

Original Research Article

Writing the Wound: Sinan Antoon's Poetic Vision of War, Exile, and Memory

Sura Hussein Mohammed Ali^{1*}

¹Department of Preparation and Training, Baghdad General Directorate of Education, Rusafa II, Ministry of Education, Baghdad, Iraq

*Corresponding Author: Sura Hussein Mohammed Ali

Department of Preparation and Training, Baghdad General Directorate of Education, Rusafa II, Ministry of Education, Baghdad, Iraq

Article History

Received: 15.08.2025

Accepted: 11.10.2025

Published: 21.10.2025

Abstract: This article is an enquiry work of the poetic elements in the writing of Sinan Antoon, an Iraqi poet, novelist and translator, whose works are to a large extent gravitated around the interrelated thematic areas of war, exile, and memory. It identifies the literariness of Antoon with the wider Anglo-Arab semiotic environment and situates the study of his poetry in trauma, memory and diasporic writing. It describes and analyses how his lyric ballet choreographies of victims of violence and displacement become loud while at the same time, silently resist a complete erasure. The article through close and detailed first-hand engagements with the emphasized texts and contemporaneous theoretical, critical, and cultural historiographies shows how Antoon's art work first of its character and steadily grows into one sort of witness and artistic refuse against it. Moreover, his bilingual composition and self-translation emphasis the issue of representation and cultural mediation, thus his poems are able to flow not only within one linguistic but also geographical and spatial areas. Sinan's writing is the model that built on the heritage of previous war and exile poets, at the same time, it is a work which always considers the condition of Iraq as a result of the Gulf War and sanctions, U.S. invasion, sectarian conflict, and the consequences of all these events. In the final stage, this piece of writing is communicating the idea that Sinan Antoon's poetry is a manifestation of cultural memory, which renders a visual record of destruction, utters the voices once muted, and celebrates the power of literature which, first of all, sees and thereby remembers and resists.

Keywords: Exile, Memory, Poetry, Sinan Antoon, War.

INTRODUCTION

Sinan Antoon, was what could be referred to as a real talent. Not only was he a poet, but he was a novelist, a translator, and a scholar. He was born in Baghdad in 1967 (Habeeb, 2015). Eventually, he left Iraq just after the Gulf War in 1991 and remained in the United States. While he was in the United States, he bagged a Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Harvard and M.A. in Arab Studies from Georgetown (Alhudhairi, 2021; Habeeb, 2015; Alkhalifah, 2023). Sinan Antoon is currently the co-founder and co-editor of *Jadaliyya* and an Associate Professor at New York University's (NYU) Gallatin School. His creative work has been the conversation of many, and is not limited to one or two genres, it includes poetry, novels, translations, essays or criticism, both in Arabic and English. Some of his poetic works are listed as *Laylun Wahidun fi Kull al-Mudun* ("One Night in All Cities") (Arabic, 2010), *Kama fi al-Sama'* ("As in Heaven") (more recent in Arabic) and *The Baghdad Blues* (English, 2007) (Alhudhairi, 2021; Anari Bozchallouei *et al.*, 2024). Some of the novels that Antoon penned are namely *I'jaam: An Iraqi Rhapsody*, *The Pomegranate Alone* (also published as *The Corpse Washer*- in English) and *Ya Maryam* (translated as *The Baghdad Eucharist*) and *The Book of Collateral Damage* (Wikipedia contributors, n.d.). When writing as a cultural critic, Antoon does Arabic and English media (e.g. *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, and *Arab Press*) (Center for Book Arts, n.d.). He also works as a translator of all the great Arab poets, such as *Mahmud Darwish* and *Saadi Youssef*. On the one hand, Antoon's biography, being brought up in Baghdad, experiencing the sanctions, wars, dictatorship, and exile, displacement, and the work of his college on classical as well as modern Arabic poetry, have given his writing a powerful depth of both living experience and literary tradition (American Academy in

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

CITATION: Sura Hussein Mohammed Ali (2025). Writing the Wound: Sinan Antoon's Poetic Vision of War, Exile, and Memory. *South Asian Res J Art Lang Lit*, 7(5): 144-155. 144

Berlin, n.d.). For centuries, literature is something which has been used to describe, observe, and understand the aspects that could not be expressed of conflict, displacement, and recall.

One crucial fact is being recognized more and more by theoretical and empirical research: stories, poems, and memoirs are not only informational sources, but also places where people from all over the world show that they have witnessed violence, that they have developed new behaviours during chaotic times, or that they have rebelled against or even changed the ideas of mutual memory. One of the proofs is war trauma-related research showing that storytelling, regardless of whether it is autobiographical or fictional, can give the sufferer a way to relief, a way to see the situation from a new perspective, and a way of providing political criticism parallel to the main theme of the narrative. The studies on forcibly displaced people indicate that narration is essential in uncovering residents' mental pains like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety as well as the ways of overcoming them through memory, community, and imaginative reconstruction (Bürgin *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the power of literature became evident in the Arab world, especially in the aftermath of the Iraq war in 2003, as the main vehicle for both unfiltered visual records of destruction (violence, wars of religion, occupier) and opening up voices that had always been denied any chance of being heard (minority groups, diasporic communities, women). Along with other writers, Antoon's work is not only the testimony of history but also the interrogation of how memory is constructed, how trauma is deepening, and how exile is reshaping identity. Most recently, the question of ethical difficulty in suffering representation (not to show as a spectacle and not oversimplifying) and the influence of poetry, metaphor, fragment, etc., were highlighted as one of the foremost ideas in recent research.

This review critically evaluates Sinan Antoon's Arabic poetry and translation, focusing on themes of war, exile, and memory. It examines Antoon's personal biography and historical events affecting Iraq, such as the Gulf War, sanctions, US invasion, sectarian conflict, and ISIS rise. The research examines recurring motifs, formal strategies, and linguistic devices used to evoke empathy and connect Antoon's poetry to broader discourse. The review focuses on Antoon's major works of poetry, including *Laylun Wahidun fi Kull al-Mudun*, *Kama fi al-Sama*, *The Baghdad Blues*, and *Postcards from the Underworld*, as well as his essays and novels. It also explores the influence of translation on memory formation in diasporic and cross-linguistic environments. This piece covers Antoon's poetic voice's growth and change over time.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study uses a qualitative literature review design with the focus of looking at Sinan Antoon's poetry and the related-spoken literature through the eyes of trauma, exile and diaspora, and memory studies.

Data sources

Besides web archives, journals, and monographs, the main sources were Antoon's poems, novels, essays, and interviews both in Arabic and English. To get secondary source data, peer-reviewed articles, edited collections, dissertations, and monographs were used as well as some online web archives that have been verified for their reliability.

Search strategy

A very thorough search was performed on several databases, such as: *JSTOR*, *Project MUSE*, *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global*, *Scopus*, and *Google Scholar* to find relevant materials for the study. The phrase "*Sinan Antoon*" was combined with such terms as *trauma*, *memory*, *exile*, *translation*, *Iraqi literature*, and *war poetry*. Besides the principal search, various directions have been followed in the scholarly field to include such works as speech text literature, interviews with writers, and websites of cultural institutions.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The time range of Antoon's publications was taken as a basis for the inclusion of sources from 1997 to 2025. The main feature of the included sources was that they were either peer-reviewed or the universities verified them as partners in the field. Consequently, at the same time, the authors whose main concern was stance without scientific ground were avoided.

Data extraction and analysis

Significant materials were sorted and implemented in thematic groups matching Antoon's trauma, exile, testimony and memory. The major treatment technique used on Antoon's poetry was the close-reading approach, while the secondary sources were critically reviewed to pinpoint agreements and conversations among the existing scholarship.

Theoretical framework

The study was based on the main ideas from the work of Caruth, LaCapra, Hirsch in trauma literature, postcolonial literary criticism and memory studies. Moreover, these concepts helped the researcher to find the author's intentions in Antoon's iconographic usage, muteness, dissemination and bilingualism for portrayal of war and exile.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptual Framework

Theories of trauma and memory in literature

Recent literary critiques of trauma and memory serve as the main architectural basis for reading the poems of Sinan Antoon. One of the main ideas of Caruth, most thoroughly exposed in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, is that the depiction of trauma is an event that cannot be completely represented and that the trauma comes recapitulating in the narrative; hence, literature turns into a place where the "unclaimed" or not fully experienced elements of the traumatic history can be implied and researched. Caruth's focus on coming late, narrative gap, and the ethical responsibility of testimony is still the basis on which the reader may look for the ways in which the rupture, repetition, and deferred meaning are presented in the poetic works (Caruth, 2008; Papa, 2016; Novick, 2015). The idea of post memory delineated by Marianne Hirsch complements Caruth by showing how the traumatic past that of one generation is passed on to another through the intermediated forms of communication (images, narratives, cultural practices) in which the coming generation has direct contact with the sources and therefore experience the memories they have inherited as close to those of their own period (Buyanovskaya, 2025). It is through the notion of *post memory* that we comprehend the interweaving of family and national histories, absence, and inherited loss in Antoon's work as the nexus of the personal and the intergenerational testimony of the collective wound (Aamir and Khan, 2021; Parui, 2024; Farooqi *et al.*, 2025). Besides those mentioned, there are also other thinkers behind the scenes—Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub on testimony and Dominick LaCapra on trauma, testimony, and the ethics of representation—who provide further ideas and methods for practice: carefulness in relation to speech and silence, the testimonial meeting between witness and listener, and the difference between doing and getting through traumatic legacies. These frameworks are conceptualizing the reason why the mode of poetry (fragmentation, anaphora, ellipsis, silence) usually is the necessary aesthetic response to historical violence (Berger, 1997).

The role of exile and displacement in shaping poetic identity

Exile and displacement deal with biographical influence and as an aesthetic source in the same way in modern poetry: the lost place changes language, time, and the public voice, thus, creating a poetics of estrangement, translation, and doubled belonging (O'Rourke, 2009; Sbiri, 2011; Sbiri, 2019). The investigation into the exile poetics identifies the typical elements, homesickness, the lack of the map, language negotiation, and the setting up of diasporic memory, that define the way poets depict loss and at the same time, cope with their identity from a distance. In such research, the emphasis is made on the fact that exile is not just a theme in the works but also a limitation that changes the direction of the different poetic forms towards the modes of narration, elegy, and moral witness.

Sinan Antoon's transition path from Baghdad to long stays abroad, and his continuous connection with Arabic literary traditions is a typical case of how voice can be influenced by displacement. The critics as well as the interviews agree that Antoon's setting of his life story and his bilingual/public-intellectual work cause a poetic subject to emerge which is the closest at the same time the farthest: a speaker who has to live again in a language and a national past which have been changed radically by violence. Antoon is better understood when seen through exile studies as therefore, the concept of spatial rupture (exile) is combined with that of temporal rupture (trauma) to evoke certain formal strategies; refrain, address, ekphrasis, and sudden ruptures of narrative continuity, which are recognizable in most of his works (Baraitser and Ba, 2018; Alhudhairi, 2021; Ali, 2024).

Literature as a "wound writing": the aesthetics of pain, silence and testimony

One of the key features of "wound writing" (here a description of the phenomena rather than a categorization of a type work), is the gathering of the means whereby the fiction tries to show the harm it has caused to the author, without making the pain the source of aesthetic or the use of it for any kind of purpose. Ph.D. dissertation writers who cite trauma studies and testimony theory consistently point to three main characteristics in such genres: (1) the ethics of testimony (witnessing without making the pain a spectacle); (2) productive types of silence and indirectness (ellipsis, fragmentation, subdued imagery), which mark the limits of representation; and (3) formal means of mediation between the intimate sphere of suffering and public history (repetition, fragmentation, intertextual citation). Such elements help poets deal with the paradox of talking about the things that cannot be fully expressed (Berger, 1997).

Recently, there has been an emphasis on the evolution of "wound" aesthetics by studying modern poets; scholars depict how contemporary poetry dramatizes aspects of disclosure and concealment, and how these works use slight linguistic modifications to promote an ethical reader's response instead of that of a voyeuristic consumption of pain (Scott, 2014; Philo, 2017; Brooke, 2017). The above-mentioned scholarship works as an instrument for the evaluation of Antoon's poems when we see that the low-tariff lines frequently convey strong cumulative moral power, witness literature that relies on control as much as on giving voice. The current situation of trauma and testimony research also highlights the issue of politics in such poetics: writing of the wounds can overthrow the regime of forgetting, refuse to close the chapter and provoke public debate about guilt and loss (Gil and Hofer, 2024).

The interpretative frame (trauma/post memory theory; exile as an aesthetic condition; and the aesthetics and ethics of “wound writing”) will be the focus of the analysis from here on. These hypotheses give us a clue of how Antoon’s poems not only professor but also question the difficulty of remembering, speaking, and re-imagining lives that have been disrupted by the war and displacement, and furthermore how his formal decisions can be considered the staging of an ethics of witnessing for readers that are beyond linguistic and national borders. This theoretical neighbourhood and close reading through the works of Antoon will be combining for a contextual base and examination of the text (*Postcards from the Underworld; The Baghdad Blues; his Arabic collections*) and related interviews and essays by the author (Robinson, 2018; Alhallafi, 2024; Khalid, 2025).

War and the Poetics of Violence

Representation of the Iraq wars in Antoon’s poetry

The poet, Antoon, through his poetry shows the direct impact of 1991 Gulf War and 2003 U.S. invasion/occupation. Besides this, he engages both wars by overlapping them as one catastrophe that hardly leaves room for any distinction between the two. In *The Baghdad Blues*, many poems are datelined, which help the reader to follow the changes in location (in Baghdad vs. exile) and time (Denzin, 2007; Hamdan, 2020). In fact, poems written in Baghdad before Antoon’s departure are mostly about Saddam’s regime and the first Gulf War, while most of the later poems are about the 2003 war and its consequences seen from exile. “*When I Was Torn by War*” (Baghdad, 1990) is a piece of work that it can be read as a presentation of a very personal and direct experience of the speaker. The speaker “took a brush / dipped in death” to depict a “window / on war’s wall,” but instead he meets “another war.” The coexistence of several wars, both in terms of the physical destruction and psychological, internal wars, is one of the main themes of the work (*Split This Rock*, n.d.). In his latest reminiscences (e.g. his 2023 *Guardian* essay “Sinan Antoon writes about the US war on Iraq, twenty years and ‘a million lives’ later”), Antoon keeps on going back to the 2003 invasion even after so many years and is still able to see the occurrence of aftershocks in the form of displacement, ecological damage, and the incessant disruption of Iraqi life (Voyce, 2021).

Imagery of destruction, sorrow, and collective suffering

Antoon would resort to compelling and shocking images to depict the level of violence and its human toll. There, in “*A Prism: Wet with Wars*,” he talks about “technological hoofs crush[ing] the night,” “a skeleton of a burning umbrella,” little children being baptised “with smoke,” and at the same time there are burning nipples left “beside ... imminent wreckage,” while in the mentioned context of the scene, public address is calling for applause. The grotesque combination of normality and horror brings forth the moral responsiveness: the witness cannot be a passive one (Cruickshank, 2024). In a similar way. The image of a mother weaving a shroud for “the dead man / still in her womb” in “*When I Was Torn by War*” depicts the combining of loss that is intimate with disaster that is collective, illustrating how the violence that touches lives of the unborn ones and even those that witness them (*Split This Rock*, n.d.). Antoon, in his interviews, refers to the aesthetic paradox: that representing pain with beauty is simultaneously both one of the dangers and the necessity. He talks about “sad songs ... still beautiful and pleasing” when one lives among tragedies. This tragical aspect of the mourn; that is both grief and creative force kindled by martyrdom, Antoon repeats both in his poems and in a recent one *Postcards from the Underworld* (2023) (Antoon, 2015; Alhudhairi, 2021; Antoon, 2024).

How Antoon deals with his personal memories and the community trauma

Antoon is neither here nor there: a poet living in exile, but nonetheless, one intimately tied to his own and family’s past, while at the same time, he acknowledges communal and national trauma. His personal memories, of his childhood in Baghdad, of his escape, of the destruction that he saw from afar, are deeply connected with stories of loss for those who are still in Iraq. Such a double perspective lends his poetry a “stereoscopic” quality: one side is memory, while the other is either reportage or creative reconstruction. The Banipal review of *The Baghdad Blues* really puts the point across: Antoon “appropriates and summons up a horrific representation of their sufferings,” even though certain realities are hidden from him due to exile. However, he does not claim more privilege than those who suffered directly; on the contrary, his exile makes hispoetic voice even more complex.

In the *Enjambments* interview, he openly describes the conflicts of seeing from a distance. The poem “*Letter to al-Mutanabbi*,” is really a work that references the al-Mutanabbi Street explosion (2007) incident. Antoon, after explaining how Baghdad has changed, goes on to talk about the past and the interconnectedness of the world with violence. His poetic “I” thus bounces between the now and the larger, between the intimate depression and the moral accountability to the community (Khattak, 2022; Hassan, 2024; Alhudhairi, 2021). Besides, in *The Book of Collateral Damage*, though a novel, Antoon shows the dramatized side of Wadood’s personal trauma (inner life of Wadood) along with the collective trauma (Iraq as a country haunted by war memory). Research by Fares and Alshetawi (2019) exposes how characters are nowhere but in the psychological collapse net yet are always trying to retain both their personal histories and national memory; the “shadows” of the 2003 war haunt every aspect of life.

Exile and the Poetics of Belonging

Exile both as disconnect and as a source of creativity

Sinan Antoon's exile is shown as a departure from home, alienation, and as an opportunity for certain kinds of reflection, artistic insight, and moral awareness. Antoon in his interview about *The Book of Collateral Damage*, expresses himself as "a stranger in the literary landscape in this country" (the U.S.), a person who mainly writes in Arabic, is considered from many angles as a foreign writer while he is in the academic and literary milieu. He comments: "*I may be a barbarian in Rome.*" The estrangement here is not just a part of his personal discomfort but also an area that gives rise to remembering (Elimelekh, 2017; Alhudhairi, 2021). At the same time, this "in-between" space enables Antoon to perceive different frames of remembrance, both how things unfold in Iraq and how exile alters one's memory of home. In "*Living Here and There: Travel and Exile in Arabic Literature*," a lecture he gave in Stockholm, Antoon muses over the themes of exile, violence, and nostalgia in the works of Iraqi poets Saadi Youssef and Sargon Boulus, and maintains that the diasporic and exilic condition can bring about the phenomenon of double vision: one of seeing what has been lost as well as what has changed. Not only are Istanbul or New York places of departure, but they become also vantage points (Alhudhairi, 2021; Al-Salibi, 2022). In that case, exile turns into a creative space where Antoon can exercise his memory, test his identity, and push poetic form; estrangement imposes limits as well as freedoms, which besides the personal and collective belonging allow Antoon to address without being totally captive to any of them.

Tensions between homeland and diaspora in Antoon's writing

One of the major themes in the works of Antoon is the concept of tension. He represents this tension as the relationship which exists between the homeland (Iraq, Baghdad, specific cityscapes, familial places) and the diaspora (New York, the United States, the wider Arab-diaspora world) (Livescu, 2012; Naji, 2015). This tension is not nostalgic in any simple sense; rather it is ambivalent, full of longing and critique, guilt and moral responsibility. For example, in *The Book of Collateral Damage*, the character Nameer shares Antoon's position: living away, observing from afar, confused by fragments of memory and the archives of loss. The narrative is the combination of episodes in Baghdad and New England/New York, mapping loss, beauty, and damage. In his interviews, Antoon has stated that even though he is writing in exile, he never really leaves Iraq behind in his thoughts: "*I have never in fact left Iraq.*" For example, the feeling of Iraq as an ever-present background, even when absent, put together through stories, familial memory, communal grief is the main idea in the reviews of *The Corpse Washer* (originally *The Pomegranate Alone*). The homeland is frequently envisaged, remembered, and reconstructed, but it is also changed (or destroyed) by war, displacement, and occupation (Mariwany, 2014). Besides that, the diaspora is not just a refuge; it is also a place of hardship: translation, alienation, partial invisibility, the fear that one's work might be read in reductive frames (as "exotic," "war literature," etc.). To a very large extent, Antoon's efforts to avoid selective framing of violence, to rescue "memories of the dead," illustrates in a way his sensitivity to how diaspora can both distance but also mediate responsibility.

The politics of language: Arabic, translation, and self-representation

The choice of language in the work of Antoon is a very politicized one. Even when living in exile and translating into English, he would still write mainly in Arabic. The way he translates his own work gives him more authority over memory, loss, and the traumatic past to be shown in different ways for different audiences. By self-translation, he is not going for complete linguistic and content fidelity, but rather he allows the transformations of text, characters, and plot depending on the readership and their linguistic tradition (Nikolaou, 2006; Anselmi, 2018). During the interview with *the Poetry Center*, he compared the richness of Arabic with English. Arabic's long history, the diversity of its tributary languages, the subtle meanings inherent in the classical lexicons are what Antoon had in mind when he talked about the sufficiency of one language against the other. Moreover, he mentioned that in English there are different registers but the language is restrictive. He does not regard translation as the mere act of transferring the original meaning of the text, rather it is an aesthetic and ethical gesture, of making the poem sound fluent in the target language and at the same time trying to maintain, or sometimes re-establish, the one that has been lost or silenced (İğsız, 2010).

For Antoon, the politics of translation are also related to the concepts of mourning and memory. In the paper "Translation as Mourning, Translation as a 'Form of Cultural Interrogation,'" he confessed that translation is not a direct method. It remains a matter of history, death, the consequences of wars, and the interplay between source and target cultures. The act of translation may become a form of witnessing and also that of cultural interrogation (Alhudhairi, 2021). Furthermore, language is something that carries the identity features of a person: dialect, vernacular, local idiom, versus standard Arabic. In "*Novels Can Narrate an Alternative History*," Sinan Antoon talks about his creative use of Iraqi dialects for the characters' speech and his opposition to the totality of the works being in modern standard Arabic, whereby he affirms that it "flattens everything." His point is that the use of idioms is more in line with actual speech and, therefore, more realistic, even if some Arabic readers find it difficult to understand (Alhudhairi, 2021).

Memory and the Poetics of Remembrance

Memory as fragmented, haunting, and resistant to closure

Throughout Antoon's work, memory is consistently denied to be any coherent whole or a complete single narrative, but rather it is one based on fragments and hauntings, characters, absent presences, sudden awarenesses that impenetrable to any attempt of form or ending (Anderson, 2011; Moini, 2024). One of the main concepts in Antoon's work is the idea of memory that is always in pieces, ghosts, and hauntings, not a coherent whole, a complete story, but fractured and haunted memories, with images, absent presences, ruptures of consciousness that resist being enclosed (Anderson, 2011; Moini, 2024). In *Postcards from the Underworld* (2023), works like "Dismemberment" symbolize the body as being broken to pieces: eyes, lips, hands "flee" or detach, voices imitate disembodied parts, the consciousness is postponed. As the visual of a decapitated or dismembered corpse is an icon of memory that is cut off but still exists in its pieces (Screech, 2000; Smithson, 2016). Paralleled and "When I Was Torn by War" (*The Baghdad Blues*, 2007) commences the narrator picturing himself as "I took a brush / immersed in death / And drew a window / On war's wall." The poet's way, its stops, especially the repeated "another war," propose memory as cyclical, multi-faceted, haunted by more than one trauma, sticking close to what is still latent (Daulatzai, 2006; Yaeger, 2008). In the *Enjambments* interview, Antoon also refers to "shards" of memory, "tombs of lives lost and forgotten," and a "vast darkness of amnesia and oblivion" out of which his poetic "I" attempts to salvage what can be retrieved. Reminiscence here is an occasion of absence, the complete missing being always partial (Berman, 2024). Closing these instances and fragmentary testimonies is the resistance to finality; there is not a definite mutual understanding or a comforting solution. The poet regularly leaves the injury exposed, the poem unfinished, thus the reader is left with the tension. It is one of the features of the aesthetic of remembrance: instead of transforming memory into a more pleasant experience, it focuses on its unresolved, agonizing margins. The repetition also triggers forgetting prevention and highlights the prolonged ordeal of trauma and memory. *The Book of Collateral Damage* is a perfect illustration: the main character gets involved in mapping destruction, ruined buildings, lost books, destroyed manuscripts, thus moving memorial work from memory to medium and to time (Antoon, 2019). Antoon not only remembers the lost through these means but also those who are forgotten due to silence or the dominance of the official story of disappearance or destruction.

Poetic strategies for memorializing the dead and the disappeared

Antoon uses a variety of poetic strategies to give presence to the dead, the disappeared, and to loss in general.

Some key strategies include:

- Naming and address:** Poems like "Letter to al-Mutanabbi" invoke a conversation with both a historical literary figure and with Baghdad itself, naming specific streets (e.g. Al-Mutanabbi Street, wounded by bombings) to anchor loss in places and to mark how memory is inscribed in geography and culture (Beausoleil and Shehabi, 2012).
- Imagery of dismemberment and bodily fragmentation:** As noted in "Dismemberment", the splitting of body parts, the scattering of eyes, lips, hands, etc., becomes a way to give voice to those whose bodies or lives were violently disfigured. This corporeal fragmentation acts as metaphor for psychological, social, and historical dislocation (Owens, 2005; Belgique, 2005).
- Objects, ruins, detritus:** In *Postcards from the Underworld*, Antoon often stands before ruins, both real and imagined, "the detritus of his home city, Baghdad" is an ongoing motif. Objects, nature, flora and fauna, even butterflies, appear in the poems, often juxtaposed with death, violence, or ruin, to highlight what remains, what resists obliteration (Papachristodoulou, 2023).
- Silence, ellipsis, and absence:** Rather than always speaking of horrors in graphic detail, Antoon allows absence, gaps, unsaid things to have power. For instance, mottled tones, muted events, dead birds flying, empty skies, all these evoke what is not there, what has been lost or erased. The attentive reader is compelled to "listen between the lines (Butt, et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2025).
- Temporal layering and repetition:** Antoon often returns to past events, overlapping historical moments; wars, sanctions, invasions, and shows how their effects persist into the present. This repetition prevents forgetting and underscores the ongoing nature of trauma and memory. *The Book of Collateral Damage* is a useful example: the protagonist is drawn into cataloguing destruction, ruined buildings, lost books, destroyed manuscripts, thus making memorial work part of narrative structure and temporality (Antoon, 2019).

Through these strategies, Antoon memorializes not only what is lost, but those who might otherwise be forgotten, or whose disappearance or destruction might be obscured by silence or official narratives.

Memory overlaps of the individual and culture/history

Memory recollection from the poet's side (childhood, family, individual grief) is the personal aspect in where Antoon's poems and prose suggest memory of culture, nation, and history. The link between these levels results in deeper and more intricate remembrance poetics. The memories of the author of childhood, home, and nature in *Postcards from the Underworld* are contrasting the images of collective destruction: war's detritus, destroyed homes, civil death. Hence, the personal is not independent but the past still matters is history (Jagose, 1992; Padoa, 2022). *The Book of Collateral*

Damage is consistent in mixing with communal histories the Nameer's individual life events, exile, relation with books, and memory. The destruction of Al-Mutanabbi Street, loss of archives, manuscripts, bookselling culture, etc., are the topics that deal with cultural memory, of what literature, knowledge, place meant in Iraq that is disappearing and personal memory becomes one of the storerooms for that cultural past (Antoon, 2019). Besides that, Antoon's bilingual work that he did by himself, i.e., translating his Arabic into English while not losing the beauty and the uniqueness of the language as well as bridging the linguistic and cultural differences, is also considered one of those intersections: personal memory has to be beyond cultural boundaries, and the change through translation symbolizes historical displacement. *Postcards from the Underworld* was actually made of such an instance: poems that Antoon wrote in Arabic and then translated by him, so the intimate personal voice as well as the wider cultural and historical destruction could be heard (Antoon, 2019). In the *Enjambments* interview, Antoon discusses such "shards" and "tombs of lives lost and forgotten," the effort to recover "traces ... of history" covered by public amnesia, he considers the individual memory of the past as a part of the fight against the forgetting of culture, against the triumphant war narratives that are being rereleased. This indicates that memories of the past, both personal and cultural, are connected, can no longer be separated, and are mutually dependent (Hassan, 2024; Alhudhairi, 2021).

Aesthetic and Stylistic Strategies

The use of imagery, metaphor, and symbolism to represent the trauma

One of the most effective ways in which Antoon envisions his poetry to be is the continuous use of strong imagery and metaphor to allude to violence, loss, and the haunted wasteland of war. In his interviews, Antoon explains how the imagery is taken both from nature and from the remnants of destruction. In *The Guardian*, he calls Baghdad a "city of ghosts," a metaphor that covers both the existence and the non-existence; the ghostliness is not only figurative but also very present, in ruins, in memories, and in broken lives (Farid, 2015). Besides, Antoon's focus is on the desolated streets, burning books, broken walls, and the fragments left by war. These are not only the poem's signs of the physical things that have been destroyed but of cultural erasure, of memory undone and of history told in fragments. He frequently combines the normal with the dreadful; childhood streets, booksellers, trees, with explosions, shelling, absence, to give an intensified effect of the disruption caused by war (Sychterz, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2012). Although only a few of Antoon's recent poetic works have been thoroughly analysed, there is a deep impact of what Antoon indicates in the *Poetry Center* interview on his conceptual imagination as metaphorical one: "pre-Islamic and classical Arabic poetry, an ocean of imagery and metaphors" along with modernist influences such as Lorca, Neruda, Cavafy. He does not use such metaphors quite often for mere ornamentation; they have a serious moral significance. Antoon considers literary comparison as one of the ways whereby he can describe things that literal description cannot hold, "smoke baptized infants," "burning umbrellas," fragmentary bodies, each image being a reminder of those that have been extinguished, destroyed, and should still be visualized. These symbolic figures implant and magnify trauma to a level where it is felt and at the same time, it does not become one of those enormous spectacles (Antoon, 2019).

Poetic form: silence, repetition, fragmentation

Antoon frequently employs formal strategies that mirror the disruption and disorientation of war: silence, repetition, fragmentation. In *The Guardian* profile, he admits that "oftentimes I am speechless ... but we are in the business of words so we have to somehow try and represent the effects ..." (Farid, 2015). This emphasizes both the edge of representation and the necessity of poetic labor even where one is writing about astonishment or horror. Repetition in his poems works at various registers: repetition of images, motifs (destruction, dust, emptiness), recurring temporal phrases, and sometimes refrains that reverberate across poems or within them. This repetition does not simply confirm; it disorienting, shows how trauma returns, loops, overturns stability. Fragmentation is even more central. Many poems are not linear narratives but assemblages: broken syntax, abrupt shifts of scene or time, dislocated speakers, empty spaces, ellipses. Memory breaks, voices break, perspectives shift. This formal fragmentation becomes a representation of psychic and communal fracture. Silence, what is left unspoken, is also part of his strategy: what cannot be said (for fear, for grief, for loss) is allowed its own space, often more haunting than what is explicitly depicted (Mickelson, 2016; Quirke, 2023).

Antoon's engagement with classical Arabic poetry and modernist traditions

Antoon is explicit in recognizing a poetic genealogy that includes classical Arabic poetry: pre-Islamic poets, classical lexicons, traditional imagery and metaphor. In the *Poetry Center* interview, he states:

"One root is pre-Islamic and classical Arabic poetry which I have read a great deal of and still do ... It has an ocean of imagery and metaphors. The other root is world and modern poetry ..." (İğsız, 2010). This means his poetry inherits symbolic tropes, rhythms, and a linguistic richness from classical sources; but he does not replicate classical forms strictly. His application of classical imagery is redirected: metaphors, symbols, classical language are run through trauma and exile and tension between tradition and postclassical break is thus established. At the same time, Antoon appropriates conventions of modernism, Arabic modernism and global modernism. His references to poets such as Cavafy, Neruda, Rimbaud, Lorca, Hikmet, etc., in interviews suggest how he positions himself in conversation with modernism's formal experimentation, voice, and allegory (İğsız, 2010). Modernism is seen in his willingness to forego strict meter, to experiment with free verse or prose-poetic mode, to make use

of disjunction, multiple foci, and non-fixity of voice. These modernist impulses engage themselves with classical Arabic poetical sensitivity in order to produce what can be characterized as hybrid poetics: one securely based in Arabic aesthetics, yet open to cross-cultural models, translation, dislocation.

Critical Reception and Scholarly Debates

Overview of the reception of Antoon's work in literary studies

Sinan Antoon's poetry and fiction have always attracted constant notice from translators, scholars, and reviewers for over a decade. Reviewers always comment on his dual life as public intellectual who testifies to Iraq's most recent catastrophes and literary writer with a loyalty to rich Arabic literary traditions. Extensive English-language reviews and profiles emphasize Antoon's elegiac, mourning tone and ethical conflict with memory, characteristics dramatized in profiles like *The Guardian* and in interviews released by university poetry centres. Wider reception places him as a celebrated contemporary Iraqi writer whose writing dissolves genres (poetry, novels, essays, translation) and whose books are consumed as vital interventions in post-2003 perceptions of Iraq (Farid, 2015). Academic reception has embraced this critical scrutiny: recent journal articles and book chapters analyse Antoon's depiction of trauma, death, and cultural loss (e.g., studies of *The Corpse Washer* and *The Book of Collateral Damage*), citing his work in the fields of trauma studies, post memory discourses, and diasporic literary studies. Critical web sites such as World Literature Today and lists of translations have also acknowledged how his formal experimentation; self-translation, hybrid forms, archival preoccupation, reshapes the manner in which Iraqi experience today is narrated (Antoon, 2019).

Representation, authenticity, and political responsibility debates

Critics and scholars contend several intertwined questions whose centrality is being brought to the fore by Antoon's work: Who has the right to represent trauma? How do authors balance political witness with aesthetic form? And what are the moral obligations of exilic writers to the communities and landscapes they speak for? Some praise Antoon for avoiding reductionist, sensationalized accounts of violence, embracing restraint, fragmentation, and moral witness, while others criticize the limits of representation in exile: can an émigré literary voice adequately represent suffering in the country of origin, or does distance risk aestheticizing suffering? Antoon himself has himself alluded to this tension in interviews, and critics often make his own positioning (insider/outsider; survivor/witness) a point of departure for understanding his work. These arguments associate Antoon with wider discussion on authenticity and politics of witnessing in war and displacement literature (İgşiz, 2010).

Scholarship increasingly addresses these concerns systematically, rather than polemically: so, recent peer-reviewed scholarship examines Antoon's practices of "decolonizing" trauma narrative and resisting reductive paradigms commodifying Iraqi suffering into spectacle. These works typically consider both ethical practice (how Antoon establishes accountability and blame) and aesthetic practice (how form resists consumption). This piece relocates the debate about representation as one of ethics and method, how texts may bear witness without exploitation, test power without simplifying complex histories (Salam and Abu-Shomar, 2024).

Antoon's place within literary Arab, diasporic, and global literature

Antoon is generally placed at the intersection of Arab literary cultures, diasporic literature, and global literary environments. In Arabic script, he is discovered to be borrowing classical imagery and modern Arabic poetic sensibilities and pushing forward towards novel forms; within the anglophone literary circle, he is generally placed among other Arab writers of the present moment whose work navigates between local particularity and world readership. Editors and reviewers (on translation websites, world literature publications, and university series) single out Antoon's bilingualism and his regular role as translator/mediator as the most pertinent to his transnational popularity (Antoon, 2019).

In diaspora scholarship, Antoon is most usually referred to in conjunction with other Arab authors in exile whose exile simultaneously contains and empowers their work: his books are read as exemplars of the "in-between" voice (neither entirely within the host nation nor entirely incorporated into the host society). Scholars of diasporic paths of Arabic literatures place Antoon in the place of controversy regarding how exile redefines narrative form, subjecthood, and memory's cultural politics. At the international literary level, his work, through performative acts of translation and material analysis, has found its way into syllabi and comparative argument about war writing, testimony, and postcolonial memory, claiming (though disputed) territory for him in contemporary global literary studies.

Comparative Perspectives

Sarcasm about other war and exile poets

Among such poets as Adonis and Mahmoud Darwish, Sinan Antoon has many thematic affinities, negotiation of language, exile, memory, loss, but is unique in style and specificity of history. For example:

- a) **Mahmoud Darwish:** Widely known for his works that talked about being uprooted, after the time when Darwish was forced to leave his home, he continued to deal with the same topics through his writing. Darwish's poems most often present a paradoxical condition of deep attachment to a vanishing past while not being able to separate

the pain of estrangement from the joy of remembering the lost home. Very often he calls to mind the images of nature--olive trees, earth, the wind, not only as the symbols of survival, but also as the attempt to anchor the recollection in the very thing. Darwish has been remarked upon by critics for the way he shows exile as physical relocation from somewhere and as a more basic alienation of being, most of the times combining it with paradox and metaphor (Perry, 2020).

- b) **Adonis (Ali Ahmad Said Esber):** Critics recognize Adonis as the one who turned Arabic poetry around and changed its landscape. His personal pieces exceed the limits of traditional romantic nationalism and further develop it via the experimentation with new forms, coining of new terms, and the use of mythic imagery in his works. Accordingly, he made Arabic poetry free from the constraints of the past, giving it the features of innovation and modernist conception as well as traditional. Antoon borrows from both classical Arabic and modernism, but his poetics are less argumentative than those of Adonis; Antoon is more likely to be found using the technique of linking the imaginary images of war to its concrete destruction, memory, and loss rather than myth or pure symbol (Howarth, 2005; Thompson, 2017).

Consequently, Antoon joins those Arab poets living in exile who are part of the tradition of not being nostalgic for the homeland (so that nostalgia stays), but at the same time they do not stop witnessing the things that have gone, the things that have been left behind (memory, language), and those which are maybe still retrievable.

Beyond the confines of Antoon's poetry and prose, his distinctive poetics can be connected to the ongoing debate of post-war and refugee literature.

Antoon's stories and verses may be aligned with, as well as brought into conversation with, the worldwide talk of post-war, refugee, and displacement literature; those narratives and verses whose authors draw on the breaks of war, exile, homecoming, or staying away. As with many of the present-day refugee authors, Antoon's creative output is characterized by the wars he witnessed, to no simply as events of the past, but as situations that are still happening: displacement, secondary trauma, ecological degradation, cultural erasure. These are things, which, in a certain sense, are similar to refugee memoirs, oral histories of Syria, Rohingya, etc., in that the "after" of war keeps on coming (Farzana, 2017; Le Espiritu *et al.*, 2022). Academic works about the characteristics of refugee fiction as world literature delineate that this fiction performs several functions: memorialization, resistance to erasure, documentation of refugee subjectivity, and inscription into world literary circuits. Antoon's bilingualism, his translation work, his cross-cultural readership, and his use of poetic form correspond to much of the issues Spear points out (visibility, translation, ethical responsibility, world audience) (Spear, 2024). Another level of comparison is how post-war poetry worldwide employs non-linear temporality, spatial displacement, and cultural hybridity to depict trauma and exile. The poetry of Antoon, particularly through translation, and through poetry techniques of fragmentation, silence, and memory, resonates with this aesthetic. His poetry can be likened to that of refugee-poets (Middle Eastern diaspora, African literature, etc.) in the similarity of how they move between the local (Baghdad, Iraqi history, Arabic language) and the global (diaspora readers, multilingual contexts, universalizing pain without diminishing difference).

CONCLUSION

Sinan Antoon's poetry has been the vehicle through which he has repeatedly delved into the trauma of war, exile, and memory and thus has brought his voice not only to the Iraqi cultural heritage but also to the global conversation about trauma. By introducing fragmentation, utter silence, continuous repetition, and a taste of sensory detail in his work, Antoon is a witness to the individual and collective suffering. Nonetheless, he refuses to let the poems be reduced to the level of spectacle. Additionally, Antoon deftly handles the dynamics of individual and collective memory, of being uprooted from exile, of feeling alienated, and of the moral duty to constantly witness. His use of multilingualism and self-translation also emphasize the power dynamics that exist between language and representation and thus make his art cross linguistic and cultural borders. During that venture, Antoon neither halts history of the destruction nor revives the space for memory to speak. Hence, ultimately, his poetics within which poetry becomes one that can make silence testify and turn grief into artful resistance, thereby, giving the readers access to a way of dealing with war and displacement that are still aftershocks in Iraq and the world.

REFERENCES

- Aamir, D., & Khan, S. (2021). Transgenerational trauma and postmemorial atonement: A case study of Uzma Aslam Khan's *The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali*. *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, 7(1), 99-114.
- Abu-Fares, A. (2023). Tracing the shadows of war in Sinan Antoon's *The book of collateral damage*: Trauma and memory. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(11), 2881-2888. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1311.20>
- Alhallafi, A. (2024). *Beyond borders: Literary encounters with the Arabian Peninsula across the centuries* (Doctoral dissertation). Purdue University.
- Alhudhairi, H. A. (2021). *Sinan Antoon's literary odyssey between Iraq and the U.S.: Exile, dissent, narrative, and translation* (Master's thesis). Middle Tennessee State University. (jewelscholar.mtsu.edu)

- Ali, Z. F. (2024). *World literature of internal exiles: Strangers at home*. (Details such as publisher or DOI not found.)
- Alkhalifah, I. (2023). *Writing trauma at home: The poetics of testimony in Iraq's literary and cultural production* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Memphis. (Details such as DOI or page numbers not found.)
- Al-Salibi, R. (2022). *Affective geographies: Borders, home, belonging and futurity in Palestinian, Syrian and Iraqi exile literature* (Doctoral dissertation). (Institution name not confirmed—needs lookup.)
- American Academy in Berlin. (n.d.). *Sinan Antoon*. Retrieved September 20, 2025, from https://www.americanacademy.de/person/sinan-antoon/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Anari Bozchallouei, I., Najm Abdul Yemma Albosabl, D., Shahbazi, M., & Omidali, A. (2024). Iambic poetry and the spontaneity of poetic construction in the works of Sinan Antoon. *Lisān-i Mubīn*, 15(56), 39-60.
- Anderson, S. E. (2011). *Writing a material mysticism: HD, Helene Cixous and divine alterity* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Glasgow.
- Anselmi, S. (2018). Self-translators' rewriting in freedom. *Testo e Senso*, 19, 11–16.
- Antoon, S. (2015). Sargūn Būluş's commitment. In E. O'Kane (Ed.), *Commitment and beyond* (pp. 213–230). Brill.
- Antoon, S. (2019). *The book of collateral damage*. Yale University Press.
- Antoon, S. (2024). Sargūn Būluş: Writing Iraq ba'd al-qiyaamah. *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 56(1–2), 161–179.
- Baraitser, M., & B. A., B. (2018). *The poetics of exile: A critical examination of an author's creative writings (1988-2010) as performative acts of political and psychic survival* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Roehampton.
- Beausoleil, B., & Shehabi, D. (Eds.). (2012). *Al-Mutanabbi Street starts here: Poets and writers respond to the March 5th, 2007, bombing of Baghdad's "Street of the Booksellers"*. PM Press.
- Belgique, T. F. (2005). Bodily fragmentation. In M. E. Owens, *Stages of dismemberment: The fragmented body in late medieval and early modern drama* (p. 24). University of Delaware Press.
- Berger, J. (1997). Trauma and literary theory [Review of *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History; Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma; Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*, by C. Caruth, D. LaCapra, & K. Tal]. *Contemporary Literature*, 38(3), 569-582. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1208980>
- Berger, J. (1997). Trauma and literary theory. *Contemporary Literature*, 38(3), 569–582. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1208980>
- Berman, R. (2024). Immigration, poetry, and translation between Syria and Germany: Adel Karasholi. *The German Quarterly*, 97(1), 40–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gequ.12345>
- Brooke, J. (2017). Following the aesthetic impulse: A comparative approach to a poetics of trauma. *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 44(2), 298-316.
- Bürgin, D., Anagnostopoulos, D., Board & Policy Division of ESCAP; Vitiello, B., Sukale, T., Schmid, M., & Fegert, J. M. (2022). Impact of war and forced displacement on children's mental health — Multilevel, needs-oriented, and trauma-informed approaches. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 31(6), 845-853. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-022-01974-z>
- Butt, B., Anwar, B., Abbasi, A. M., Bakhsh, I., & Tariq, S. (2023). Covert nominals and argument ellipsis in Punjabi. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1), 2167321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2167321>
- Buyanovskaya, V. (2025). From paralysis and phantom pains to narrative prostheses: Post-Soviet memory in Dmitri Prigov's Zhivite v Moskve. *Slavic Literatures*, 153, 58-83.
- Caruth, C. (2008). After the end: A response. *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 41(2), 121.
- Caruth, C. (2016). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history* (2nd ed.). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Center for Book Arts. (n.d.). *Sinan Antoon*. Retrieved September 20, 2025, from https://centerforbookarts.org/people/sinan-antoon?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Cruickshank, D. (2024). *The grotesque modernist body: Gothic horror and carnival satire in art and writing*. Springer Nature.
- Daulatzai, S. (2006). To the East, Blackwards: Bandung hopes, diasporic dreams, and Black/Muslim encounters in Sam Greenlee's *Baghdad Blues*. *Souls*, 8(4), 59–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940600997003>
- Denzin, N. K. (2007). *Flags in the window: Dispatches from the American war zone* (Vol. 314). Peter Lang.
- Elimelekh, G. (2017). Disintegration and hope for revival in the land of the two rivers as reflected in the novels of Sinan Antoon. *Oriente Moderno*, 97(2), 229-255. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22138617-12340150> (CoLab)
- Elimelekh, G. (2017). Disintegration and hope for revival in the land of the two rivers as reflected in the novels of Sinan Antoon. *Oriente Moderno*, 97(2), 229–255. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22138617-12340150>
- Farid, F. (2015, March 26). Sinan Antoon: An Iraqi novelist living in continuous mourning. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/mar/26/sinan-antoon-iraqi-novelist>
- Farooqi, H. K., Kayani, T., & Rizwan, M. U. (2025). Burden of the past: Postcolonial silence and intergenerational trauma in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives*. *Al-Aasar*, 2(1), 474-485.
- Farzana, K. F. (2017). *Memories of Burmese Rohingya refugees: Contested identity and belonging*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50853-4>

- Gil, I., & Hofer, S. (2024). Wounded scholar — Healing witness. *Life Writing*, 21(4), 631-637. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14484528.2024.2427479>
- Great — thanks for sharing this third set! I've gone through and formatted them in **APA 7th edition**, correcting capitalization, italics, punctuation, and providing volume/issue/pages/DOIs where I could confirm. Where some details are missing (e.g., page ranges for newspapers, some dissertations, or obscure book series), I flagged them for you to decide if I should verify online.
- Habeeb, Z. Q. (2015). *Writing trauma in Iraq: Literary representations of war and oppression in the fiction of Sinan Antoon* (Master's thesis). Missouri State University, USA. (bearworks.missouristate.edu)
- Hamdan, F. H. (2020). *Relations between cultural institution and literature in Ba 'thist Iraq: Modern Iraqi prose poetry of the 1990s under war, sanctions, and dictatorship* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Arizona.
- Hassan, R. (2024). *Collateral damage: The body and the environment in post-2003 Iraqi fiction* (Doctoral dissertation). National University of Ireland, Maynooth.
- Hirsch, M. (2008). The generation of post memory. *Poetics Today*, 29(1), 103–128. <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2007-019>
- Howarth, J. (2005). *Neo-Sufism in modern Arabic poetry, 1960–2005: A study in the poetry of 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Bayyati, Salah 'Abd al-Sabur and Adonis* (Doctoral dissertation). School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
- Iğsız, A. (2010, November 30). Interview with Sinan Antoon. *Poetry Center, University of Arizona*. <https://poetry.arizona.edu/blog/interview-sinan-antoon>
- Jagose, A. (1992). Postcards from my aunt. *Meanjin*, 51(4), 723–733.
- Kaplan, T. P. (2016). *The generation of post memory: Writing and visual culture after the Holocaust* [Review]. (Details on journal/publisher missing—needs verification.)
- Khalid, D. (2025). *World literature and the contemporary Pakistani Anglophone literature* (Master's thesis). Washington State University.
- Khan, I. A., Khan, K. A., & Rasool, S. H. (2025). Linguistic encoding of quantum silence: A corpus-based analysis of non-linear trauma in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*. *Annual Methodological Archive Research Review*, 3(1), 40–54.
- Khattak, A. (2022). *The bio-political empire: Sovereignty, race and war in Afghan, Iraqi and Pakistani literatures* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Warwick.
- Kirkpatrick, G. (2012). Poetry in ruins: Scenes of destruction or renewal? In *Poetics of hispanism* (Ediciones de Iberoamericana, Vol. 65, pp. 163–178). Iberoamericana/Vervuert.
- Le Espiritu, Y., Duong, L., Vang, M., Bascara, V., Um, K., Sharif, L., & Hatton, N. (2022). *Departures: An introduction to critical refugee studies* (Vol. 3). University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520976166>
- Livescu, S. (2012). *Francophonie and human rights: Diasporic networks narrate social suffering* (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles.
- Mariwany, M. (2014, March 25). Baghdad, utopia. *The New Inquiry*. <https://thenewinquiry.com/baghdad-utopia/>
- Mickelson, J. N. (2016). *City poems and urban crisis, 1945–present* (Doctoral dissertation). City University of New York.
- Moini, R. (2024). *Ghosts at the threshold: Disembodied memory and mourning in post-war violent death in contemporary Middle Eastern and South Asian literatures* (Master's thesis). Purdue University.
- Naji, A. A. A. (2015). *At home in the diaspora: Displacement and diasporic consciousness in Anglophone-Arab and contemporary Arabic literature* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- Nikolaou, P. (2006). *The translating self: Literary translation and life-writing* (Doctoral dissertation). University of East Anglia.
- Novick, M. H. (2015). *Impostures: Subjectivity, memory, and untruth in the contemporary memoir*. University of Toronto, Canada.
- O'Rourke, M. (2009). *The experience of exile in modern Arab poetry*. (Master's thesis). School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK.
- Owens, M. E. (2005). *Stages of dismemberment: The fragmented body in late medieval and early modern drama*. University of Delaware Press.
- Padoa, S. C. (2022). Postcards from the underworld: The ash trail from Palermo to Trieste. In *MedWays Open Atlas* (pp. 826–837). LetteraVentidue.
- Papa, V. (2016). *The invention of survival: Time and the transformation of trauma in American modernist literature*. (Doctoral dissertation). Northeastern University.
- Papachristodoulou, A. (2023). *Visual poetry in the Anthropocene: Sculpting & materialising language as a social, ecological and feminist gesture* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Surrey.

- Parui, A. (2024). Memory studies and postcolonial writing: Interstitial intersections and entanglements. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 60(6), 725-733.
- Perry, L. A. (2020). The poetics of dispossession in Mahmoud Darwish's "Exile." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 49(4), 91–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0377919X.2020.1817197>
- Philo, C. (2017). Squeezing, bleaching, and the victims' fate: Wounds, geography, poetry, micrology. *GeoHumanities*, 3(1), 20-40.
- Prager, B. (2015). The generation of post memory: *Writing and visual culture after the Holocaust* by Marianne Hirsch. *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 33(3), 149–151. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sho.2015.0032>
- Quirke, B. (2023). *Form, fragment, refiguring return: Memory and abstraction in three Palestinian poems* (Doctoral dissertation). Victoria University of Wellington.
- Ravizza, E. N. (2019). *Exile and return as poetics of identity in contemporary Anglo-Caribbean literature: Becoming home*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Robinson, R. (2018). *An elementary level annotated bibliography of Middle Eastern and Arab world themed literature* (Master's thesis). Hofstra University.
- Salam, W. J., & Abu-Shomar, A. (2024). "Life in death": Decolonizing trauma in Sinan Antoon's *The corpse washer*. *Style*, 58(1), 22–45. <https://doi.org/10.5325/style.58.1.0022>
- Sbiri, K. (2011). Writing refugee in the era of displacement: Reflections on poetry. *Transnational Literature*, 4(1). (Page numbers not found.)
- Sbiri, K. (2019). Becoming refugee: Poetics and politics of representation and displacement in refugees' poetry. In *Still Here* (pp. 224-237). Routledge.
- Scott, E. J. (2014). *Traversing trauma and consuming perverse pleasures in the neo-Victorian novel* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Portsmouth.
- Screech, T. (2000). *Shogun's painted culture: Fear and creativity in the Japanese states, 1760–1829*. Reaktion Books.
- Smithson, T. B. (2016). *The mnemonic maid: Joan of Arc in public memory* (Doctoral dissertation). Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College.
- Spear, C. (2024). Refugee fiction as world-literature: Rethinking registration in the contemporary refugee novel. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 60(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2023.2270675>
- *Split This Rock*. (n.d.). *When I Was Torn by War*. In *The Poetry Database*. Retrieved September 20, 2025, from <https://www.splitthisrock.org/poetry-database/poem/when-i-was-torn-by-war>
- Stuber, D. (2013). Review of Marianne Hirsch, *The generation of post memory: Writing and visual culture after the Holocaust*. *Bryn Mawr Review of Comparative Literature*, 10(2), 5.
- Sychterz, J. (2009). Scarred narratives and speaking wounds: War poetry and the body. *Pacific Coast Philology*, 44(2), 137–147. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25698919>
- Thompson, T. L. (2017). *Speaking laterally: Transnational poetics and the rise of modern Arabic and Persian poetry in Iraq and Iran* (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles.
- Voyce, S. (2021). Of poetry and permanent war in the twenty-first century. In M. Zaprunder & K. Rooney (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to twenty-first-century American poetry* (pp. 191–205). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108758044.016>
- Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). *Sinan Antoon*. In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved September 20, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinan_Antoon
- Yaeger, P. (2008). Editor's column: My name is blue: A map of Ottoman Baghdad. *PMLA*, 123(1), 9–19. <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2008.123.1.9>