the reference to the "picana" (electric prod), an Argentine invention employed by the unscrupulous military (Rodriguez, 2012). In this way, the Argentine side shows a terrifying element in the shape of an inhumane torture method, expressed with the rhetorical question and implying that both, Gurkhas and "picanas", are to be equally feared. The historical data underlying this text places the Argentine and British soldier personas in different places. From this sociocultural and historical perspective, the fact that there was a dictatorship in Argentina and that human rights were violated as the direct result of state terrorism inserts the soldier into a context of added vulnerability, an idea Caso Rosendi depicted here and in other poems that are critical about the military like "Momento" and "¡Fiiiirrrmes!". On the other side of this spectrum, the U.K. operated under a parliamentary democracy and had a superior militia and support from powerful countries, as we have seen in chapter 2. Therefore, the soldier personas constructed in *Screaming in Silence* do not question the role of the State in the war in the same way but typically tend to denounce politicians on a personal level, for example, in poems like "Over There" and "It's Not About Oil", where Tony Blair and

David Cameron are harshly criticized. It is interesting to note that there are no implicit or explicit references to PM Margaret Thatcher or her political management during the war. Nevertheless, both writers show consistency regarding the figure of the politician as a symbol of distrust that promotes war for their own interest and advantage.

"Himno en la escuela" and "Malentendido fashion" deal with representations of nationalism and the role of the media during the war, respectively. The former takes part of the Argentine national anthem and rewrites it. The intertextual figure is a parody as the poet imitates the original lyrics and uses them with a different purpose. In this specific case, the whole poem is constructed through rhetorical questions that ridicule and expose nationalism. For example, "el grito sagrado" becomes "el llanto sagrado", "las rotas cadenas" becomes "rotas cabezas", and "el pueblo argentino" in "el pueblo perdido". The last part introduces a seven-line question that deals with the theme of silence, "Y escucharán ellos allá lejos / esta tarde del estribillo / ahora que mi hijo está vestido / de granaderito / ahora que canta la inocencia / ahora que la bandera / se mancha de crepúsculo?". The word "ellos" refers to the ones left behind, the soldiers who cannot hear the national anthem, which only sounds innocent to children dressed as "granaderitos" but the poetic speaker knows that the flag is stained with "crepúsculo", an allusion to blood as twilight is typically associated with a palette of red and purple colors. In the latter, Caso Rosendi exposes the media and dedicates the poem to *Revista Gente*, a clear provocative and critical statement, even more so if we connect its content with the title and the mocking use of the word "fashion". The text plays with the idea of mistaking one prince for another, "Cuando decíamos: / '¡Que se venga El principito!' / No queríamos decir:/ '¡Que se venga el principito!' / No era al Andrés que reclamábamos / Era al que dibujaba boas / tragándose elefantes y sombreros / Al de los baobabs al del planeta / en el que crecía solamente una flor". The poetic speaker is referring to Prince Andrew, Duke of York, who served in Malvinas War as a pilot on multiple missions and to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's fictional character. The text is also a reminder that the dictatorship was not only military in essence but also civic (and clerical, though there are no poems addressing this in *Soldados*), and that the media had a vital role in spreading information and, in the case of *Revista Gente*, in supporting the de facto government.

As a side note, McNally's "Sorry" is a bit different from the rest of the texts considered in this section. The poetic voice apologizes to a soldier he killed during the war,

I did mean to kill you then
But now I wish I had not
You remain 19 forever
To forget your face, I cannot
I've suffered for the last 34 years
Nightmares Divorce Depression
I've tried to drink your image away
To give you my pathetic confession
Your name I don't even know
I hope your souls is at peace
One day we will meet in Paradise
When I finally achieve a lasting peace.

The act of killing another person froze the veteran in that past incident as he feels he never left the war zone. After many years, the traumatic event keeps inflicting pain on his psyche and has caused several problems in his life like depression and divorce. There is also reference to the use of alcohol in the hopes of mitigating the intrusive images haunting him but with no positive results, an issue also addressed in the poem "PTSD". The last lines suggest this text can be read as a confession/apology letter to an Argentine soldier killed in the islands because the persona asks for forgiveness and hopes to reunite with him in "Paradise". At the end, the author comments, "Due to my PTSD I have over the years thought about the two Argentinians that I killed in the Falklands War, it's how your mind torments you" (McNally, 2016, p. 101).

To finish with this subset of poems, we will consider texts that express celebration and remembrance. In "Memories", for instance, McNally goes back to the battlefield, "We were young men back then in 82 / Frozen solid and soaked wet through / Outgunned outnumbered but stood solid and true". The persona moves in time and remembers what happened after the conflict ended and how they were received with praise back home, and then closes the poem with "It's now 33 years since we hit the beach / We did our bit but we seldom preach / Remembering our brothers, a poppy for each / The class of 82", lines that show a different side of war trauma and the common practice of remembering the fallen soldiers. The symbol of the poppy flower is strongly associated with Remembrance Day in the UK, which originated after WWI and has been used for every war since. "Salute" is very similar in content but the first part differs from other remembrance poems because the poet expresses his loss of faith in religion, "No more do I worship… / Man-made idols in the sky / God fearing is mere words / Exorcised now are they that don't exists… / Label how you fell / It matters not…". In the second part of this poem, the writer mentions Valhalla again, a place he frequently uses as a symbolic soldier heaven,

pointing to the idea of honor and glory, "Glory be as you march / Through the halls of Valhalla / It's you I truly love / Once a year I drink at your altar / Salute / To the glorious dead". The word "salute" is significant as it is part of the conventional military ceremony for the fallen, and shows the persona's expertise in the matter but in this case, with a private twist as the veteran has his own personal remembrance ritual. Besides Valhalla, the poet also uses another mythological geography in "Avalon", the name of the mystical island from Arthurian Legend. The use of this name bears a highly symbolic importance for warriors because as the legend tells, King Arthur held Excalibur for the first time in Avalon and it is also the place where he died.

The motif of celebrating and honoring the dead continues in McNally's "Raise Your Glass" because the poetic speaker proposes a toast for his army mates, "Raise you glass / Have a drink with me / To those comrades / Who fought and died with me / From the Bogside / To the angry Falklands sea". There are explicit references to the Malvinas War and the communal riots that took place in Bogside, Northern Ireland in 1969, stating that no matter the cause or conflict, the soldiers need to be remembered as the lines "I salute you / One more for the road / It would be rude not to" imply. This literary production can be directly related to Caso Rosendi's "Brindis" in the way they both honor and remember the war with a toast. The Argentine poem begins in the same manner like "Memories", going back to a moment on the battlefield, "Subía y bajaba Colinas / hasta llegar al soldado Sañisky / Le daba un abrazo / le ponía entre las manos / mi paquete de Marlboro / *esto es tuyo* –le decía- / *es todo lo que tengo* / y nos dedicábamos a echar humo / igual que aquellos agujeros / que de pronto aparecían / en la turba como un / acné irremediable". This first stanza presents a scene from the war where the persona shares a packet of cigarettes with Sañisky, a gesture that evokes friendship and companionship against the background of constant danger. The following two stanzas show that the veterans are in a social gathering, having a few drinks while remembering the past through a shared pain,

> Hoy cuando nos juntamos
> en algún cumpleaños
> y enciendo un cigarrillo
> sentimos que estamos allá de nuevo
> Entonces mi amigo
> -que ya no fuma me pone en la mano
> una copa de vino
> y miramos cómo corren

> nuestros hijos
> cómo hablan nuestras mujeres
>
> Y porque aún nos perdura
> la tristeza es que estamos felices
> y porque sabemos que de alguna
> manera no nos han vencido
> es que brindamos

Sañisky and the poetic speaker are war survivors and when they meet, they have a sadness in common, an extreme experience that makes them understand and appreciate moments of celebration. The mentioning of women and children is important because they belong to the sphere of civilian life and at the same time, they represent the veterans' post-war lives: in spite of the hardships endured in combat and difficulties arising from war traumas, they still go forward. The last quintet summarizes the veteran's reason for the toast: they will never forget, and the memory of war will always permeate their lives; because of that, they can feel good and celebrate. It is relevant to observe that this idea is expressed in a passive construction ("no nos han vencido"), suggesting that there are no victors after the war, only people who resist and fight back. The veterans' battle in the aftermath of war is of a different kind, one that takes the shape of painful memories and traumatic responses but even so, they do not give up, a fact represented in the poem's positive tone set in the end. The main idea underlying these verses would seem to be that trauma is not a final and overbearing experience that affects soldiers in the same way. As long as they can manage to resist and remember, they will never be defeated, even more so if we consider that the

> Practices of remembrance and commemoration in the aftermath of a war become an important site of contestation and struggle. There are those who want to return as rapidly as possible to the security of the accounts of continuity and wholeness, and there are others who wish to recognize the impossibility of such comforts and acknowledge the radical and inevitable incompleteness of any attempts at symbolization. (Edkins in Buelens et al, 2014, p. 132)

Summarizing, the texts studied in this section can be read in two ways. On the one hand, the poems denounce the underlying forces behind warfare and criticize the role of people in charge promoting it. The figure of the politician as a person who enjoys the benefits of war without risking his own life is pervasive in both poetry books, mainly illustrated by the writers' use of irony and sarcasm. On the other hand, there are literary productions that celebrate life and the fallen soldiers, honoring their memory and

sacrifice. The personas acknowledge the hardships experienced in the past and the fact that they are survivors, but they try to face life in the best possible way within their capabilities. Additionally, the poetic voices constructed in these texts can be seen as "performing their own rites of remembrance" (Durrant in Buelens, 2014, p. 106) as they pay tribute to the memory of soldiers who fought in the war in their own personal ways. The act of remembrance also enables the poets to see life's worth within the context of collective trauma and in doing so; they can celebrate and be glad they survived. Put differently, Caso Rosendi and McNally's verses about celebration/remembrance highlight the positive side of their trauma, or rather; they focus on trauma as an inherent part of themselves, suggesting that they need to learn how to cope and live with it. As a whole, these poems stress the importance of resilience and the role of memory in revisiting the war and provide a positive imprint to the generally negative tone found in the rest of the corpus. The act of remembrance and criticizing political forces that create or perpetuate shared traumas shed light on the different sociocultural mechanisms at work that are instrumental when dealing with collective traumas,

> the transformation of individual suffering into collective trauma relies on ritual, political action, and different forms of storytelling (Alexander 2012: 3–4). If received by readers as media of cultural memory and if widely read, literary works can have transformational power: "Representations of historical events . . . and characters . . ., of myths and imagined memories can have an impact on readers and can re-enter, via mimesis, the world of action, shaping, for example, perception, knowledge and everyday communication, leading to political action – or prefiguring further representation" (Erll 2011: 155). Consequently, literature may not only transform readers' perception of reality but also reality itself through readers' actions. (Rodi-Risberg in Kurtz, 2018, p. 117)

In the case of McNally and Caso Rosendi, the "different forms of storytelling" can be read as the different forms of poeticizing, and as we have discussed before, even though every poem is different, as a group, they are part of a same thematic unit related to war trauma. The role of literary texts in transforming and reshaping traumatic suffering is a key point in trauma studies because most of the times such texts question who is forgotten or remembered in a society. Some social suffering may be considered part of a collective trauma over others, causing the individuals within those particular groups to be excluded and face further challenges and adversities. Therefore, literary productions "[p]rojected as ideologies that create new ideal interests, are two edged: they have the potential to trigger significant repairs in the civil fabric or instigate new rounds of social

suffering" (Rodi-Risberg in Kurtz, 2018). The texts in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* have been produced within the context of collective trauma and the representations of pain and suffering coded through poetry are varied and complex and they do not portray trauma as a one-sided universalizing experience. On the contrary, the authors depict different scenarios where the persona revisits and reorients his traumatic impulses, at times facing them straight on and some other times redirecting them through remembrance and celebration. For this reason, *Screaming in Silence* and *Soldados* can be regarded as literary productions that trigger potential healing or improvement, and while there are different opinions about the best path to follow, many specialists agree that

> the first step in trauma healing is creating a sense of safety (or at least relative safety, according to LaCapra), to allow the "working through" (as opposed to the "acting out") of trauma. Acknowledgment and remembrance are subsequent steps, and these are facilitated by the literary resources of testimony and by literary criticism's capacity to "read the wound" (Hartman 1995: 549), even for its unspoken elements. The work of grieving is also credited as an important stage of healing, and the elegiac capacity of literature suggests ways of dealing with loss and injury that promote what Freud would call a healthy "mourning" as opposed to a pathological "melancholy". (Kurtz, 2018, p. 12)

Taking these ideas into account, we can observe that most of the poems analyzed so far display the poetic portrayal of "working through" trauma by dealing with it and trying to master it. The corpus also points to the idea of the persona employing healthy ways of grieving like remembrance and respecting soldiers, therefore redirecting traumatic impulses into more positive roads. The idea of testimony mentioned in the quote above is very interesting when applied to poetry because in this case trauma is not represented through narratives or storytelling but coded with metaphorical language and rhetorical devices typically found in the genre of poetry. This creates a different kind of approach to the texts and the way trauma can be read in the corpus. As Antony Rowland states in *Poetry as Testimony*,

> Testimony can only be performed through form and genre, and poetic forms are adept—particularly in the lyric—at conveying the epiphanic moment, truncated traumatic recollections, silences beyond the black print, and the emotive space that need not be repressed behind the supposed objectivity of testimonial facts. [...] Poetry is adept at describing such epiphanies, briefly and illuminatingly, since the lyrical tradition has always focused on such intense moments of subjective experience. (2014, 4-5)

4.5. The Aestheticization of Trauma

After analyzing and comparing both poetry books, it is important to consider the authors' different stylistic choices and subtleties in expressing the shared motif of warfare trauma. As the main objective of this thesis is to compare the poetical representations of trauma within the theoretical framework of trauma studies, the analysis of the author's stylistic choices will be brief and by all means not exhaustive. Most differences in style have already been dealt with and figures of speech analyzed, and by reading the poems quoted thus far, we can trace differences and subtleties in the way the writers express themselves and give shape to their personal representations of war-related traumas. The corpus has been approached with the method of close reading, i.e., "detailed textual analysis which seeks not to reduce literary texts to a manifestation of the same but instead to clarify the nuances of difference even whilst it acknowledges linking facets of similarity" (Norridge in Behdad et al, 2011, p. 221).

As we have seen in the two chapters that compare the literary texts, regarding length and lineation, McNally tends to write longer poems that sometimes gravitate towards the form of narrative poetry as they include personas in situations that follow a narrative pattern within the verses. By way of illustration, in numerous poems, the author tells the story of a soldier in a specific scenario who goes about his duties or daily life in a chronological fashion. Naturally, this narrative quality can also be perceived in *Soldados*, especially in poems like "El ultimo enemigo" or "Puerto Madryn" where the stanzas can be read as verse paragraphs, i.e., "a group of lines (often in blank verse) which forms a unit" (Cuddon, 2013, p. 758) and depict soldiers/veterans in specific situations. It is important to highlight that none of the texts are examples of narrative poetry per se, but they share some elements of the form, especially in *Screaming in Silence* where the stanzas tend to be longer. Going back to the issue of length, Caso Rosendi tends to express himself in shorter forms, with fewer lines frequently interrupted by caesuras, pauses, and time lapses that might

> allow for reflection on traumatic experiences in a way distinct from prose. As Derek Attridge argues in *The Singularity of Literature*, prose—particularly modernist and postmodernist novels—can create such literary effects, too, but the extent to which they do so is precisely dependent on their use of the poetic. Abrogating narrative coherence, poems can function—as Susan Gubar illustrates—as 'spurts of vision' that are effective in their engagements with baffling experiences of suffering. (Rowland, 2014, p. 5-6)

Although this idea cannot be completely asserted as rhetorical devices are open-ended in its reception and interpretation, there are textual clues that suggest the breaks and gaps in the verses enact the breakage of the fragmented mind and the silences in linguistic representation. One last remark related to length is that some of Caso Rosendi's productions consist of two or three lines, which is reminiscent of the Japanese haikus or Imagist poetry with its dictum on brevity and simplicity.

Other relevant textual features are punctuation, layout, and rhyming schemes, in other words, how the poets visually and musically arrange words and stanzas in order to convey an effect or idea. In general terms, McNally follows traditional punctuation rules in poetry like capitalizing the first word in each line and including final stops at the end and employs rhyming schemes, especially couplets. In this regard, his way of constructing poetry is a bit more traditional, especially if we take into account the metaphorical language used in the poems. The modes of expression, images, and devices employed are reminiscent of the War Poets, who embraced a more Romantic view of poetry expressing their feelings and emotions by making the persona the center of the action. Nonetheless, there are many texts in *Screaming in Silence* that are written from a more contemporary perspective and that abandon traditional rhyming schemes like "PTSD" which is sonically constructed as a hip-hop performance with fragmented lineation and gaps in the images presented. Concerning layout, both writers make explicit creative use of it at least once, evidenced in poems like "Kill Die" or "Monte Longdon" which deal with concrete poetry and the idea of representing thoughts in one block of language, respectively. Going back to *Soldados*, for the most part, Caso Rosendi disregards rhymes and embraces free verse; "[c]alled *vers libre* (q.v.) by the French, it has no regular meter or line length and depends on natural speech rhythms and the counterpoint (q.v.) of stressed and unstressed syllables. In the hands of a gifted poet, it can acquire rhythms and melodies of its own" (Cuddon, 2013, p. 290). With respect to punctuation, the writer rarely capitalizes lines or uses final stops, adhering to a more heterogeneous and personal use of punctuation rules. On a first reading, the eventual use of capitalization in the verses seemed to signal the beginning of a new idea or a break from the previous image but this hypothesis was rejected due to lack of consistency.

Another element that contributes to the creation of a personal style is diction. In broad terms, the vocabulary used by the writers differs not only because they write in different languages but also because they tend to use lexical items that belong to specific

fields of knowledge in different ways. Diction in Tony McNally's poems is connected to military terms or jargon, with more specific use of expressions, idioms, and vocabulary related to war, weaponry, and war tactics. The poetic voice in this respect employs a more specific military lexicon than the one chosen by Caso Rosendi, demonstrating more expertise in the field within the context of the poems. Words in *Screaming in Silence* that belong to the semantic field of the military and combat include booby trap, tripwires, minefields, bayonets, magazine, GPMG (general-purpose machine gun), cordite, green maggot (slang for a soldier's sleeping bag), among many others. It is important to note here that Caso Rosendi tends to use words which are less specific about the military and the battlefield, preferring to refer to weapons and war vessels with metaphors or other related terms like "dragones" (aircraft), "cuervo" (jet fighter), "vinchucas rojas" (bullets), and "Moby Dick de acero" (British frigate). As regards the use of personal pronouns, both poets often employ a first-person speaker, the lyrical "I". At some points of the text, this changes into the plural "we" in order to signal the transition of personal accounts of trauma to communal experiences that indicate the persona is part of a group of soldiers. The use of first-person singular and plural pronouns also suggest that the persona is either a participant or witness in these extreme combat situations (or in their aftermath) and also point to the biographical fact of the authors being Malvinas veterans.

As we have seen, Caso Rosendi and McNally construct their poetry in different ways. Even though there are many similarities in connection to the themes and motifs as the poems' main subject matter is warfare, the way the ideas are poetically coded differ. Among the most relevant differences, we can mention length, punctuation, diction, and use of figurative language (which was mainly addressed during the comparative analysis). Nonetheless, both literary productions equally present the atrocities of war through a repertoire of literary devices that work graphically and clearly to express the excessive violence and how even though war deprives its participants of language, they can reclaim it. This proves that literary texts have the potential of representing trauma and addressing the trope of unspeakability by breaking the unbearable silence created by the brutalizing event. As Joshua Pederson states,

> Those who attest to literary language's special ability to communicate – or "claim" – trauma also frequently contend that nonliterary language cannot do so. And trauma theorists often argue that historical, objective, or archival language fails to capture traumatic experience. For Caruth, direct, "archival" accounts of trauma fail because they seem to put us to sleep,

> deadening us to the most piercing horrors. Says Caruth, such "direct" representations fall short because of their "hypnotic or numbing quality" (Caruth and Hartman 1996: 647). (Pederson in Kurtz, 2018, p. 98)

Pederson and Caruth's ideas point to issues in representation when dealing with traumas and question the role of purely analytical works to effectively capture the complexities of pain and extreme events. In the same way, Zoe Norridge claims that

> literary texts are uniquely placed to represent pain because they excel in the creation of new systems of meaning – vocabularies, grammars and image libraries of emotion – which render intelligible multifaceted and deeply personal beliefs and sensations. […] [L]iterature opens up such systems to reader involvement and interpretation, to both a cognitive search for meaning and the potential for emotional identification. (Norridge in Behdad et al, 2011, p.221)

The reference to emotional identification is significant for the present study, as the poems engage readers in a deep process of textual immersion. By resorting to symbolical scenarios and placing readers in analogous positions to the soldiers, the books demonstrate "the capacity of trauma in literature to engage the reader's empathy by closely examining the personal and community contexts of trauma and its psychological ramifications" (Vickroy in Balaev, 2014, p. 148). For this reason, the comparative analysis has revealed that a good way of complementing the readings could be carried out with the theoretical frameworks of reader-response criticism and literary empathy studies. Nevertheless, as the main objective of this thesis is to analyze trauma representations within the tenets of trauma studies, an analysis from those perspectives will not be considered, especially since the relationship between interpersonal and aesthetic experience calls for a different kind of approach to the texts. However, the idea of the poems creating situations that foster the reader's possible empathic responses is applicable, especially if we remember that at least Tony McNally stated that he hopes his writing generates a positive impact on trauma sufferers and enables possible changes. In this way, empathy can be traced in a more general way as an underlying element that depends on the reader's personal circumstances and sociocultural context and the writer's creative imagining and resources for representing trauma in a way that could generate identification. In the poetry books, the "emotional identification" mentioned by Norridge derives mainly from perceiving the poetic personas as recipients of painful and extreme experiences, mostly since they relive the moment of shock in the texts time and again. Thus, the repetition and ramifications of trauma representations in the poems are more

accessible for the reader precisely because they occur more frequently, from different perspectives and are coded in numerous ways through rhetorical devices and creative resources. The analysis of recurrent motifs and images in the books uncovers and stresses "the rhetorical potential and the literary resonance of these figures, a literary dimension that cannot be reduced to thematic content of the text or to what the theory encodes" (Caruth, 1996, p. 5).

4.6. Conclusions

The texts studied in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* give testimony of the physiological and psychological hurt the veterans suffer from as a direct result of having developed traumatic responses after wartimes. A common element observed in Caso Rosendi and McNally's productions is the relationship of the personas with their social environment and how the indescribable past constantly comes back to haunt them. The mention of the armed conflict in the verses triggers memories of the traumatic event, which tends to be revisited through painful flashbacks and symbolic reenactments of the repressed prototype. This recidivism is the organizing principle in the analysis of both books of poetry and it is what facilitates the reading of the corpus with special emphasis on how trauma develops, its aftermath on the individual, and the different coping mechanisms adopted. It is also important to highlight the former combatants' difficulties in reintegrating into civilian life after having served in the military and the challenges they have to endure. Sometimes, the veteran isolates himself and avoids social interactions, some other times he suffers from depression and can end up in the streets without the comforts and safety of a home, or even resort to suicide. As regards memory and time in the texts, in some cases they can be perceived as fractured or discontinuous since the traumatic memory bursts into the present and makes it difficult for the poetic subject to relate to his environment in a satisfactory manner. For example, in "Sanos y salvos" the persona mentions how a friend rescues him from the traumatic memory by interacting with him, and in several other texts, the veteran is located in simultaneous temporalities and symbolic constructions of the past in the present, trying to find ways of coping with his pain and attributing new values to it. Therefore, memory can be part of a retrieval process where the speaker finds new ways of understanding the horrific event every time he revisits it, especially if we remember that for the pluralistic model of trauma

studies, memory is not a storehouse where the brutalizing event is in a frozen unaltered state, but rather a fluid and dynamic process "created and recreated in moments of recollection" (Balaev, 2018, p. 367). Another important aspect is that the poems can be better approached if read within the broader sociocultural and historical contexts. Understanding, for example, that the conflict of Malvinas was part of a de facto military government provides other interpretative tools for the reader when dealing with poems that criticize the military or politicians. Consequently, the representations of trauma are informed by the study of the contexts of productions and complement the readings and subsequent interpretations. In this regard, the poems present a layer of denunciation, where the horrors of war and its promoters are contested and exposed through antimilitaristic attitudes and blatant criticism. It is also worth noting that "[w]hen trauma theory emphasizes the role played by memory […], it shows how literary works can reflect on the relationship between the memorialization of past events and the formation of current national identities" (Bayer in Kurtz, 2018, p. 222). The identities forged by the veterans show direct conflict with the war and high discontent toward the people who decided to start it. Furthermore, there is a feeling of distrust and disrespect that can be traced in the texts as regards the deficient role of the state in aiding veterans after the armed conflict, an idea that can be confirmed in McNally's poems like "What Should We Do With the Drunken Soldier?" and "They Don't Shoot Us at Dawn Any-more" and Caso Rosendi's "Condecoración".

Another pertinent observation is that the author's personal way of constructing their poetic representations of war trauma varies. They resort to different configurations as regards layout, punctuation, use of words, rhyming patterns, and figures of speech among others, which contribute to shape their own personal styles as poets. As a result, even though the subject matter of war, its aftermath, and the anti-militaristic attitudes are the same in *Screaming in Silence* and *Soldados*, the creative resources for poetic expression are used differently. In relation to this, the analysis has shown that texts have the potential of generating possible empathic feelings through identification, a process that derives from the portrayal of the persona's critical condition through repetition of the severe event and its consequences from different perspectives and poetic forms. After reading, interpreting and reacting to the varied ways war trauma is present in the corpus, this high frequency of occurrence "points to the possibility that reading creative literature may increase our ability to mentalize, that is imagine, the mental processes and internal

behavioral motivations of others, thus increasing our ability to empathize" (Miller in Kurtz, 2018, p. 237)

After the comparative analysis, it is evident that the poetically constructed veteran in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* suffered from a psychological wound that scarred his self and permanently affected his life. However, even though the pain and suffering is constant, he acknowledges that his trauma is shared because it derives from warfare and as a result, he gives voice to other soldiers and veterans who cannot put their experiences into words: "[i]t is through this public voice that we can understand the reality of life in the trenches […], but it is through their processes of developing these voices that we can understand the personal, psychological struggle of the war's often silenced participants" (Hipp, 2005, p. 43). By doing so, the poet is showing understanding of his own role in honoring soldiers and preserving the memory of what happened in the war, a key step towards the process of social healing. From this perspective, the concept of collective trauma is a complex phenomenon because it can be "debilitating and disruptive to individuals and communities, but it can also create a stronger social cohesion and a renewed sense of identity" (Visser in Balaev, 2014, p. 110). The texts analyzed in this chapter show that even though the persona is in pain and endures many hardships on a daily basis, his identity is not defined solely by his traumas because he tries to find reason through his actions, whether real events or symbolic reproductions. As previously stated, revisiting the past is not only, for example, a symptom that indicates the self is suffering from PTSD, but a strategy adopted in the hopes of dominating trauma or lessening its impact. From this point of view, repetition compulsion shows two different paths, the first one related to obsessively returning to the place where trauma originated but failing to grasp it and the second one shows that repetition

> functioned as the primary mechanism by which the mind attempted to move beyond the trauma by mastering it via the production of what we might call salutary anxiety: returning to the site of the trauma but in a "prepared" state for the shock that was to come with the result that, from the vantage of readiness, the mind would now be capable of integrating what had previously been unassimilated into an unfolding and coherent temporal structure. (Barnaby in Kurtz, 2018, p. 31-32)

This reminds us that once wounded by an extreme event, the ego will try to find defense mechanisms that can range from mature/immature to positive/negative in order to reorient itself. Moreover, confronting the horrific past by facing it linguistically is

already a process that entails profound reconfiguration as coding the traumatic event into poetic representations enable the persona to elucidate ways of claiming that which was unspeakable. Thus, it is significant to observe that trauma in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* is reoriented into new paths not restricted to the impossibility of representation or accessibility. Bearing in mind that the pluralistic model of trauma studies argues for a more revised and updated conception of the trope of unspeakability, we can say that representation of extreme experiences in the corpus takes many shapes that defy the traditional maxim of trauma as an experience that remains inherently unclaimed.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

The present thesis started from the hypothesis that the poetic representations of war trauma in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* assigned new values to the extreme event and revisited the figure of the soldier/veteran, reconstructing and redirecting the traumatic impulses into new possibilities. The analysis of the corpus under discussion has shown that the initial hypothesis has been confirmed as both poetry books showcase a range of strategies and reactions that question the claim of trauma as a silencing inaccessible fright. Through a variety of rhetorical devices and creative resources, the texts exemplify the potential of poetry as a genre for representing traumatic events by linguistically coding that which was first deemed as irretrievable. The traditional idea of trauma as a permanent absence is disputed in the poems, especially if we consider that the aesthetic impulses and symbolic coping mechanisms employed in the corpus point to self-discovery and reorientation. The soldier/veteran personas are constructed in a locus of constant change and revision, where they reenact their earlier traumas in an attempt to master them, challenge the forces behind them or prevent the events and its participants from fading into oblivion. In this regard, the poems that honor soldier's memory are highly significant within the context of war trauma because they lament the loss and waste that derive from armed conflicts but celebrate the fallen soldiers and regain the collective memory of the past, thus enabling greater social cohesion and reconfiguring identities. Furthermore, the importance of the past and the role of the poet as a preserver of collective memories suggest the reading of the literary texts as socially utilitarian, an idea that can be traced back to the War Poets and their commitment in denouncing the horrors of warfare. In this respect, McNally and Caso Rosendi share their stance in relation to war, advocating for peace and rejecting pro-war propaganda. Their texts express outrage and discontent at senseless violence and nationalism, typically criticizing politicians and questioning combat in relation to the value of human life in such unpredictable and hazardous scenarios. Following this thread of thought, the comparative analysis has revealed that the corpus can be read as "an act of resistance aimed at the very heart of warfare" (Bayer in Kurtz, 2018, p. 217), an act of reclaiming and transforming traumatic experiences.

Initial readings of the corpus revealed that the poems constructed trauma in two main moments, during battle and after the war. The analysis of the texts grouped in the first moment showed that the main stressors for potential traumatic responses lie in the fact of combat as an unpredictable and dangerous event where soldiers are subject to extreme hazards, risking their own lives or suffering from serious injuries. At the same time, the combatant personas are prone to witnessing fellow soldiers die or receive wounds in the war zone, a fact that worsens trauma's future shock. In order to survive, the persona builds up an identity that clashes with his pre-war self and resorts to bonding with his army mates, humor, irony, and sarcasm; strategies that count as mature defense mechanisms. In the second moment, the comparative analysis has demonstrated that there is a marked tendency to depict veterans in the aftermath of war, showing that integrating into civilian life is impossible after having experienced military combat because survivors are generally haunted by past demons that take the shape of traumatic responses and belated symptoms. Representations of trauma can be better located in this afterwardsness because it is precisely there where traumas manifest at full capacity through PTSD symptomatology. As we have seen, the ego can have great difficulties in assimilating an intense event because the experience is so devastating that the self absents itself during the episode in order to prevent further cognitive and emotional harm. Thus, the wound inflicted by a particular trauma (in this case, war) remains latent for a determined period of time and then emerges primarily as repetition compulsion, i.e., the individual re-experiences and relives that particular moment as a coping strategy hoping to lessen trauma's intensity. The main implication underlying this idea is that the literary productions construct the survivor persona in a constant state of resistance and questioning, where painful flashbacks or intrusive memory shards can have the potential of redirecting the traumatic impulses into new areas.

As regards the sociocultural context, in general terms the war had a profound impact in both countries, especially for Argentina since the nation was in the midst of a severe military regime and eventually lost the war. Following this idea, the analysis of the corpus has revealed that the study of the sociocultural context is vital when dealing with texts inspired or originated from a collective account of trauma, as most of the times, the poets inscribe sociocultural references and intertextual figures that set an active dialogue between the texts and historical context. For example, both writers mention specific geographical names from the islands, refer to battles that took place during the

conflict, and use names from national artists in the case of Caso Rosendi. It is also worth noting that the texts' readings have been supplemented with relevant biographical information, particularly facts related to the authors being Malvinas War veterans and ideas behind their creative impulses drawn from available interviews and book prologues. This adds another layer of meaning to the texts, as the extra information sheds light on aspects that might have proven more difficult to appreciate and provide details and pertinent facts that enhance the process of reading and understanding. By way of illustration, discovering that Caso Rosendi's "El último enemigo" was written to honor Jorge Mártire or that the soldier in "Cuando cayó el soldado Vojkovic" was Caso Rosendi's friend changed the perspective and aroused more interest and motivation when engaging with the texts. In this respect, studying Malvinas war poetry from two authors belonging to opposing countries in a military conflict proved an enriching experience. The field of comparative literature enables the reading of texts produced under different circumstances, languages, and countries by centering more on similarities than differences. In this case, literature works as a bridge between cultures, fostering mutual understanding that transcends the boundaries of the military conflict, reinforcing the idea that there are no victors in war, only pain and suffering for its participants, an idea that highly permeates the texts. After taking into account the larger sociocultural and political practices that influence and give origin to the traumatic experience, the analysis of the corpus indicates that "trauma's meaning is locatable rather than permanently lost" (Balaev, 2014, p. 8). By setting up a relationship between the texts and the sociocultural spheres that enable trauma's proliferation and subsequent deferred permanence, it was possible to appreciate the different dimensions of trauma and the diversity of poetic expression; an idea that defies the limited view of trauma as a silencing event. This was achieved because the interpretative framework of the pluralistic model of trauma studies is inherently multidisciplinary and contemplates the complex nature of traumatic depictions that go beyond purely biological and universalizing conceptions of trauma.

It has also been established that trauma has multiple causes and effects and that the individual's responses and reactions to it are multifaceted, even more so if we remember that war is a collective account of trauma that positions soldiers in vulnerable states, prone to develop traumatic responses in a belated fashion. The processing and understanding of an extreme event trigger a period of latency in the individual, which will eventually become active and develop into traumatic responses that most of the time can

be linked to the clinical term of posttraumatic stress disorder. For this reason, PTSD proved to be a valuable theoretical tool for the present study because it encapsulates the varied manifestations of trauma into one conceptual category and organizing framework. In this sense, the comparative analysis has shown that trauma cannot be conceived in binaries, restricting the experience of the individuals to isolated neurobiological elements only and their subsequent responses. On the contrary, trauma and the way it manifests mainly through PTSD is better read as a spectrum; studying not only the personal circumstances of the traumatized subject but the contextual properties that influence and inform how trauma can be experienced and reoriented into different directions.

One of the main objectives of this thesis pointed at recognizing and establishing each author's personal writing style when dealing with the shared theme of war trauma and its poetic representation. After comparing the poems and reading them under rigorous scrutiny with the method of close reading, it was possible to outline McNally and Caso Rosendi's main differences as regards creative choices. As it was expected, the authors differ in the way they express themselves in relation to length, punctuation, layout, use of metaphorical language, rhyming patterns, and word choice. Their unique ways of expressing themselves while constructing the poems exemplify their personal voice when dealing with the same subject matter and illustrate that even though their writing is different their anti-war stance is not. The books' aesthetic strategy stands in clear antithesis to texts that glorify or justify war in any sense by outlining the intricate relationships between representations of warfare and complex aspects of trauma theory. Moreover, the systematic study of the books' stylistic choices also confirmed the hypothesis of the texts as possible enablers of empathic responses. Through identification, the poets symbolically address readers and place them in situations where they can at least begin a process of understanding pain and trauma within the confines of a literary work, especially if we contemplate that "effective trauma texts engage readers in a critical process by immersing them in, and yet providing perspective on, the flawed thinking, feeling, and behavior of the traumatized individual" (Vickroy in Balaev, 2014, p. 138). Future research could further explore the relationships between the reader and the ethical implications in engaging trauma texts informed by the fields of affect theory and empathy studies, which rely on research from cognitive, developmental and social psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy.

As we have seen, the literary productions focus on the soldier/veteran's psychological and physical wounds inflicted during combat and their constant reappearance, which is always significant for the persona as he goes back not only to try to conquer his own personal traumas but to remember his fallen comrades, give them voice, feel he is with them once more, and honor their memory. Hence, his reactions cannot be defined solely as psychological symptoms and traumatic responses, but rather as active ways of transforming and reorienting his impulses into different possibilities. The persona's challenge lies in attributing meaning to the extreme experience, reshaping his identity, and embracing new truths that serve as an interpretive key to his own traumatic experience. Put differently, the poetic representations in *Soldados* and *Screaming in Silence* show war-related trauma beyond its silencing conception and demonstrate that overwhelming events can be linguistically coded into new conceptual landscapes that reclaim the past. To take the study of the poetry books a step further, it should be noted that poetry as a genre to represent and read trauma was highly effective. More often than not, trauma studies scholars focus on the analysis of trauma narratives, mostly delving into novels, narrative techniques, characterization, shifting viewpoints, and how time is used. In this case, the poetry books were approached from a different perspective, dealing with rhetorical devices and figures typical of the genre like metaphors, similes, rhyming schemes, imagery, personas, and so forth. From this standpoint, poetry proved to present unique ways of embedding meaning into trauma representations, making use of creative resources that demonstrate its capacity in coding and reading the wound. This element points to the category of trauma poetics, another interesting aspect to continue exploring in future studies. This is especially true if we realize that through poetry, it was possible to reconfigure the unspeakable into poetical responses that reclaim the absence and break the silence. As Gustavo Caso Rosendi states (Flachsland et al, 2009), "la poesía es la expresión justa para aquello que no podés decir".

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