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Against Embedded Literature

Brian Turner's Iraq War Poetry

Abstract

Brian Turner has quickly risen as the US poet of the Iraq War. Though many have praised his work on both aesthetic and political grounds, others have objected to his inability to move beyond an American soldier's perspective. My essay explores the terms of this controversy, suggesting that Turner does—at least at times—try to incorporate in his poetry the viewpoint of the enemy. My argument is that Turner's work could be described as "cosmopolitan," at least if by that term we mean, as Bruce Robbins has suggested, not an impossibly "neutral" perspective but, more realistically, "a striving to transcend partiality that is itself partial" (1992, 181).

Keywords: *Brian Turner, war poetry, Iraq war, Cosmopolitanism, American literature*

T he US-led war in Afghanistan, and to a greater extent the second Iraq War, have by now both yielded a substantial literary output in the form of essays, poems, autobiographical narratives, short stories, and novels. Written for the most part by those who served in the conflict, many of these accounts are certainly interesting on a documentary as well as on a socio-cultural level, but often may leave a bit to be desired as literature (no matter how contested this term has become over the last decades).[1] A number of writers, however, have garnered positive reviews comparing them to classic war-literature authors such as Ernest Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque, Norman Mailer, Joseph Heller, Tim O'Brien, and even Homer. A short list of acclaimed fictional texts would include at least Kevin Powers' *The Yellow Birds*, the recipient of the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award and a finalist for the 2012 National Book Award; Phil Klay's *Redeployment*, the winner of the 2014 National Book Award (as well as of a number of other prizes); Ben Fountain's *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*, the winner of the 2012 National Book Critics Circle Awards. Also worth mentioning, is the satirical novel *Fobbit* by David Abrams, the recipient of a number of lesser prizes and, like *Billy Lynn*, often hailed as

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[1] For an interesting 'ethnographic' reading of some of the early texts on the new American wars, see Brown and Lutz 2007.

the *Catch 22* of the War on Terror. Among the short story collections, the best so far is *Fire and Forget: Short Stories from the Long War*, a book endorsed by the late E. L. Doctorow as "necessary to write, necessary to read," according to the backcover of the 2013 edition. In the realm of verse, Brian Turner, described in a recent article as "a rock star" of contemporary poetry circles (Bishop 2010,300), seems to stand out as *the* Iraq War poet. His first collection, *Here, Bullet* (2005), sold more than twenty-five thousand copies, with his second volume, *Phantom Noise* (2010), also doing extremely well. His work has been compared to that of celebrated war poets like Wilfred Owen, Randall Jarrell, Yusef Komunyakaa, and Bruce Weigl.[2] All the works I have just mentioned, as well as others, are undoubtedly interesting on a number of different levels, and though many are debuts, they are for the most part the product of remarkable talent. However, a question one might wish to ask is how valuable these texts are as a record of American empire. What I mean by that is, quite simply, how much these much-praised writers help us in making sense of the US conduct toward 'foreign' peoples and their territories. As John Carlos Rowe has written,

> modern imperialism has relied centrally on discursive and symbolic means to exercise, disguise, and justify its force. […] The poet, novelist, and critic may have no powers to combat the troops called up to secure territories for the empire, but they certainly do have the ability to question the rhetoric of imperialism and educate their readers regarding the cultures and peoples subjugated. (2000, 294)

From this perspective, I submit, the literary representations of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq are often rather disappointing. In a series of articles appearing on the online journal *Jadaliyya*, the Arabist Elliott Colla and the Iraqi scholar and poet Sinaan Antoon have both suggested that most US literature on the Iraq war is best understood as "embedded literature" (Antoon 2014; Colla 2014). Colla argues that, as is the case with embedded journalism,

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[2] I must add, however, that a great deal of war or, better, 'anti-war' poetry has been written both before and after the US attack on Iraq. An excellent discussion of "The Reemergence of War Resistance Poetry" following George Bush's launching of the War on Terror can be found in Metres 2007, 219-36. The work of poets opposed to the war acquired great media visibility when Sam Hamill and others refused Laura Bush's invitation to a White House Symposium on "Poetry and the American Voice." In record time, besides Sam Hamill's *Poets against the War*, three more anthologies appeared in 2013: *100 Poets against the War* (Swifte 2003); *enough* (London and Scalapino 2003); and *101 Poems against War* (Hoollis and Keegan 2003). Metres' approach is nicely balanced, as he sees both the potential and the limitations of different poetry genres. For another interesting and useful discussion of both British and American poetry, see Gupta 2011, 32-95.

> In the new war canon the Iraq invasion and occupation again appear as almost exclusively American events. Again, Iraqis are largely absent from the frame. Again, torment and pain— and humanity—belong to US soldiers rather than Iraqi civilians. Again, the war and its rationale may be available for critique, but only in a very limited way. Like the failure of embedded journalism before it, the failure of embedded literature is one of imagination and research. (2014)

The article in which the statement I have just quoted appears is entitled "The Military-Literary Complex." The author himself admits that, "it may be an overstatement to call the new model of embedded literature a 'military-literary complex,' since much of the activity—especially vet activity—is independent, uncoordinated, and even dissident." Yet, Colla goes on to write, "there is evidence […] of a strategy to make sure military stories have a privileged place on bookshelves. Commercial publishers are not passive actors in this story, for they are publishing and promoting military titles with regularity while consistently marginalizing war literature by Iraqi authors" (2014). One may object that the nationality of the writer is no guarantee that his or her text will provide a more comprehensive perspective. Perhaps the challenge for a writer is to write, in a sense, above the fray, so that, as Simone Weil wrote of Homer's *Iliad*, one would be hard pressed to decide whether the poet was Trojan or Greek, American or Iraqi. Therefore, while the marginalization of Iraqi and more generally non-US writers is certainly something that deserves sharp criticism, it is on the failure of imagination and research that Colla tracks in the work of US authors that I want to dwell for a few moments. I will do so by referring to the critical remarks that the afore-mentioned Iraqi writer Sinaan Antoon has directed at Brian Turner's first book, which he sees as an example par excellence of "embedded poetry."

According to Antoon, *Here, Bullet*, "views Iraq and Iraqis from an observation post and through military binoculars. And whatever it sees is filtered through a version of the war's official narrative. The occupier is a victim trapped in a foreign landscape, fighting a war in an incomprehensible place" (2014). Even though Antoon acknowledges that Turner does not completely erase the suffering of Iraqi civilians, he insists that Turner's poetry participates in a narrative that "obfuscates the tragic reality that is Iraq and absolves the authors of the war of any responsibility" (2014). His article ends with three lapidary statements condemning Turner's "embedded" poetry:

> The civilian victims are disappeared.
> The soldiers are the victims.
> Did the war wage itself?

The critical points Antoon raises in his brief but sharp review are important ones, and I cannot do justice to all of them here. Without altogether discounting the importance of his remarks, however, regarding the three final points he raises I must observe that:

(1) Antoon himself writes in the article that Turner does not ignore altogether the sufferings of civilians.

(2) It is hard to find any war literature that would not consider the soldiers themselves (beginning of course with those fighting on the author's side) as victims of the war. Of course, this is problematic insofar as soldiers are also agents of the war, and presenting them only as victims may have the effect of turning war into an impersonal mechanism that, as Antoon suggests in his third point, has no cause outside itself. Yet, no one would deny that soldiers are also victims, both during and perhaps especially after the war—as witness the tragic fate of so many veterans of all wars. It is no accident that pacifist and anti-war literature has opposed the image of the beautiful, tough, masculine hero by calling attention to how war actually brutalizes soldiers.[3]

(3) Most students of war literature would probably agree with Samuel Hynes' statement, in his influential *The Soldier's Tale*, that "why war" is not a question to which war stories either can or should provide an answer (Hynes 1997, 11-12). Even though one may well resist this idea—I, for one, find it rather problematic—it is true that traditionally war literature, including much of what goes by the name of 'anti-war' literature, is often vague when it comes to denouncing the causes of war.

What I am trying to say is not that Antoon's reservations on US war literature on Iraq in general, and on Turner in particular, are gratuitous. However, I do not think Antoon gives Turner enough credit for the ways in which he does attempt to look at Iraq by setting aside, so to speak, his binoculars. Turner's texts do belong in many ways in the soldier-poet tradition: he is a direct witness of both war's horrors and of soldiers' remarkable spirit of sacrifice. Yet, Turner's poetry is also animated by a sincere desire to produce a record of events open to the viewpoints, the culture, and the history of the people of Iraq. In this sense, I believe that Turner's outlook deserves to be identified as cosmopolitan, at least if by that term we mean, as Bruce Robbins has suggested, not an impossibly "neutral" perspective but, more realistically, "a striving to transcend partiality that is itself partial, but no more so than similar cognitive strivings of many diverse peoples" (Robbins 1992, 181). As he has written more recently,

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[3] The legitimate concern with the soldier as a victim of war, however, can easily feed into what Roy Scranton (2015)—a soldier, writer, and critic himself—has attacked as "the myth of the trauma hero." Similar reservations on the limitations of recent US war fiction can be found in Sacks 2015.

cosmopolitanism may be an indispensable intellectual and political resource in confronting "the indifference, the ignorance, the lazy habits of backing one's own and of not thinking too much about the other side that maintain a sort of perpetual rehearsal for future military intervention while they also legitimate and enable ongoing ones" (Robbins 2012, 6). If that is what we mean by cosmopolitanism, Turner's work—whatever its limitations and contradictions—is in my view a valuable effort to turn it into a poetic practice.

In the last chapter of a book I have recently published (Mariani 2015), I have focused mostly on the ways in which Turner contextualizes the US invasion of Iraq within a much-expanded historical, even pre-historical framework, thus intersecting the problematic notion of "deep time," as well as on the larger question of forgiveness.[4] In the present essay, by looking briefly at a few poems I could not discuss in the book, I would like to concentrate on what rhetorical strategies Turner deploys in order to include 'the enemy' in his poetic discourse. In poems like "2,000 lbs," or "16 Iraqi Policemen" (Turner 2005, 51-4; 41)—which point to the literally shattered lives of *both* occupiers *and* occupied—Turner shows how human beings from both sides are swept away by an impersonal force closely resembling the one Simone Weil, in the essay I referred to earlier on, describes as a relentlessly destructive power "before which man's flesh shrinks away" (Weil 1956, 11). This is not to say that Turner tries to ease his guilt by always blaming a disembodied, cruel Fate. In "Caravan" (Turner 2005, 71), for example, the poet contrasts the boxes full of "millions of bullets" shipped to the Persian Gulf from the US, to the cardboard boxes full of body parts (which are of course the net result of a war fed by the constant supply of ammo) "which will not be taped and shipped / to the White House lawn." This may stop short of identifying the causes of war, but it does indicate that that the war is not waging itself; that it is waged by political power.

Equanimity does not necessarily mean equidistance. In "Body Bags," Turner juxtaposes the cynicism and callousness of US soldiers to the rightful questions raised by the dead Iraqis:

> who look as if they might roll over,
> wake from a dream and question us
> about the blood drying on their scalps,
> the bullets lodged in the back of their skulls
> […]
> and rise, wondering who these strangers are
> who would kick their hard feet, saying

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[4] By expanding enormously the historical context in which cultural forms may be understood, "deep time" (as employed for example in Dimock 2006) opens up texts to new readings, but at the risk of overlooking the significant differences that mark specific historical and political settings.

> *Last call, motherfucker. Last call.* (Turner 2005, 24)[5]

Here one might well say that the poet is much closer to the Iraqi victims than he is to his own fellow soldiers. While the former pose a legitimate question, the latter have only insulting words. To the soldiers kicking the bodies of the dead enemies, this is their last call. The poet makes sure they will call again.

Turner's effort to offer us sympathetic and humanized portraits of both Iraqi combatants and civilians stops short, I think, of any imaginative exploitation of an exoticized Other. The feelings Turner displays for the landscape, the people, the culture, and the history of Iraq is both full of admiration and regret. Turner is a poet but the member of an invading army too, and while he is never as merciless regarding the "enemy" as his comrades in "Body Bags," he knows his relation with the Iraqi population cannot but be marked, for the most part, by ambivalence. As he writes in "What Every Soldier Should Know,"

> There are men who earn eighty dollars
> to attack you, five thousand to kill.
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> Small children who will play with you,
> old men with their talk, women who offer chai—
>
> and any one of them
> may dance over your body tomorrow. (Turner 2005, 19-20)

Turner knows that, due to his relationship with Iraq being always mediated by war, his regard for the people and the environment is compromised by the surrounding violence and hatred as well. In the prose poem "Last Night's Dream," the speaker imagines making love to an Arabic-speaking woman and while at times the two seem to reach a perfect understanding ("In the dream she kisses Arabic into my skin and I understand every word of it"), the love-making bleeds into war-making:

> In the dream her breasts become confused in my lips. I shoot an azimuth to her navel
> while her fingertips touch me with concussions, as if explosives rang through the nerves
> of my body, as if I am strung with wire, a huge receiver of UHF radio transmissions,
> frequency hopping with our tongues as we kiss and I slide into her with a sound of
> flashbang grenades that make her eyes cloud over in smoke from the heat of it.
> […]

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[5] To insist that all combatants, no matter what side they are on, are in the end victimized by violence is a "Homeric" (according to Weil 1956) stance that does not necessarily entail ignoring the political responsibilities a given nation has in starting a war.

> In the dream our orgasm destroys a nation, it leaves thermite and gunpowder in the air
> above us, a crackling of radio static as we kiss on, long into the denouement of skin and
> fire, where medevac helicopters fly in the dark caverns of our lungs in search of the
> wounded, and we breathe them one to another, a deep rotorwash of pain and bandages.
> (Turner 2005, 65)

To my mind, far from being an allegorical representation of the American rape of Iraq, this is a metaphorical rendering of how, given their surroundings, the two lovers are unable to leave war behind. After all, the poem is dedicated "to Ishtar," the Babylonian goddess of both love and war, a cross between Venus and Athena. War has colonized the lovers' minds, their souls, and their bodies. On the other hand, it has not extinguished their desire for love, for opening oneself to the Other.[6]

In her intelligent study of Turner's first collection, Stacy Peebles writes that

> though Turner seems to enjoy taking Iraq in, he does so with respect […] he watches, studies,
> considers, emphasizes. The clarity of his writing comes from the desire to cross boundaries
> between people, nations, and ways of seeing. Yet as the collection progresses, the viability of
> boundary crossing as a sustainable or even productive practice becomes increasingly suspect.
> Moments of clarity are inextricable from moments of destruction, and light that illuminates
> can also blind. (2011, 129)

The prose poem I just quoted provides a poignant example of the irresolvable tensions mentioned by Peebles. Another instance can be found in the contrasting images of the sun in the final lines of two consecutive poems, "R & R" and "Dreams from the Malaria Pills (Bosch)." In the former, the speaker, "all out of adrenaline, / all out of smoking incendiaries," imagines the future reunion with his lover back home, and in the closing lines sees "Birds that carry / all my bullets into the barrel of the sun" (*Here* 44). The image suggests a farewell to arms of sorts, with the sun mercifully accepting the speaker's ammunition. In the latter poem, however, the dream is incendiary and the sun, too, "rises up over the earth at dawn / like the opened mouth of a flamethrower, 140 degrees" (*Here* 45).

It may well be true that *Here, Bullet* "ends on an unmistakable note of loss" (Peebles 2011, 132)—it would indeed be surprising if it were not so for a book that finds nothing redeeming in the violence of the war. Yet, even in a poem like "Night in Blue," where the poet admits to having

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[6] I acknowledge, however, that the poem may be read also in more critical terms, with the language of war superimposed on the language of love precisely to signify rape. Judging from the response of the audience to two public discussions of this text, I would say that each reading has, roughly, a 50% rate of approval.

"no words to speak of war / I never dug the graves in Talafar / I never held the mother crying in Ramadi," he does indeed have something, however small, however traumatic, to take back home:

> I have only the shadows under the leaves
> to take with me, the quiet of the desert,
> the low fog of Balad, orange groves
> with ice forming on the rinds of fruit.
> I have a woman crying in my ear
> late at night when the stars go dim,
> moonlight and sand as resonance
> of the dust of bones, and nothing more. (Turner 2005, 70)

In an important passage of his book *Globalization and War*, Tarak Barkawi writes that

> War involves interconnection between peoples and places, whether experienced by the soldiers actually fighting one another or by civilians on the home front following events from afar […]. The enemy, in wartime and later on, is always constituted in and through meaning in ways that relate the self to the other. War produces cultural resources that can be used both to vilify the enemy and glorify the self, or to find common human ground between combatants. (2006, 123)

My contention is that Turner's poetry strives to take the latter route, and I would even go as far as saying that it provides some of the most humane, compassionate, and interesting pictures of the 'enemy' and its environs to be found in the whole tradition of American war writing. In its best moments Turner's work projects what I would call a transnational imaginary where Iraqi as well as Americans are both, simultaneously, at home and exiled. In one of the poems from section I of *Here, Bullet*, "The ghosts of American soldiers / wander the streets of Balad by night / unsure of their way home" (Turner 2005, 28). In the erotic prose-poem I quoted earlier, orgasm is seen as capable of destroying a nation, an ambiguous formulation given the poem's oscillation between the language of love and the rhetoric of war, but one with emancipatory potential nonetheless. In another poem, from the book's final section IV, the speaker imagines providing his own personal answers to the routine questions posed by a radio operator concerning a medical evacuation procedure. To question number 8, regarding the patient's nationality, the speaker answers:

> If they die here, what will it matter? The plains of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, this land of confluence and heat will become their nation, and even if they live, it will be theirs as well—the land that tested their souls and changed them. (Turner 2005, 69)

Here Turner may be said to rewrite J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur's celebrated motto, *Ubi panis, ibi patria*, so as to read, *Ubi bellum, ibi patria*: war redefines the concepts of "home" and "nation" both internally and externally. The interconnection of Iraq and America generated by the war lives on in the soldier's memories and consciousness, thus giving rise to what may be described as a third imaginary space owned by neither nation. It is by no means a liberated or Utopian space, but it is a ground, I believe, where some meaningful reconciliation may take place.

Several of the poems in Turner's second collection, *Phantom Noise* (Turner 2010), are devoted to a description of this transnational meeting ground, whose outlines, however, may be found also in texts from *Here, Bullet*. An exemplary one is "Katyusha Rockets," where the missiles shot by the Iraqi fighters are imagined as travelling so far away in both time and space so as "to land in the meridians of Divisadero Street," near the poet's home, during a veterans' parade. The outside scene is the objective correlative of what goes on inside the speaker's mind:

> Rockets often fall
> in the night sky of the skull, down long avenues
> of the brain's myelin sheathing, over synapses
> and the rough structures of thought, they fall
> into the hippocampus, into the seat of memory—
> where lovers and strangers and old friends
> entertain themselves, unaware of the dangers
> headed their way, or that I will need to search
> among them. (Turner 2005, 43)

This no-nation's landscape of the mind hardly provides any idyllic reconciliation. It is not a pacified space, but one where dangers lurk nearly everywhere. Once the poet is back in the US the war remains a haunting presence, no matter how much one wishes to "improve" oneself and feel "at home" again. In the tellingly entitled "At Lowe's Home Improvement Center," the speaker accidentally busts "a 50 pound box of double-headed nails" and he confuses them with "firing pins / from M-4s and M-16s." This incident triggers a series of war-related memories and the distance from "front" to "home" collapses as "Sheets of plywood drop with the airy breath / of mortars the moment they crack open / in shrapnel," and "Cash registers open and slide shut / with a sound of machine guns being charged" (Turner 2010, 15, 16). Likewise, in "Perimeter Watch" the poet gets ready for sleep and double-checks the bolts, "just to make sure," but through the venetian blinds he sees scenes from Iraq: water buffalos, prisoners of war, snipers, and, to boot, "it's difficult to tell the living / from the dead, walking the dim elephant grass, papyrus thickets / lining the asphalt streets. I see Bosch, my old rifleman, / sleepwalking—on

fire and unaware of it" (Turner 2010, 27). These haunting images are part of what, in the poem that provides the title for Turner's second book, the poet describes as "phantom noise"—"this ringing hum   this / bullet-borne language   ringing / shell-fall and static" (Turner 2010, 38). Unpleasant as they undoubtedly are, drenched with images of death, suffering, and the poet's own guilt, these memories convey what I think must be described as a moral imperative. Thus, "Perimeter Watch" does not end with the speaker's attempt to barricade himself inside his home but, on the contrary, with an invitation to welcome those outside, no matter how unsettling their company may turn out to be:

> When I dial 911,
> the operator tells me to use proper radio procedure,
> reminding me that my call sign is Ghost 1-3 Alpha,
> and that it's time, long past time, to unlock the door
> and let these people in. (Turner 2010, 38)

Also in "Illumination Rounds" the scene is suspended between feelings of culpability, anxiety, and a desire to find a way to accommodate the ghostly remnants of war haunting the poet's dreams:

> Parachute Flares drift in the burn time
> of dream, their canopies deployed
> in the sky above our bed. My lover
>
> sleeps as Iraqi translators shuffle
> in through the doorway—visiting
> as loved ones might visit a hospital room,
> ill at ease, each of them holding
> their sawn-off heads in hand. (Turner 2010, 29)

In what is both an act of mercy and perhaps a futile attempt to bury all his unpleasant memories, the speaker starts digging in his backyard. "We need to help them, if only with a coffin," he explains to his lover when she finds him "shoveling / the grassy turf." Yet, after staring at the "blurry figures,"

> […] with a gentle hand
> [she] stays the shovel I hold, to say—
> *We should invite them into our home.*
> *We should learn their names, their history.*
> *We should know these people*
> *we bury in the earth.* (Turner 2010, 30)

These words are uttered in a dream; they express a wish that may not be easily realized in real life. As Turner has stated in one of his "Home Fires" entries for *The New York Times*, he is aware of the difficulties and the pain entailed in his choice, but he also believes that this is the only ethical thing he (and, ideally, all of America) should do: "If we learn who the dead are and what they were like, if we allow the dead their own unique humanity, we risk the possibility of being overwhelmed by loss. I believe that, as a country which has initiated war, we have no right to do otherwise" (Turner 2007).

In both *Here, Bullet* and *Phantom Noise*, I could not find a single poem where the word "peace" appears. Turner mentions love, refers to hearts breaking and people crying, writes some beautiful lines about his and other people's desire for a clean break from a world at war. One might then say that "peace" is actually very much on the poet's mind, despite its nominal absence. Yet, the poems in which some momentary stay against the cruelty and confusion of war is achieved are rare and, for the most part, they project a longing for peace of mind and soul that is factually unavailable. In "Elephant Grass," for example, Turner describes a local woman who, done with her domestic duties, as the moon rises over Mosul finally finds relief in bathing in the river

> where she undresses, loosening her hejab
> and laying it down, easing her body
> out into the dark water, cooling her
> better than she ever imagined it would. (Turner 2005, 29)

As Peebles correctly notes, despite the sensuality of the language, "The image here is less one of eroticization than it is of envy. How nice it must be, he [the poet] reflects, to put away the clothes that make us who we are, and find shelter in the consuming darkness" (2011, 123). On the other hand—and this should not be taken in any way as a condemnation of the poem on my part—we might want to add that here, in order to envy the woman, Turner must first imaginatively appropriate her as a woman who would find bathing a truly alleviating experience, something that anyone familiar with the endemic, endless fighting that went on in Mosul since the invasion would probably see as at best a pious wish. Whether describing the Iraqi or the US terrain, Turner projects a world that has trouble finding the peace it needs and partly longs for.[7] To quote from Carolyn Forché's blurb for *Phantom Noise*, "Flashbacks explode

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[7] In a piece published on March 17, 2008, five years after the invasion of Iraq, Renee Montagne and Lourdes Garcia-Navarro noted how "perhaps no place is more emblematic of the war than

the daily hell of Baghdad into the streets and malls of peaceful California, at the same time sending Turner's imagination reeling back to Iraq." As Tom Engelhardt (2010), among others, has eloquently argued, the US is a war state. It should come as no surprise that for many of the soldiers who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the war does not end once they return home, nor does the violence, especially if we consider the rate of suicides among the War-on-Terror veterans, or the violence they unleash onto others.[8] Vis-à-vis this "forever war" (as Dexter Filkins [2008] has aptly renamed the so-called War on Terror), Turner's evocation of a "third space" beyond the nation, and beyond the clutches of empire and embedded language—whatever its aesthetic and ideological imperfections—is an important act of poetic and political resistance.

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the northern city of Mosul. The fighting in Iraq's third-largest city seems to just go on and on. The US military takes part of the city only to lose it again. Insurgents move out, then they come back in." *National Public Radio*, http://www.npr.org/2008/03/17/88336442/mosul-and-the-fight-for-iraq. Last visited 27/11/2020.

[8] As of early June 2012, there had been 154 suicides among active-duty troops since the beginning of the year, which means nearly one suicide per day. This represents an 18 per cent increase over the rates of suicides for the same period in the previous year (see Williams). On the high number of veterans who perpetrate domestic violence or engage in other kinds of criminal behavior, see Swords to Plowshares (2011).

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