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Temporalizing the Great War:
Wartime in Twentieth-Century American and British Literature

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

Edward Clark Eason, Jr.

June 2015

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Katherine Kinney, Chairperson

Dr. George Haggerty

Dr. Steven Gould Axelrod

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The Dissertation of Edward Clark Eason, Jr. is approved:

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University of California, Riverside

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In memory of my mom

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Temporalizing the Great War:
Wartime in Twentieth-Century American and British Literature

by

Edward Clark Eason, Jr.

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in English
University of California, Riverside, June 2015
Dr. Katherine Kinney, Chairperson

This dissertation highlights the importance of time to the “wartime” experience of the First World War. The power of poetry to commemorate and of narrative plot to sequence defines literature’s unique potential to make sense of time beyond the often reductive logic of linearity. In this way, literature disrupts the premise that wartime is a homogenized experience, unavoidable and necessary for peace. My project defines four unique temporalities of WWI—mobilized time, trench time, civilian time, and retrospective time—across a range of literary works composed by American and British poets and novelists. By delineating particular temporalities of the Great War in literature I argue wartime has been a perpetual norm in modern life, characterized by temporal continuities rather than, as is commonly suggested by propaganda or history, temporal containment.

The first chapter, “Trench Time,” examines the commemorative poetry of Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen and the sequencing novels of Erich Remarque and Dalton Trumbo in order to reframe the trenches as a temporality—rather than simply a space—

that has endured in cultural memory on a queer horizon. The second chapter, “Mobilized Time,” analyzes how a montage aesthetic enabled John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway to represent the shock of wartime and spectacle of peace that arrested lives and conflated the past, present, and future of their lost generation. Chapter Three, “Civilian Time,” focuses on the temporal margins of the war in order to characterize the experiences of those foreclosed from the benefits of wartime aid and disavowed in remembrance: the precarious women working in wartime through V.A.D. or W.A.A.C. as reflected in Evadne Price’s *Not So Quiet* and the marginalized men demobilized after the Armistice as reflected in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. In the final chapter, “Retrospective Time,” I read the recurrences of trench time, mobilized time, and civilian time in contemporary works that emphasize the provisionality, textual remains, and excentricity of the past: “Last Post” by Carol Ann Duffy, *The Stranger’s Child* by Alan Hollinghurst, the *Regeneration* Trilogy and *Another World* by Pat Barker, and *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham.

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Introduction

War is often described as a “time” of violence followed by peace. Yet such linear thinking obscures the distinct temporalities war imposes on its participants. This dissertation highlights the importance of time to the “wartime” experience of the First World War. The power of poetry to commemorate and of narrative plot to sequence defines literature’s unique potential to make sense of time beyond the often reductive logic of linearity. In this way, literature disrupts the premise that wartime is a homogenized experience, unavoidable and necessary for peace. My project defines four unique temporalities of WWI—*mobilized time*, *trench time*, *civilian time*, and *retrospective time*—across a range of literary works composed by American and British poets and novelists.

Although war zones are frequently discussed in terms of space—no man’s land of the trenches, Paris as the center of mobilization, and London as the home front—this dissertation considers how literature maps a temporal sense on spaces of war.¹ The literary representations of these temporalities reflect particular relationships between wartime participants and the past, present, and future. As distinct literary reactions to the psychic and physical trauma of wartime violence, these time zones often overlap. After all, the surviving soldiers, ambulance drivers, or nurses mobilized for the trenches eventually returned home to civilian life. Nonetheless, these temporalities cohere in

¹ For studies on the experience of trenches of the Great War see Peter Chasseaud’s *Rats Alley: Trench Names of the Western Front, 1914-1918*, and Eric Leed’s *No Man’s Land: Combat and Identity in World War I*; for studies on Paris and the war effort see Bruce Porter’s *War and the Rise of the State*; and for studies on the experience of being at home in London during the war see Jay Winter’s *Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume III: Civil Society*.

twentieth-century literature as alternatives to the linear conception of wartime propagated by military authority to support the war effort.

My study explores the dialectic between the two contradictory polarities—the state’s attendant measures of mass-mobilization during total war and the individual’s experience and civil rights—to question how novelists’ and poets’ formal choices reflect, resist, and shape temporal meaning during and after the First World War. My focus on war literature strives to uncover the link between the historical division of twentieth century history according to total war and the cultural assumption that wartime is finite, exceptional, and inherently followed by peace time—a culturally assumed notion that legal scholars have begun to problematize and that this study seeks to further complicate.² The goals of this project are two-fold: first, to demonstrate literature’s role as a cultural discourse that records developing conceptions of time, and second, to begin an interrogation of the particular ways that literature sequences and demarcates wartime for future remembrance in particular temporalities.

War novels are bound within wartime, delimiting when wars begin and end as well as sequencing what lies between as a means of making sense of war’s violence and trauma. In order to sequence wartime, a narrator, whether first- or third-person, must occupy a retrospective position regardless of how compromised or fragmented that position may be. In this sense, novels are temporally limited to a beginning, middle, and end so therefore “cannot banish time...to the degree that poems...can” (Kermode 177). This temporal limit enables and constrains novelists to plot the temporalities of wars from

² For legal studies that explore the power of the state in times of war see Mary Dudziak’s *War Time and Mariah Zeisberg’s War Powers*.

within a finite timeline measuring life and death. Drawing from the work of Paul Ricoeur, who reads plot as that which “places us at the crossing point of temporality and narrativity” (qtd. in Brooks 209-10), Peter Brooks makes an important distinction between narrative and plot; the former is “of and in time,” reflecting “timeboundedness,” while the latter shapes narratives according to the “internal logic of the discourse of mortality” (207, 216). Such an understanding of plot as terminal echoes Frank Kermode’s “tiny model of all plots,” in which he surmises that stories stand as “fictive models of the temporal world” that sequence the “‘*tick* of birth and the *tock* of death’ . . . but must not do so too simply” (192, 196-7). Kermode equates the tick to a “genesis” and the tock to an “apocalypse;” the latter “purges the interval of simple chronicity”—or the “endless successiveness” of clock time—by giving complex meaning to what lies between the tick and tock (192, 193). According to these narratologists, the plotting of narratives, especially their endings, places the variable significance of death into discourse. I assume novelists and memoirists are both temporally bound to mortality. Despite the autobiographical pact that Philippe Lejeune theorized, which sets memoirs apart from novels as texts written by a verified author assuming the role of narrator, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson note how memoirs and life writing borrow from the basic form of novel writing: characters, setting, dialogue, and—most importantly to sequencing wartime—plot (9-10). The narratives of war novels and memoirs sequence the passage of wartime through plot as a means to make sense of its successive destruction of life and the meaning of the war dead.

Without plot's obligation to the discourse of mortality, poetry occupies the temporal space outside of wartime and bears the onus of commemorating the war dead. While novels "depend on meanings delayed, partially filled in, stretched out," poetry "strives toward an ideal simultaneity of meaning, encouraging us to read backward as well as forward (through rhyme and repetition, for instance), to grasp the whole in one visual and auditory image" (Brooks 215). Poetry's ability to transcend chronological time and achieve simultaneity—its timelessness in contrast to narrative's timeboundedness—invests the medium, especially in times of war, with the cultural imperative of commemoration. By inscribing wartime from outside its temporal frame, poets mark the preliminary limits of the future memories and myths of the war.

A central premise in this project is that narratives and poetry require us to interrogate the Great War's temporality—when it starts, when it ends, and what is sequenced between—as a prerequisite to its memory. Scholars of the First World War have theorized how the war entered cultural memory by considering novelistic and poetic engagements with mourning the war dead and public commemoration of the war. Some studies theorize the British "collective memory" of the war by tracing the shift from traditional Romanticists to the high modernist avant-garde.³ Other studies more broadly conceptualize "modern memory" as a complex articulation of the Great War's remembrance shaped by irony, or "hope abridged," that writers of the next world war inherited.⁴ For many, especially veterans, remembrance and mourning are deeply

³ For the theorization of "collective memory" see Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*.

⁴ For a study on "modern memory" as "hope abridged" see Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*.

attached to the bodies of the war dead. Critics have approached the relationship between memory, embodiment, and masculinity through an historical consideration of how shell shock and other physical and mental disabilities shaped the cultural construction of British masculinity after the Great War and through a literary theorization of touch and intimacy between the living and the war dead.⁵ While these critics of WWI literature do not directly engage with the notion of wartime, their claims that rest upon the cultural process of memory and mourning were made possible by the sequencing narratives and commemorative poetry that shaped the Great War's temporal contours.

Such shaping is highly dependent on the legal definitions of war and peace, a critically neglected consideration in studies of war literature. Scholars have noted the general ways that since the Greeks Western culture has recorded the experience of the individual in times of war as well as the modernist reaction to and influence of military (il)logic and public policy during twentieth-century wartimes.⁶ And yet war literary criticism has not questioned the relationship between total war and its limiting effects upon individual rights. To fill in this critical gap, I turn to the findings of recent legal scholars.⁷ Mary Dudziak stresses the urgency for citizens to recognize how war is an enduring mark of America's democracy in spite of the way that wartime has always been propagandized as exceptional (26). Geographer and sociologist James Tyner has recently argued against the epigraph inscribed on the Imperial War museum attributed to Plato,

⁵ See Joanna Bourke's *Dismembering the Male* and Santanu Das's *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature*.

⁶ For general war literary criticism since the Classical ages see Katherine McLoughlin's *Authoring War* and James Tatum's *Mourner's Song*. For modern war literary criticism see James Dawes's *The Language of War* and Margot Norris's *Writing War in the Twentieth Century*.

⁷ Beyond Dudziak's *War Time*, see Edward Corwin's *Total War and the Constitution* and Wadlo Heinrichs's *Threshold of War*.

“Only the dead have seen the end of war,” by arguing the inverse: “War has no endpoints” (ix); the detritus of modern warfare in the forms of landmines and depleted uranium has created lasting effects on the land and survivors well into the supposed peace of post-war time (xvii). I am interested in exploring how the literature of the Great War challenges this hegemonic obfuscation of war’s continuity by approaching wartime as Dudziak would have all democratic citizens understand it: an argument for the expansion of governmental powers and the reduction of civil liberties—not an inevitable condition that justifies political judgments and actions (Dudziak 136). Taking my cue from these legal scholars, I consider how the sequencing and commemorating functions of literature disrupt the neat historical divisions that have justified the state’s expansion of power at the expense of individuality in wartime.

How did the specific material conditions, technologies, and the state’s rhetorical structures influence the literary conceptualization of wartime? Stephen Kern notes that despite Helmuth Moltke’s introduction of World Standard Time in 1890, it was the Great War that “impos[ed] coordination of all activity according to a single public time” as opposed to the “the dominant cultural thrust of the prewar years that explored the multiplicity of private times,” or local times (288). Although regarded as unmanly in pre-war society, wrist watches were issued to officers who synchronized offensives such as the Somme, which began July 1, 1916 at 7:30 A.M. sharp, symbolizing how the war united millions of soldiers under a long chain of command through homogenizing time on a scale never before attempted. Synchronizing time became all the more urgent in WWI as advancements in artillery technology sped up the rate of destruction on the front.

John Keegan conjectures that most of the Somme's 60,000 casualties were killed in its first hours if not minutes by machine gun fire (255). The "unprecedented long range" at which the war was fought further increased its speed of destruction (Kern 308). The small-bore, breach-loading rifle was effective up to 2,000 yards while larger artillery had a range of up to 9,000 yards, obscuring the anonymity of the enemy within the miasma of battle and multiplying the contingencies of battle in an accelerated rate on a shrinking space. John Bourne notes that the "revolution in the conduct of war" during the twentieth century is epitomized by the way in which "firepower replaced manpower as the instrument of victory" (133-4). Nonetheless, nations attempted to match the speed of modern warfare at the expense of individual life.

The literature of trench time, mobilized time, civilian time, and retrospective time explores the dialectic between personal experience and the state's measures for total war. Regarding the First World War, Walter Benjamin observes, "Never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power" (Benjamin 99). Benjamin notes the same dialectic involving the individual caught in the maelstrom of a militarized state that David Jones writes about in *World War II*: "it is possible—it is even probable—that you can read the history of a campaign in which you served, and find the history doesn't at all tally with the campaign you remember...No fight I know personally...was ever written up historically as it really happened, but rather was written as filtered through the ideals systems of the historians and officers who fought and wished that it might have been, and in fact believed that it

was” (71, 72). My analysis of wartime sequencing and commemoration is rooted at the intersection of state sanctioned narratives and the individualized voices of First World War literature.

I attempt to contextualize these individual, literary voices within their respective time zones in order to reconstruct the traumatic history of the Great War outside of its presumed linear timeline. By delineating particular temporalities of the Great War in literature I argue wartime has been a perpetual norm in modern life, characterized by temporal continuities rather than, as is often suggested by propaganda or history, temporal containment.

Overview

The first chapter, “Trench Time,” examines the temporal experience of the trenches through the commemorative poetry of Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen and the sequencing novels of Erich Remarque and Dalton Trumbo. In the trenches, the incessant firing of artillery left soldiers immobile—many in a state of shell shock—waiting for their fate to be meted out. This passivity accounts for the fragmentation of trench time; the Romantic ideals of the past shattered under the weight of the machinery of modern war, foreclosing the youth on the Western Front from a future. The doomed youth writing in no man’s land counter this physical and psychic violence by the shared friendship and love fostered in trench time. These poets and novelists preserve their always, already doomed fates within queer moments that do not easily fit along the historical timeline of cultural remembrance. Drawing from queer theorists such as Jose Muñoz, Lee Edelman,

and George Haggerty, I place their intimacy outside of normative time. Enshrined in a temporality running counter to coordinated wartime violence and state-sanctioned memorialization, trench time challenges the constructed temporal shift from war to peace. By reframing the trenches as a temporality rather than simply a space, I argue that the most pervasive image of the Great War—the trenches—endures in cultural memory because of its temporal positioning on a queer horizon.

The material conditions of trench time disrupted traditional assumptions of the pre-war period and expectations of the war's end, making possible the isolated temporality in which intimacy between the doomed youth could be fostered. The destruction of trench warfare and military synchronization disrupted British soldiers' deep-seated ethical and aesthetic assumptions about time, particularly the distinctions between dusk and dawn rooted in early twentieth century pastoral ideology as defined in John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (Fussell 62). Wilfred Owen's opening to "Anthem for Doomed Youth," "What passing bells for these who die was cattle?" is perhaps the most iconic line of the trench poets' parodic protest of the pastoral. Owen, other poets, and novelists might be understood as doomed youth themselves, representative offspring of a lost generation bred in the trenches and divorced from pastoral traditions. They passively endured the strict routinization of trench time on the Western Front, where every sunrise and sunset soldiers on both sides of the trenches were required to stand-to. Rather than the hope of pastoral renewal and the potential of growth, each new dawn entailed a greater chance of casualties due to heightened visibility. Because the pre-war pastoral ideology did not provide soldiers with an adequate framework to understand trench

time's redefinition of dusk and dawn and its accompanying violence, a future outside of the trenches became harder to imagine each passing day. And a future back home took on an uncanny relationship with the present of trench time, especially when it is considered that many of the infamous battles of the Western front were fought in France—the Marne, Somme, Arras, Verdun—if not Belgium—Ypres and Passchendaele; all of these sites are relatively close to England. British soldiers dealt with this spatial uncanniness by informally and ironically naming trench lines, otherwise labeled through a system of numbers and letters, as public locations: Piccadilly, Regent Street, or Hyde Park Corner (Fussell 48-9). Such an imaginative recontextualization of the home front within no man's land presents us with something more than the homesickness critics like Fussell have suggested; it represents the dialectic of the individual's experience and the state's authority during wartime, and it suggests how authors temporally displaced the trenches from the future where youth were doomed to die in accordance with the state's synchronization of wartime.

My second chapter, "Mobilized Time, explores the larger war effort to provide a broader perspective on the temporality of the Great War. From conscription to industrial labor and transportation to communication and entertainment, the nations participating in WWI sought to utilize modern technology as a means to simultaneously synch military and civilian life to the tick of a mobilized wartime, which was suspended within the present of its immediate violence.⁸ The efforts to synchronize the citizenry of a nation-

⁸ For more on conscription see Susan Brewer's *Why America Fights* and Christopher Capozzola's *Uncle Same Wants You*. For an in-depth look at industrial labor see Winter and Jean-Louis Robert's *Capital Cities at War*. For a look at wartime transportation see Porter's *War and the Rise of the State*. For studies about

state to the tick-tock of wartime suspended a generation within “mobilized time.”

Mobilized time arrested lives and conflated the past, present, and future; within this temporality, a lost generation was born.

I analyze John Dos Passos’s and Ernest Hemingway’s cinematic aesthetics in their war literature through visual and film theory written across the twentieth century by Walter Benjamin, Jonathan Crary, Mary Anne Doane, and Sergei Eisenstein. I argue that Dos Passos and Hemingway create a prosthetic effect and thereby assuage the shock of their generation. Their war novels represent wartime through the experimental form of montage, reanimating the past, expanding the present, and capturing the contingency of the future. Dos Passos’ *1919* contains multiple plots narrated at a seemingly simultaneous pace while Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* presents readers with the incommensurable perspective of a narrator, Frederic Henry, who refuses to connect his narrated self to his narrating self and thereby splits his perspective between what is being narrated into what is *being* (in the present) and what is *narrated* (in the past). The parallel edits between chapters in *1919* presents wartime in a montaged temporality that reflects the multiple frontlines of the war effort temporally centered in Paris, France where since 1913 time signals were globally transmitted (Kern 14).⁹ While Dos Passos expands the present of wartime through a series of events to prove Randolph Bourne’s refrain that “war is the health of the state,” Hemingway’s multi-perspectival rendering of the Great War

communication and entertainment during the Great War see John Bourne’s “Total War I: The Great War” and Stephen Kern’s *The Culture of Time and Space*.

⁹ The novel proves the point that “the centripetal force of multiple fronts made it impossible for one man to process everything” (Kern 300). Moreover, it is no surprise then, that according to his archive at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collection at the University of Virginia, Dos Passos’ early notes and manuscripts indicate Paris as the spatial center from which to map the simultaneity of *1919*.

expresses the novel's explicit message that there is no possibility for an individual to forge "a separate peace." This message is most clearly expressed in the narrator's gesture of abandonment at the end of *A Farewell to Arms*. While Frederic walks away from his dead lover who died in labor and their stillborn, he cannot walk away from the war because there is nowhere to go outside of the neutral territory of Switzerland during wartime. The seemingly non-existent spatial boundary between total war and potential peace challenges the state-propagated notion of wartime's exceptionality. These novelists measure the effects of the state's synchronization in wartime, thereby complicating the assumed return to peacetime.

By utilizing twentieth-century media technologies, their war novels run counter to the master narrative of propaganda and sequence the continuity of wartime beyond the Armistice. Daily life was attuned to wartime as reflected in the iconic poster of Uncle Sam proclaiming, "I WANT YOU FOR THE U.S. ARMY," to the Four-Minute Men spreading government-sponsored, pro-war messages in theaters in each time zone of the nation. After the war, the state's military authority turned its sights on its civilians during labor strikes of the Red Scare, blurring the temporal line between war and peace. Mobilization "shocked" the public in the Benjaminian sense of the word, numbing the post-war generation. Beginning with Stephen Kern's persuasive claim that film "expanded the sense of the present either by filling it with several noncontiguous events or showing one event from a variety of perspectives" (70), I will consider how Dos Passos and Hemingway deploy cinematic aesthetics to present wartime not as an inevitable and exclusive temporality, but as an extension of the present that suspended the

lives of citizens across mobilized nations. I argue that Dos Passos and Hemingway not only sequence mobilized wartime for future remembrance, but they also reflect the ways that cinematic technologies established a framework to challenge the state's temporal synchronization. The cinematic techniques of montage and parallel editing pioneered by early directors such as D.W. Griffith and Edwin Porter reflected the potential of presenting simultaneous events taking place in a single moment. According to film scholar Mary Ann Doane the cinematic cut marks the temporal gap between the shots, investing scenes with suspense, desire, and contingency (195), thereby complicating the stability of time that the state attempted to shape and control during wartime. And yet cinema's global reach by the turn of the century evinces how such instability and simultaneity was not limited to warfare and its combatants.¹⁰

Chapter Three, "Civilian Time" focuses on the temporal margins of the war in order to characterize the experiences of those foreclosed from the benefits of wartime aid and disavowed in remembrance. Although the geographical distance between civilians and the front can be quantitatively measured, civilian literature—particularly Evadne Price's *Not So Quiet: Stepdaughters of War* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*—marks the qualitative gap between non-combatants and wartime. Framing the non-combat in broad terms—including the nurse in the Forbidden Zone and the demobilized veteran returned home—reveals the particularly gendered ways in which civilian time was claimed and experienced as "precarious," in the sense that Judith Butler uses the term.

¹⁰ While the invention of the cinema between the years 1893 and 1896 by Thomas Edison in America, Robert Paul in England, Max and Emil Sklandowski in Germany, and Louis and Auguste Lumiere in France, placed the experience of simultaneity on a global scale (Kern 70), the invention of the telephone in 1876 and its widespread use to publicly broadcast news, music and other forms of art and entertainment, made the "simultaneity of experience" *technologically* possible (Kern 68-9).

For women, the culturally imposed obligation to serve the war effort, especially as nurses, claimed their time, leaving the protagonist of *Not So Quiet* without the time to even sleep. For civilian men, especially veterans who came home after the Armistice, the assumption that they would return to “regular” life left them out of time and options, compelling Septimus Warren Smith from *Mrs. Dalloway* to find suicide as the only way out. These marginalized temporal positions—women without time and men out of time—reflect the precarity of civilian time, which Dudziak and others interrogating state authority have begun to historicize. As a means to counter this marginalization, civilian literature sequences and commemorates the remainder of the physical and psychic violence of war as continuous with peace. Price’s and Woolf’s novels are filled with ghosts who embody a past that intrudes upon the present and forecloses the future. If the trenches signify as “no-man’s-land,” a strategic space that “belonged to no country” as Gertrude Stein aptly put it, then civilian time signifies as “no-man’s-time,” a gendered temporality that belonged to no one. I consider how Price and Woolf offer insights about the state of post-war masculinity that male war writers like Hemingway could never admit in order to broaden the conversation staged by the authors of trench time and mobilized time.

From the 1960s through the 1990s, feminist historians and literary critics have evaluated the role of women in the Great War. However, much of this important work fails to connect the interrelations between genders. This chapter furthers Margaret Higonnet’s scholarship, which has effectively complicated the line between battlefield and home front. At the same time, I complicate Sandra Gilbert’s argument that the Great

War was the precursor to the women's liberation movement of the twentieth century; although the Representation of the People Act of 1918 gave women over thirty voting rights in the post-war world, literature of the time demonstrates how individual women, particularly young women participating in the war effort, paid a clear price for such advancements. I also draw from Arthur Marwick's historical study of the Great War's impact on British society. His statistical records of the demobilization process and post-war employment are invaluable resources to measure the war's impact on shifting gender roles. By bringing these studies together under the framework of precarity, it is evident that both sides of the gender line need further critical attention. This chapter seeks to correct this oversight through the framework of Butler's sense of precarity, a term denoting the modern condition of a life deemed socially unworthy of living or mourning. Butler has recently framed precarity by the social conditions of war, which is especially germane to the discussion of civilian time. In particular, her gendering of precarity helps elucidate and connect the specific ways that men and women experienced the Great War and post-war life.

In my fourth and final chapter, "Retrospective Time," I trace the lingering presence of these earlier wartimes across the twentieth-century. The passivity of the trenches, the suspension of mobilization, and the precarity of civilians enacted time zones that together reflect a broader temporal dislocation beyond wartime and continuity with modern life. A deeper understanding of this temporal paradox helps elucidate why modern life is so often associated with fragmentation. Using Linda Hutcheon's postmodern literary framework of historiographic metafiction, this chapter reads the

recurrences of trench time, mobilized time, and civilian time in contemporary works: “Last Post” by Carol Ann Duffy, *The Stranger’s Child* by Alan Hollinghurst, the *Regeneration* Trilogy and *Another World* by Pat Barker, and *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham. With the clarity of hindsight, these retrospective works prove that before the cultural remembrance of war is possible, wartime must be sequenced and commemorated in literature. By understanding retrospection outside of its linear trajectory backward and rethinking its temporal movement toward the future, the historiographic metafiction of the Great War reveals and critiques our assumptions undergirding the war’s mythos. Novels and poetry set in retrospective time have the additional obligation to re-place wartime in culture; these contemporary works both mark the difference war literature made and mark their difference from their predecessors by emphasizing the provisionality, textual remains, and excentricity of the past.

Although the Great War began over a century ago, we are fascinated with its connection to our contemporary retrospect, especially as we enter the war’s centenary. Between July 17-November 11, 2014, 888,246 ceramic poppies were “planted” in the moat around the Tower of London, each poppy signifying a British or Colonial fatality of the Great War. The installation takes its name from the first half of the line written by a Derbyshire casualty of the war who wrote, “The Blood Swept lands and seas of red, where angels fear to tread.” Although public memorializations such as this one created by Paul Cummins and Tom Piper raised millions of pounds for veteran related charities, such acts can only recall moments: the moment that the war legally ended or the moment

that individual lives ended.¹¹ In fact, the installation was inspired by verse written in wartime. The novels and poetry about the Great War possess the unique power to not only recall these events, but to place them in time like no other cultural discourse. James Tatum argues that “reliance on the durability of meaning in a monument [or site of remembrance] is a delusion” and that literature shapes wartime into “an eternal meantime, where we can return to battle...and bring [its] memory...once again to life, forever alive” (95). I argue that the retrospective authors of chapter four do not just remind us of their literary predecessors’ ability to bring wartime “to life, forever alive;” these postmodern writers rely on their retrospective distance from the Great War to enhance their re-envisions of the trenches, mobilization, and civilian life. With the historical knowledge of the Second World War and with the academic awareness of the mediating power of literary mythos, Duffy, Hollinghurst, Barker, and Cunningham each self-consciously represent the temporal continuity between the Great War and today. Their works attest to and enact the temporal delay of trauma that psychologists have theorized through the modern label, PTSD. Rather than attribute trauma to an individual’s psyche as a psychologist, these retrospective writers commemorate and sequence a shared history for a current readership looking toward the future. Ultimately, these novels prompt readers to consider: should the war be forgotten—is that even possible?

¹¹ The proceeds of the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* went to Cobseo, Combat Stress, Coming Home, Help for Heroes, The Royal British Legion, and SSAFA.

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Chapter One
Trench Time: The Commemorating Poetry and Sequencing Novels of No Man's Land

Poets and novelists face different temporal obligations inherent to their genres and forms. The poet's duty during wartime is often to commemorate a moment, as if a prophet with the power to enshrine a moment for the future. War novelists, under the constraint of a plot, must selectively sequence a period of time between the pages of a book. Normative conceptions of time such as linearity may be helpful for historians, but as the poets and novelists of this chapter demonstrate, literature is attuned to a different sense of time—one that is selective, personal, and intimate. Instead of providing an historical, holistic view of wartime, poetry and the novel place individuals in time and space in a very different way. Tracing the cultural memory of war from *The Iliad* to the Vietnam War, classicist James Tatum claims that war stories are directed “away from political history, toward psychological rather than historical themes” (51). Tatum claims that literature gives readers access to “an eternal meantime,” in which “we can return to...battle” and restore the lives of the war dead (95). In this chapter, I expand upon Tatum's claims by tracing poetry and the novel's distinct generic obligations to the war dead in order to understand how they give us two different kinds of access to the “eternal meantime” of wartime. In short, I draw a distinction between the commemorating function of poetry and the sequencing function of novels as two different approaches to represent trench time.

By trench time, I refer to the particular temporal experience enacted upon participants by war. In the trenches, the incessant firing of artillery left soldiers

immobile—many in a state of shell shock—waiting for their fate to be meted out. Since Elaine Showalter theorized the gendered effects of shell shock as passivity, emasculation, powerlessness, Wyatt Bonikowski has extended the scope of the wartime trauma to include amnesia, mutism, anxiety, survivor’s guilt and repetitive nightmares of experiences that suggest a “repression and avoidance” of the past (1-2).¹² The passive waiting, silence, repressed guilt and repeated nightmares account for the discontinuity of trench time; the romantic ideals of the past shattered under the weight of the machinery of modern war, foreclosing the youth on the Western Front from a future and locking them in to a repetitive present recycling their trauma. Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Erich Remarque, and Dalton Trumbo among the other doomed youth of no man’s land counter this physical and psychic violence by commemorating and sequencing the shared friendship and love fostered in trench time.¹³ The trench poets and later novelists preserve their always, already doomed fates within queer moments that do not easily fit along the historical timeline of cultural remembrance. Outside of normative time, they enshrine their intimacy in a queer temporality countering the linear logic espoused by military authority that coordinated wartime violence and state-sanctioned memorialization that constructed the temporal shift from war to peace. Nonetheless, institutional forces—politicians, publishing houses, historians—supporting a pro-state narrative of wartime in

¹² See Showalter’s “Male Hysteria” (167-194) in *The Female Malady*, where she argues that shell shock provided a more masculine-sounding substitute for the effeminate associations of “hysteria” (172).

¹³ Some of Owen’s poems put to verse the trauma of trench time without the hope friendship provides while other poems complicate the very notion of friendship in wartime. See “Mental Cases” for a poetic representation of the friendless, silent, and shell shocked veterans who have repressed the past: “Purgatorial shadows. . . these men are whose minds the dead have ravished / Memory fingers in their hair of murders, multitudinous murders they once witnessed.” See “Strange Meeting” for his depiction of the guilt and blurring between friendship and enmity: “I am the enemy you have killed, my friend.”

the post-war period often circumvented the subversive potential of poets and novelists who commemorated and sequenced the experience of trench time. By reframing the trenches as a temporality rather than simply a space, I argue that the most pervasive image of the Great War—the trenches—endures in cultural memory because of its temporal positioning on a queer horizon.

Soldiers' disillusioned perception of the trenches could not be contained on a simple historical timeline. Rather, their poems and novels based on the experience of the trenches questioned the state's authority to craft a unified narrative, containing wartime between the years 1914-1918 across the 10,000 miles of trench lines (Chasseaud 18). The Retreat from Mons on August 24, 1914 turned into the battle of the Marne in which each side faced a half million casualties. On the German side, this level of destruction and loss of human life was in large part due to the total war plans developed to achieve the aims of the slogan, "Weltmacht Oder Niedergang," or "World Power or Downfall" (Townshend 14). Graf von Schlieffen's strategy to encircle the Allied forces in order to annihilate them, known as "*Vernichtungsstrategie*" or the Schlieffen Plan, pushed the notion of "absolute war," first developed by military theorist General Carl von Clausewitz, beyond pragmatic military strategy and put the war into "existential terms" for those commanding ground troops in the trenches (Townshend 14). Carried out by Helmuth von Moltke, the plan failed when the French attacked at the Marne. Losing their defensive thrust, the Germans dug in and thus began trench time. As I will show, Erich Remarque responded to "*Vernichtungsstrategie*" in his war novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* by comparing the individual soldier's perception of the war to a whirlpool. By reversing the

centripetal movement of war outlined by generals, I claim in this chapter that Remarque sequences his protagonist's experience of trench time in a centrifugal movement away from the destruction of the front and toward a utopian horizon outside of the war.¹⁴ Through plot, Remarque exerts a sense of agency over the endless cycle of trench time, filled with inevitable slaughter and monotonous conditions.

After the first year of the war, the trenches became a strange place outside of time in which soldiers lost their ability to see beyond the walls of a muddy dugout and the immediate threat of the present. As John Bourne observes, "it was apparent by the end of 1915 that pre-war assumptions were false," as such romantic notions gave way to an increase in firepower, manpower, and passive witness to destruction.¹⁵ In spring of 1915, the Germans attacked with chlorine gas in what has been called the Second Battle of Ypres. For both sides, it appeared impossible to break through the enemy's trench line. The British suffered 60,000 casualties in the battle of Loos in September of 1915 when they misused chlorine gas that blew back into their own trenches (Fussell 11). This collateral damage from new technology as well as the instability of the Schlieffen Plan defamiliarized the line between friend and foe on each side of the trenches, providing credence to Gertrude Stein's observation in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* that the warzone "belonged to no country" (187). As each side dug in, no man's land—the space between the Allies and the Central powers—placed the front line soldier in the temporal

¹⁴ As I will elaborate on, I rely upon Muñoz's theorization of "centrifugal space" and utopian futurity to approach the particular way in which Remarque sequences wartime (140).

¹⁵ By December of 1914, each side held a Christmas day ceasefire and exchanged cigarettes, a truce that never happened again because commanders forbade it. This gesture at the end of the first year of the war reflects the romantic notion that the war was being carried out like a sporting match. The war tactics of 1915 shattered such sentiments.

position of passive waiting (Kern 296). Without a sense of national claim to neither the land nor a personal agency over the passage of time, soldiers turned to each other to make meaning out of their sacrifices and wartime experiences.

For many veteran writers, the battle of the Somme was the definitive moment in the Great War when they abandoned patriotic obedience to their commanders and found an intimate friendship with the men around them, an intimacy that is at the root of the ways survivors commemorated and sequenced trench time. Under the command of General Haig, the first day of the Somme resulted in an unprecedented casualty and death toll of 60,000 men.¹⁶ Although the press instantiated a patriotic simplification of Haig's wartime strategy by publishing headlines asking readers, "What can I do?," and answering, "Don't think you know better than Haig" (qtd. in Slater 164), poets who saw action on the Somme, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, wrote verse suggesting that they knew better. In Sassoon's "A Night Attack," composed in the trenches of 1916, the poet puts his political pacifism and personal empathy to verse. The speaker reacts to the dead corpse of a German soldier with great sympathy: "No doubt he loathed the war and longed for peace / And cursed our souls because we'd killed his friends" (43). This love between friends on each side, a love that is not legible in the existential plans of military generals, nonetheless made an indelible impression upon the men who experienced the

¹⁶ As technology increased casualties, states required more men to fight. The Military Service Act passed in 1916 and England trained its first army made of conscripted men, marking the Great War's transition to a modern World War. Around this time Sir Douglas Haig became commander of British forces. He addressed the problem of the stalemate on the Western Front with an increase in manpower. His plan for the Somme was an attempt to overcome the Germans in a 7:1 ratio, but such grand plans turned into what the ground troops called the "Great Fuck-Up" (Fussell 13). A likely cause of Haig's catastrophe was his oversimplified plan of attack, which required ground troops to attack during broad daylight in waves. This strategy came out of the "class system and the assumptions it sanctioned" that sacrificed men's lives and dismissed their intelligence (Fussell 15).

trenches and wrote about them.

In September in the St. Mihiel Salient, the Germans collapsed under the weight of American forces—American author Dalton Trumbo among them—assisting the Allies and leading to the Armistice on November 11, 1918. Just as Trumbo entered and fought in the last days of the war, his 1939 novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*, would be last major literary entry of the long catalogue of Great War works.

I rehearse these historical events and reactions not to homogenize the temporal experience of the Great War to fit between 1914-1918. Rather, I seek to contrast the historical representation of these moments with the distinct way in which commemorating poets and sequencing novelists represent wartime. Literary critic Santanu Das claims that “while the trench lyric usually derives its power from its immediacy and contingent nature, it is as if more time was needed to heal the breach in time caused by the war and organize the war years into a coherent prose narrative” (63). While Das effectively explores how the writer’s need for time is a practical concern, I wonder, what does time demand of poets and novelists, respectively? And how might the commemorative and sequencing texts of the Great War, according to and against the constraints of their genres, envision the future for those in mourning and thus heal readers in different ways? To approach these questions I turn to the poetry produced during the beginning and end of the war by poets who died in battle, Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen. Then I examine the narratives of the war books boom in the 1920s and 30s, Erich Remarque’s German novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Dalton Trumbo’s

American novel *Johnny Got His Gun*, which sequenced the fleeting intimacy that Brooke and Owen commemorated in their verse.

Granted, it may seem simplistic to align poetry with commemoration and novels with sequencing time. The authors John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway of the next chapter disrupt such generic functions. In this chapter focused on the literary representation of the trenches, I argue that the obligation to the war dead of the Marne, Ypres, the Somme, or the St. Mihiel Salient obliged the poets and authors published during and immediately after the Armistice to commit their bonds with the dead to memory. All of the writers in this chapter follow the sentiments explicitly expressed by Richard Aldington in his WWI novel *Death of a Hero*: “Somehow or other we have to make these dead acceptable, we have to atone for them, we have to appease them” (32).

The trope of doomed youth emerges from the trenches as the means to make the dead acceptable to the public as well as atone for and appeased them on a personal level. This trope embodies the Great War’s highly historicized memory, mythos, and history.¹⁷ Wilfred Owen, coined this term as a way to characterize his fallen comrades in one of the

¹⁷ Fussell’s, Hynes’s, and Winter’s literary studies typify the different approaches to the Great War, respectively engaged with its memory, mythos, and history. See Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* in which he argues the Great War is the origin of an ironic engagement with the past, or what he calls “modern memory,” and can be traced through WWII writing and structures our remembrance of the Great War today. See Samuel Hynes’s *A War Imagined* for an account of the social and political changes that mark a gap between the older generation and that of the Great War. This historical discontinuity generated by the war, Hynes argues, powerfully shapes our current conception of both war and the world we live in so much so that the First World War is less a memory and more a myth, or something that must be imagined. And See Jay Winter’s *Remembering the Great War*, which takes a comparative cultural history methodology to explain the common transnational experience of mourning in Europe in reaction to WWI in order to challenge the current historiography of the Great war. Unlike other critics who assume there is a “modern memory” of the war (Fussell) and critics who emphasize the modernists’ cultural intervention in public attitudes toward the Great War and the making of the Lost Generation (Hynes), Winter is interested in teasing out the complications, intersections and disconnections between traditionalist and modernist reactions to the war.

most anthologized war poems to date, “Anthem for Doomed Youth.” As a pervasive literary trope on both ends of no man’s land, doomed youth embodied the isolation of trench time and came to characterize the chasm between the young men fighting and the past traditions and future lives outside of war. Das focuses upon the space of no man’s land, particularly the unique landscape (or as he calls it “slimescape”) produced by trench warfare, and claims that “mud on the Western Front represented the paradoxical nature of time during the Great War: itself the result of the latest technology (combined with bad weather), it looked back to some primeval chaos” since “going down into the bowels of the earth was like going back in time as well” (44-5). I argue the trope of doomed youth emerges out of the mud, embodying this temporal paradox of being at once of the future as well as some spectral trace of the past. Within these boundaries of past and future, European and American poets and authors inscribed wartime as a queer temporality in which the fleeting intimacy between doomed youth was fostered. As I will show, these writers responding to their war experiences conceptualized their connections to the future outside of normative, linear notions of time associated with inheritance, reproduction, and natural renewal. Instead, the traces of their intimacy, the memories of queer moments and conjugal friendships, and the impression of their camaraderie fundamentally compose the sequence and commemoration of trench time. By turning to theorists of queer temporality like Jose Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia*, I am more interested in a “queer doing” than a “queer identity” (84). This chapter attempts to reframe the intimacies of the trenches to better understand how trench literature queered wartime in contrast to the straight, linear timeline on which history conceptualizes 1914-1918.

Drawing upon queer theorists who have interrogated the heteronormative assumptions of futurity, I elucidate how the trope of doomed youth figures a queer moment, a moment that I recuperate from normative notions of time. In this way, I restore the critical valence of this literary trope by tracing its pervasiveness throughout literature produced during wartime as well as in the 1920s and '30s war books boom. Ultimately, I seek to recover what Muñoz theorizes as what is forgotten about this past literature in order to bring the expression of trench time's queer temporality back into relation with the future of our ever changing memory, history, and mythos of the Great War.

I read the isolated intimacy between men on the front within the framework of what Eve Sedgwick refers to as a “queer moment.” Although she was writing within the context of the 1990s, her characterization of this context as a “continuing moment, movement, motive—recurrent, eddying, *troublant*” (xii) is particularly helpful to approach the trench time of doomed youth because it allows us to reapproach trench literature outside of its place on a historical timeline. Instead, using Sedgwick's cyclical notion of temporality, we can better understand the nature of the relationships formed between men in wartime. Sedgwick goes on to explain that the word “queer” “means *across*” or “transitive...relational, and strange.” I want to expand the implications of Sedgwick's formulation of a queer moment by turning to more recent queer theorists—particularly Jose Muñoz and Lee Edelman—who have interrogated the relationship

between queer time and futurity.¹⁸ In this way, I seek to clarify how the queer moment of trench time has established the temporal contours of what can be remembered, mythologized, and historicized.

The contentious issue of queers' relationality with the future is a major debate within the field of queer temporality. For Lee Edelman, there is no promise of futurity for queers so he advocates embracing one's anti-relational position within society. Although Munoz agrees with Edelman's critique of heteronormative assumptions about the future, he endorses a utopian relationality between queers and a politically viable future because he argues not all queers, particularly those of color, cannot so easily dismiss the future. While Edelman's argument against the cultural logic of normative time is important to understanding the subversive power of the trope of doomed youth, Munoz's theorization of a utopian futurity is vital to bridge the temporal gap between trench time and the retrospective position of readers from the war era and today.

Edelman's *No Future* is perhaps the most recognizable and controversial polemic against the political assumption that the future is made for children. For Edelman, "the image of the Child invariably shapes the logic within which the political itself must be thought" (2). In effect, the Child embodies the very heteronormative logic that dictates the scope and organization of politics around reproductive futurity. The child is such a pervasive figure in our culture that we are not "able to conceive of a future without the figure of the Child" (11). Edelman argues that queers cannot seek change or position

¹⁸ Recently, Kate Haffey has revisited Sedgwick's early writings within queer theory's recent focus on temporality to reread modernist literature. Haffey deploys Sedgwick's queer moment to argue that in *Mrs. Dalloway* Virginia Woolf "is able to present a queer temporality that disrupts and questions traditional forms of narration and traditional plots" (149).

themselves within such a system. Rather, he posits an alternative: a refusal of the Child and all that it stands for—the stable identity of the “social subject” and the hope or “faith that politics...implicitly affirms” (6). By refusing the Child, Edelman refuses politics, which he frames in the Lacanian terms of intersecting between the Imaginary, or the social relations that structure one’s sense of subjecthood, and the Symbolic, or the realm of language and social signifiers that hail one into subjecthood.

Instead, Edelman calls queers to embrace the death drive, what “always insists as the void in and of the subject” (25). Lacan links the death drive to the Real; it does not adhere to the Imaginary or one’s sense of self realization because it “can only be thought as impossible” and it evades the Symbolic Order of signification because “each time it shows the tip of its nose, it is unthinkable” (qtd. in Edelman 38). Edelman figures queerness as anti-relational, “never a matter of being or becoming but, rather, of embodying the remainder of the Real internal to the Symbolic order” (25). Edelman specifies that one way of naming this remainder is the Lacanian notion of *jouissance*, what goes beyond identity and signification and how the death drive manifests (25).

While I am interested in WWI literature’s critique of normative notions of time within the trenches, doomed youth is more than a refusal to engage with a heteronormative future beyond the war; it embodies what is left over and left out of a future beyond wartime.

The trope of doomed youth critiques the logic and language of reproductive assumptions about the future, assumptions embedded in literary genres like the elegy. Through the genre, elegists have naturalized the future by way of pastoral renewal and economic structures safeguarding futurity such as inheritance. Although the vegetation

deity was a staple of the English elegy from Spencer until the turn of the twentieth century (see Sacks 26-7), the notion of renewal, regeneration, inheritance—any traditional tie to futurity—was drastically interrupted by trench warfare and refused by those who experienced it. According to Jahan Ramazani's *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney*, the modern elegist after the Great War performs “melancholic mourning” by violating the elegiac conventions that once moved the traditional elegist to consolation; he refuses to find a substitute for the lack created out of his lost object and mourns indefinitely into the future. Ramazani argues, the modern elegy challenged the twentieth-century psychiatric discourse of mourning that posited the outcome of the process in linear, binary terms in which consolation was normative and melancholy was pathological. The literary expression of this loss through the trope of doomed youth, however, opens up its dialectical potential beyond endless individual depression.

The literary expressions of the doomed youth from the trenches critique the future but do not adhere to Edelman's manifesto-like call to reject political relationality. The very functions of commemorative poetry and sequencing novels are relational; the war literature of this chapter is written with the intent to be read by an other, who presumably identifies with—or in the very least recognizes—the disruptive relationship between wartime and futurity. In an intensely relational way, the war literature of this chapter grapples with the relationships between past, present, and future, staking out a better political horizon for readers to transcend the geographical contours of the trenches.

The widespread presence of the trope of doomed youth has ensured the Great War's prominence in our cultural memory, mythos, and history of modern life. To understand the effect of what doomed youth have left behind, I turn to Jose Muñoz's viable formulation of utopian queer futurity. Muñoz is similarly skeptical of normative assumptions about time, particularly the future. Whereas Edelman relies on a Lacanian framework to refuse the future, Muñoz takes a Marxist approach, particularly inflected by the works of Ernst Bloch, whose temporal formulation of the future as "not-yet-here" and the past as "no-longer conscious" opens up the potential of the present to relate with a utopian future through "anticipatory illumination" (Muñoz 83). He agrees with Edelman that current "political hope fails queers because, like signification, it was not originally made for us. It resonates only on the level of reproductive futurity" (91). Muñoz, however, questions what is literally leftover for queers in Edelman's formulation when he writes, "What we get, in exchange for giving up on futurity, abandoning politics and hope, is a certain *jouissance* that at once defines and negates us" (91). He refuses Edelman's contention that this is "kid's stuff," the title of *No Future's* first chapter. He urges that the solution is not "to forget the future. The here and now is simply not enough" (96). Instead, within Muñoz's queer utopian framework, "queerness should and could be about a desire for another way of being in both the world and time." Muñoz rejects Edelman's anti-relational politics for a relational, utopian one that has at once a "positive valence...and a negative function": on one hand it looks forward to a "collective potentiality" and on the other hand it expresses a "shared dissatisfaction" (125, 189).

From Brooke's and Owen's verse penned during wartime to Remarque's and Trumbo's novels written after, the lament for doomed youth goes beyond individual eulogies or single representations of melancholy; it is an expression of an entire generation's loss as the literature of this chapter reflects. The literary trope of the trenches embodies and preserves the absent presence of this loss as a utopian means of combating the obsolescence of the war dead from fading out of cultural remembrance. Geoff Dyer claims in *The Missing of the Somme* that "constantly reiterated, the claim that we are in danger of forgetting is one of the ways in which the war ensured it would be remembered" (16). The trope of doomed youth embodies this fear of forgetting, placing the burden of remembering upon the reader, much like the work of the elegy which imagines a different future—one out of time—that preserves an intimate connection. This intimacy is the kernel from which these poets and authors base their connection to a utopian temporality beyond wartime.

Brooke's and Owen's commemorations of the bonds they made in wartime recurred in the decades following the war as a ghostly presence sequenced in wartime within the novels by surviving authors like Remarque and Trumbo, authors outside of England and on both sides of the trenches. Both Owen and Brooke were limited by their post-war, posthumous publication histories and placed in the cultural imaginary by state institutions. More importantly, both men poetically commemorated their intimacy and thereby typified camaraderie at wartime. In *Paris France*, Stein explains the unifying power of wartime by comparing such comradeship with the intimacy of a family: "The family, any family has naturally the quality of the concentration of isolation. That is what

makes a family, that is what makes war, so much war, it is that concentration of isolation” (101). Stein’s “concentration of isolation” may seem like an ironic comparison between an intimately connected family and the violence of war. However, the structure of a family is a particularly apt framework to consider relationships between men at war, particularly the young men called “doomed youth.” I consider how the experience of the trenches was a temporal isolation, a “concentration of isolation” in the sense that the intimacy between doomed youth has no foreseeable future.

The novelists discussed here, Remarque and Trumbo in particular, wrote with a retrospective distance from the war that required them to sequence the temporal experience of the war with a beginning and end that did not necessarily accord with the war’s declaration or armistice. I analyze how Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* limits its plot within the temporal confines of wartime while Trumbo’s *Johnny Got His Gun* sequences the temporal aftermath of the war for a readership on the cusp of the next World War. For these novelists, their selectivity in sequencing wartime not only makes sense of individual experiences in ways history cannot; sequencing wartime is at once a political statement against the state’s assumed, linear narrative and a cultural imperative to atone for and appease war casualties.

“His Death Was Not More Lovely Than His Life”:

Queer Moments in Rupert Brooke’s War Verse

One of the earliest and most popularly read poets of the Great War, Rupert Brooke, is often referenced as penning some of the most staunchly nationalistic war

verse. As a key Edwardian poet of the pre-war period, Brooke penned verse that sought out traditional values within the physical landscape of England. He was better known for applying his Georgian appreciation for his homeland while at war in his 1918 edition of *Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke: With a Memoir*, particularly the poems from the sequence 1914, “The Dead” and “The Soldier.” In the latter he prophesizes his own death and reflects on its value to the nation by bestowing “some corner of a foreign field” in no man’s land with the commemorative title, “forever England” (105). War literary critics who seek to dismiss Brooke for his imperialistic inclinations often cite this line—first made famous when Winston Churchill quoted it in his eulogy for the poet in *The London Times* on April 26, 1915—. Churchill’s political purpose behind publishing the eulogy becomes clear when readers note the call for more troops that directly follows the obituary. In an effort to reach a broad readership, his literary executor, Edward Marsh, emphasized the poet’s legacy by naturalizing Brooke’s death within the island of Skyros, where he was buried while serving the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. At the end of Marsh’s memoir of Brooke in *Collected Poems*, he quotes Brooke’s friend, Dennis Brown, who wrote to Marsh about traveling through the Aegean Sea and passing by Skyros, observing that “the sea and sky in the East were grey and misty; but it stood out in the West, black and immense, with a crimson glowing halo around it. Every colour had come into the sea and sky to do him honour; and it seemed that the island must ever be shining with his glory that we buried there” (qtd. in Marsh clix). Brown’s romanticized language, amplified at the end of Marsh’s memoir prefacing Brooke’s poetry, places the poet’s memory upon a pedestal and heightens the British imperial presence in the

Mediterranean as if their navy joined the classical warrior ranks of Spartans and Athenians.

While Brooke is known for his positive poetry about the patriotic purpose of the war dead in the early stages of the war, as I will show his verse contains other moments—queer moments—that disrupt the image of the jingoist Georgian. In an effort to recuperate these queer moments that stand beside his overemphasized lines praising his country, I seek to reveal how Brooke developed the prototypical way of commemorating the war dead outside of prescribed nationalism and normative notions of wartime adhering to linearity. By emphasizing the ephemerality of male intimacy and its representation as loss on the destructive front, he lays the foundation for poets who experienced the latter part of the war.

In Winston Churchill's eulogy for Rupert Brooke, he wrote, "A voice had become audible...more to do justice to the nobility of our youth in arms...than any other" (qtd. Jones xiv). Churchill, however, had selective hearing. He hears the Georgian poet's just treatment of England's fighting youth at war through the noble sacrifice expressed in the sonnet "The Soldier," which Churchill printed alongside his eulogy: "If I should die, think only this of me: / That there's some corner of a foreign field / That is for ever England." By carefully curating such patriotic lines, Churchill belied the implicit message of intimacy and peace voiced in Brooke's poetry, which was ultimately overshadowed by his posthumous reputation. Beyond Churchill's widely read eulogy, Brooke's historical persona was further idealized by his literary executor and friend, Edward Marsh, who wrote the first draft of Churchill's eulogy and published Brooke's

1914 and Other Poems, the 1915 collection that begins with his five-sonnet sequence about the war including “The Soldier,” and ends with a nostalgic look back at “The Old Vicarage, Grantchester.” Brooke’s literary reputation placed the fallen soldier poet within the idealized pastoral space of Grantchester, sealing the poet within the romanticized landscape of the early part of the war before its full-scale mass destruction and the turning of public opinion.¹⁹ As Harry Ricketts points out, the collection was “book-ended with Englishness” and contained what would become the iconic photographic portrait of Brooke from 1913 by Sherril Schell. To Ricketts, “Marsh understood exactly what the public wanted,” as evinced by its reprintings since its first pressing sold out (26). The collection underwent fourteen impressions in the year following his death. In 1918, Marsh released Brooke’s poetry along with his memoir of the poet in a collected edition titled *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke: With a Memoir*, which underwent sixteen impressions over the following decade (Brooker and Widdowson 121). Through shaping the public’s memory of Brooke, the state and his literary estate cooperated in situating the poet on a linear timeline. Edward Thomas noted the way in which Brooke’s reputation preceded his verse when he wrote a review for *1914 and other Poems* and commented, “His death makes certain sonnets stand out” (Jones 34).

Other lines of Brooke’s poetry do not so easily coalesce with the poet’s posthumous reputation or his prescribed temporal position within wartime. There are lines from the poet’s verse that audibly signify as queer moments: they assert a different

¹⁹ Many critics attribute this change to the battle of the Somme. Others have posited that other than the Somme, soldiers were dispirited due to high casualties, a shift from volunteer enlistment to conscription, the Easter uprisings in Ireland, and numerous failed missions indicative of a protracted decline in faith in their superiors (Hynes 100-1).

kind of justice for the youth at war, whether they are dead, doomed, or surviving. These queer moments disrupt wartime's linear connection with the future by imagining a different kind of peace. Peace for Brooke is not a temporality after a war fought for the edification of the British Empire. Rather, Brooke's queer moments posit an ephemeral instance rippling across time, sparked by an intimate memory, physical touch, or personal connection. As I will show, in poems such as "The Soldier," the spatiality of the warzone—a "field that is forever England...under an English heaven"—becomes audible with "laughter, learnt of friends," a trace of a bond and intimacy that exceeds the reach of the empire. While scholarship on Brooke has always been interested in the sexuality of the sensual poet, I am interested in moving beyond the poet's biography in order to mark how his poetry engages in a queer temporality.²⁰ Granted, Brooke's poetry is filled with concerns over his own death, which his personal letters corroborate. For instance, he wrote to his ex-mistress, Katherine Cox, a month before his death, "I suppose you're the best I can do in the way of a widow. I'm telling the Ranee [Mary Brooke, his mother] that after she's dead, you're to have my papers. They may want to write a biography! How am I to know if I shan't be eminent?...It's a good thing I die. Goodbye, child" (qtd. Hale 283). Nonetheless, in this chapter I demonstrate how his poetry frames death and a future beyond death outside of traditional notions of linearity and inheritance.

Rather than read Brooke's constant concern over his doomed fate as a premonition of his death, I understand his preoccupation with mortality within queer

²⁰ For a biographical account of Brooke's "physical" relationship with Denham Russel-Smith, see Ricketts 18. Such biographical information became available after the publication of his private letters. See Jones xi-xvii for further information about the changes of Brooke scholarship over the course of the twentieth century.

moments that move beyond death as a finite end. Muñoz observes, “death is viewed in Western thought as quintessentially antiutopian because it absolutely defines the end of potentiality” (149). However, Muñoz posits that “to make ‘death art,’”—as I argue Brooke, Owen, Remarque, and Trumbo all do—“is to move beyond death as a finitude” (149). Their commemorating and sequencing works move the war dead beyond their ethereal ends, preserving their lost potential as what is leftover on the horizon of a better, utopian future. Brooke reroutes access to the future in his apocalyptic poetry written before 1914 and his war verse. He does so by memorializing queer moments that redefine the signification of the quotidian, the everyday like the laughter leant of friends in “The Soldier.” Brooke’s memorialization of such moments enact the very function of revising the future as what Muñoz theorizes in the Blochian terms of the “not-yet-here:”

Moments of queer relational bliss, what the poets name ecstasies, are viewed as having the ability to rewrite a larger map of everyday life. When ‘future generations’ are invoked, the poet is signaling a queerness to come, a way of being in the world that is glimpsed through reveries in a quotidian life that challenges the dominance of an affective world, a present, full of anxiousness and fear. (Muñoz 25)

Much of Brooke’s anxiousness and fear was sourced in his own legacy, remembrance, and lineage, all of which are markers of a linear, heteronormative sense of time. And yet the queer moments in his poetry allow us to move beyond the assumed finitude of death and problematize a future circumscribed to reproductive futurity. In spite of how Brooke’s reputation was patriotically repurposed in the wake of his death, readers of his poetry glimpse the ephemerality of doomed youth in its early form, which later poets who actually fought in the trenches would develop.

Brooke began his critique of the future and his relationship to it long before the

war began, but his early critiques were based in the abstract and rooted in pastoral form rather than lived experience. The war forced him into the position of the doomed youth disconnected from a normative future. Brooke's poetry leading up to and written during the war offers a very clear critique of futurity, inheritance, and heteronormative time—all of which were foundational values that the state drew upon to co-opt the young poet's death in service to the narrative of wartime as contained, and necessary for peace. I apply Sedgwick's notion of a "queer moment," defined as a "continuing moment, movement, motive—recurrent, eddying, *troublant*" (xii), to navigate the temporality of Brooke's commemorative war poetry. In this way, I seek to reverse Hynes's cause and effect claim that Brooke's poetry provided the "Big picture of the war" through the language that reinforced traditional values (110). The thematic of doomed youth and the subsequent foreclosure of inheritance and futurity reflects the ways he sublimated his own personal anxiety over his imminent death, which the state made immanent to the narrative of the Great War. Brooke's queer moments figure the early embodiment of doomed youth that other poets and authors would attempt to reclaim from the state as a kind of queered lineage in a different kind of future outside of a normative conception of time demarcating war from peace.

In Brooke's "The Vision of the Archangels" (29), composed between 1905 and 1908, he lyricizes the pre-War, Georgian value of the child as symbol of purity, futurity, and sacrifice. The poem takes the vantage point of the titular four archangels who bear the weight of the future:

A dingy coffin; where a child must lie,
It was so tiny. (Yet, you had fancied, God could never

Have bidden a child turn from the spring and the sunlight,
And shut him in that lonely shell, to drop for ever
Into the emptiness and silence, into the night. ...)

Brooke's parenthetical aside confronts readers' assumptions about divine justice and the child's symbolic position in the future. The use of imperative language ("a child *must* lie" and "God...*bidden*"), positions the child as a passive object within a contained space, falling into oblivion. Against readers' presumed objections,

They [the archangels] then from the sheer summit cast, and watched it fall,
Through unknown glooms, that frail black coffin—and therein
God's little pitiful Body lying, worn and thin,
And curled up like some crumpled, lonely flower-petal—
Till it was no more visible, they turned again
With sorrowful quiet faces downward to the plain.

The Christ-like characterization of "God's little pitiful Body," its disregarded status as crumpled and lonely, and its disappearance into an unknown gloom reads as a foreboding prophecy of the doomed youth of WWI. While his verse pays deference to the archangels and their celestial duty, the pre-War image of doomed youth and all of its markers of weakness and inadequacy—a "pitiful," worn and thin," "crumpled" body within a "dingy," "frail" and "lonely shell"—revises sentimental assumptions about sacrifice and its purpose.

"The Vision of Archangels" is a precursor to Brooke's later poems, which give voice to the war dead, albeit on a lower frequency in the imagined abstract of biblical mythos. As an early indicator of the potential of Brooke's later war poetry, "The Vision of the Archangels" displays the poet's sympathy for both the doomed youth shut up in a coffin and those on high command. While Brooke's pre-war vision questions normative assumptions about the future and the child's "natural" inheritance of it, I caution against

reading this poem as a prescient prophecy of the war. Doing so mitigates the true horror of the experience of what Brooke would later describe as “half the youth of Europe blown through pain to nothingness in the incessant mechanical slaughter of these modern battles” (qtd. Jones 386). Amidst this incessant slaughter, Brooke found a time and space to further question his skepticism of linearity.

Wartime would hone his biblical scope to the quotidian, enabling Brooke to poeticize a different way of being in everyday life outside of a sequential temporality, outside of straight time. Brooke’s better known, five-sonnet sequence, *1914*, begins—rather than ends—with “Peace,” suggesting by its very composition that the experience of wartime cannot be understood in terms of linearity. “Peace” inhabits the poetic and commemorates time rather than sequences it in narrative form. By beginning with “Peace,” Brooke disrupts any simple starting or ending point, disrupting the notion of narrative progress. With a similar obeisance to the divine as the speaker of “The Vision of the Archangels,” but with more ardor, the speaker sings praises of war:

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping
...
Leave...all the little emptiness of love!

Like God’s pitiful, infantilized body of “The Vision of Archangels,” the youth of “Peace” are passive offerings. However, in their collective sacrifice, they have been awakened from the shallowness of selfish love. Jones reads this poem as Brooke’s relief that a society, corrupt and stagnant in peace, would be shaken up “by the thunderclap of war” (391). Rather than read “Peace” as a pre-war idyll, it could more accurately be read as a poem about finding peace in time of war. For Brooke, war opens a temporality in which

intimacy beyond merely the physical and erotic can be fostered:

Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
Naught broken save this body, lost but breadth;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's peace there
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

Sedgwick's definition of shame is useful to approach Brooke's articulation of "shame" in light of his equivocal characterization of death as both friend and foe. For Sedgwick, shame contributes to the shaping of one's identity while guilt is an effect related to one's actions, even as the two terms have very "slippery" distinctions (37). Sedgwick temporalizes the ephemerality of shame as "a moment" in which identification with the other is interrupted, but nevertheless identity for oneself is made (36). For this reason, Sedgwick explains, "Shame is both peculiarly contagious and peculiarly individuating" (36). "There," where Brooke's collective "we" finds release of shame, has a spatial presence in a no man's land filled with the intimacy of men. "There" indicates a fleeting moment in which shame is released, giving outlet for his laughing heart, a metaphor that is at once abstract and physical. However, the ever-present reminder of the body's frailty and capacity for agony leads the speaker to shamefully regard death as a release from life. The ambivalence of the final lines might also belie the speaker's own survivor's guilt of being "there." Jones has noted how the poem suggests how Brooke saw the war as "a convenient way of purging his sexual sins and emotional guilt—the contrast between cleanness and dirt is specifically underlined, as is the orgasmic 'release' that 'we' (actually he) has found" (392). If Brooke's release is read within a queer moment, it can be understood as a time that is recurrent and relational rather than final and resolute.

If we apply Lacan's psychoanalytic orders of the Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic that Edelman relies upon to formulate his criticism of heteronormative time, we can understand these queer moments as residing in the Imaginary, the Lacanian realm that stages one's identity in social relation to the other.²¹ These moments attain a kind of political valence with Brooke's readership who come to know his moments of shame. By putting these moments to structured verse form, Brooke also enters into the Symbolic realm of signification, communicating with his readers well beyond the deaths of his friends as well as his own death. These relations between the men and his readers realign Brooke with love and creation, in opposition to the death drive. Brooke's releases *of* shame—not a release *from* shame as death would provide—stand as ephemeral moments of peace at the outset of the war. Granted, critics have reasonably charged Brooke for his naive endorsement of the war by voicing the traditional, pre-war values of the ruling class, upholding England as "Home," and privileging self-sacrifice for the good of the state (Brooker and Widdowson 121). And yet "Peace" foresees a very different temporal relationship between the soldier and the future than that dictated by traditional values propagated by the state. These brief moments, when Brooke's intimacy with the men enables a release of shame, figure doomed youth outside of duty to one's nation during wartime. By repurposing peace and shame, Brooke finds a different way of being in wartime. Rather than negate a political future after these queer moments, Brooke charges them with a similar "potentiality" that Muñoz theorizes as "always in the horizon

²¹ Edelman aligns the Imaginary with politics and reproductive futurity, the Symbolic with language and its cultural propagation through discourses (such as literature) that name and signify the Child as the embodiment of futurity, and the Real with the death drive, which he formulates as a queer negation of the Child and futurity.

and...never completely disappears but, instead, lingers and serves as a conduit for knowing and feeling other people” (113). Brooke’s memorialization of the relational bond between the men on the front becomes the temporal traces of trench time expressed by the speaker and preserved by the reader.

In the two-sonnet sequence, “The Dead,” taking up sections III and IV of *1914*, Brooke deploys the recurrent images of the heart, slumber, and death to resound the impact of the war on idyllic notions associated with inheritance and futurity. In the process of composing the first sonnet of “The Dead” in Chatham, Brooke received the casualty list from France and Belgium. This context is important to understand the ambivalent tone of the speaker who proclaims a surprising reversal of fortune:

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There’s none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us fairer gifts than gold.

The “us” in the final line places the speaker on the side of the war dead, obliging those blowing the bugles, the survivors, to recognize the price of the war. Although Brooke volunteered out of nationalistic pride, his revaluation of the war dead questions who will inherit peace. He and his fellow soldiers “poured out the red sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be / Of work and joy, and that un hoped serene, / That men call age.” Expressed in idyllic lyric as foreclosed from seeing the end of the war let alone old age, the “poured out...sweet wine of youth” is one of the first poetic renditions of WWI soldiers figured as doomed youth. Unfortunately, Philip Gibbs of *The Daily Chronicle* would write in a voice mimicking Brooke’s lament for the young war dead in the first report on the battle of the Somme, “It is a day of promise in this war, in which the blood

of brave men is poured out upon the sodden fields of Europe” (qtd. Hynes 110). In a co-opted Brooke-like voice that would cohere the Big Picture of the Somme, Gibbs produced this report on official military sanctioned sources without direct contact with the front. Just as Churchill and Marsh integrated Brooke’s posthumous image into the idyllic mythos of the war’s beginning, the state and press mutually synthesize the Georgian’s poetic voice to articulate a zealous report of one of the most mismanaged battles of the Great War.

“The Dead” then considers how the war interrupted the progression to the future by turning to the memory of the war dead, those who did not live long enough to produce an heir. Contrasting the image of poured out wine, Brooke conjures “those who would have been / Their sons,” the unborn inheritors of the war dead who are given “their immortality” by virtue of their fallen fathers. The would-have-been sons of the war dead increase the value of the sacrifice of their would-have-been-fathers, while further enriching the lost potential of that un hoped serene. Here, the war dead, bound together by sweet youth within the present of wartime, become a haunting present for the future. Just as Muñoz claims that photography and performance art “do not disappear but instead linger in our memory, haunt our present, and illuminate our future” (104), Brooke commemorates the no-longer-conscious of “The Dead” through a speaker who stands on the horizon of the not-yet-here, that “un hoped serene.” The war dead’s foreclosure from procuring a connection to the future revises their corporeal absence as a lingering presence in the lives of their survivors. Their would-have-been sons, the presumed heirs of this foreclosed futurity, embody their lasting presence. Even though the speaker relies

upon the child's assumed place in the future without irony, the poem nonetheless announces a haunting relationship between the war dead and the future from the outset of the war in 1914. The press and state—Gibbs, Marsh, Churchill, among others—would mitigate Brooke's critique of inheritance and futurity, banishing the ghosts of the war dead and their unborn future in service to the war's contained narrative.

“Rough, these five camp children”:

The Queer Moments of the Five-Sonnet Sequence, “1914”

Brooke held a very ambivalent view of inheritance once the war began. In one letter he wrote to Rosalind Murray that “perhaps our sons will live the better for it [the war],” while in another letter to his closest confidante, Dudley Ward, he disclosed that his premonition of his own death at battle made him feel a “revulsion towards marriage” leaving him in the existential state to only ponder his place and presence in “a perplexing world” (qtd. Jones 394, 397). Nonetheless, he wrote to another close friend, Mrs. Toynebee, “What hell it is I shan't have any children—any sons. I thought it over and over, quite furious, for some hours” (qtd. Jones 394). One of Brooke's remedies was to ask close friends to name their sons after him.²² One alternative to ensure his legacy was to create poetry like the five sonnets of *1914*, which he described in their early draft form as “rough, these five camp children” (qtd. Jones 403). The first half of “The Dead” unsettlingly concludes with the claim from the perspective of the fallen, “And we have come into our heritage.” And Brooke would come into his own sense of heritage with

²² Frances and Francis Cornford named their son after Brooke per his request. At the young age of 21, Rupert John Cornford was the first British soldier to die in the Spanish Civil War.

these five lyricized children; the last two of the five, the second sonnet of “The Dead” and “The Soldier,” would show up in print along with Churchill’s “fulsome, but essentially false” eulogy in *The Times* (Jones 428). The creation of his public persona in the wake of his death would elide his critique of the war’s impact on inheritance and futurity. At the same time, the selectivity of Brooke’s poetry effaced the traces of queer moments across *1914*, traces I argue that signify as Brooke’s uneasy navigation between the no-longer-conscious memories of the past and the “unhoped serene” of the future.

The second sonnet of “The Dead,” when contrasted with the first sonnet, takes a despondent look back from a survivor’s point of view at what was lost in the pouring out of the sweet wine of youth in no man’s land. Couched in pastoral assumptions about beauty and the passage of time, the speaker laments:

The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

The “unhoped serene” of old age from Part III is contrasted here with the revoked kindness of youth. The natural beauty of the dawn and sunset, natural markers signaling the temporal ends of the day are ended. The speaker goes on to undercut the earlier claim of “Peace” that God “awakened” “our youth” from “sleeping,” for death ends those temporal divisions as well. In spite of these temporal ends, there lies a queer moment between the sonnets. Just as the first poem of *1914* carves out a queer moment, a time for release of shame for the “laughing heart’s long peace,” the doomed youth of the war dead are accorded an ephemeral moment to feel a quick stir of wonder as they sit alone, before

death ends their intimate connections to past loves, friends, and nature. This quick moment resonates with Sedgwick's characterization of a queer moment as "recurrent, eddying, and *troublant*." The epiphanic stir of wonder, a return of emotion against the current destruction around them, reaches back to make a queer connection to peaceful moments. These disturbingly brief moments recalled by an even briefer stir of wonder reflects the dynamics of a temporality that is at once past and future. Within this subversive, queer moment, which lies beside dawns and sunsets as well as slumber and waking, is the potential for an expression of love and friendship. Like the release of shame in "Peace," the "pour[ing] out of sweet red wine of youth" in the first sonnet of "The Dead," the "quick stir of wonder" in the second sonnet of "The Dead" is *troublant* in how it privileges the intimacy of personal memory, physical touch, and communal honor above over-determined national allegiance. Brooke's queer moments imagine alternative temporalities in which memorialization is possible even if the speaker's access to the future is not.

The mythos surrounding the final poem of *1914*, "The Soldier," has totalized the Georgian poet as a nationalistic jingoist. Such a conclusion is reasonable if "The Soldier" is read in isolation and out of context of the rest of *1914*. Unlike the speakers of the other poems, the speaker expresses sentiments that apply exclusively to himself:

If I should die, think only this of me:
 That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England...
...
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
 And laughter, learnt of friends, and gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

The poem's conditional phrase, "If I should die," became true on April 23, 1915 when Brooke died of septicemia, which was brought on by either an insect bite or an inoculation, aboard the ship *Duguay-Trouin* close to the shores of Skyros, where they would later erect a statue in his honor (Hale 283). And many readers and critics took him at his word remembering him in death for his service to the land of England in spite of the irony that he died at sea rather than on land. When the five sonnets are read sequentially, like the pages of a novel, the final sonnet stamps a conclusive significance upon the war dead, subsuming the queer moments of 1914 to the state's rhetoric. Harold Monro keyed in on the issue of reading Brooke selectively with only his patriotic sentiments in mind: "one fears his memory is brought to the poster-grade. 'He did his duty. Will you do yours?' is hardly the moral to be drawn. Few people trouble to know much about poetry—but everyone takes an intelligent interest in death...His whole poetry is full of the repudiation of sentimentalism. His death was not more lovely than his life" (qtd. Jones 432). In spite of Monro's protest against Brooke being held up as a "poster-poet," Simon Featherstone has argued that Brooke was vital to the "process of [England's] national self-representation" within the context of the Great War, which "demanded new ways of defining and communicated national identity and purpose" (25). In spite of the "English heaven," a celestial colonizer that hangs over domestic and foreign fields alike, there remains "laughter, learnt of friends, and gentleness, / In hearts at peace," that returns readers to the earlier queer moments of shame, sacrifice, and wonder that cannot be contained by the state even as it lays claim to his body as "forever England"—and, inevitably, "forever England[']s."

The residual queer moments in Brooke's apocalyptic and war poetry reach across the mythos of the idyllic patriot poet. Brooke's service and death for the British Empire cannot explain away the rich archive of intimacy preserved in his poetry. Although most of Brooke's readership were more interested in his death than the actual lines as Monro bemoaned, there were readers who were attuned to and discerned how Brooke commemorated wartime as a queer temporality. Brooke's verse memorialized the trace of intimacy left over from a temporality left out of a foreclosed future. It offered an early model for Owen and others doomed to endure trench time to develop into a broader collective anthem. As I will show, this anthem shifted the wartime expression of male intimacy away from Brooke's shame and toward Owen and Sassoon's friendship.

“We have followed parallel trenches all our lives:”

Conjugal Friendship in the Creation of Wilfred Owen's “Anthem for Doomed Youth”

Owen's subversive critique of wartime, more direct and incisive than Brooke's, was met with an even more pervasive erasure by state and literary institutions. Owen was pathologized with the term “Neurasthenia,” according to his medical board proceedings report. Although Owen would infamously write in his preface that “the Poetry is in the Pity,” literary critics, particularly Owen's contemporaries, often focus on his shell shocked state as a condition of his work, reversing the “Pity” that Owen had in his poetry for his subjects as readerly pity for the poet. His early reviewers lamented the “lost promise rather than fulfillment of his poetry” (Hynes 302). Many of his acquaintances

including Robert Graves, Middleton Murray, Scott Moncrieff, and Robert Nichols remembered Owen as a “damaged man” by telling stories of his shell shock, and sometimes going so far as to imply his cowardice (304). According to Hynes, the damaged man circulated in post-War Europe and America as an anti-monumental figure that revised what heroism meant in modern warfare. I argue before historians enshrined Owen as a physically and psychologically vulnerable soldier who died in the spatio-temporality of the trenches, he first cast himself as the “damaged man” of “lost promise” by dooming himself *and* his generation. The latter, unfortunately would be elided by generations of readers in favor of the historical persona of the poet. Rather than emphasize his fractured psyche, I seek to trace the connections and bonds that Owen formed, particularly with Siegfried Sassoon, in order to stress the creative potential of their friendship and its importance to the commemorative verse of the trenches.

In a letter dated September 12, 1917, Wilfred Owen wrote home to his mother, Susan, describing the nature of his relationship with Sassoon: “Sassoon I like equally in all the ways you mention, as a man, as a friend, as a poet...The Friend is intensely sympathetic* (*sym-pathy=feeling with (Greek)), with me about every vital question on the planet or of it...We have followed parallel trenches all our lives, and have more friends in common, authors I mean, than most people can boast of in a life time.” Owen’s Greek annotation of “sympathetic,” provides an important frame to their friendship. I take my critical cue from the recent scholarship of George Haggerty who has emphasized the Greek context of friendship as a corrective to the complex nature of same-sex friendships. By reading Owen and Sassoon’s creative bond in this way, I will show how this Greek

context shapes the writing and editing of one of the most anthologized Great War poems, Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth."

For Haggerty—and Owen and Sassoon—the fruits of friendship go much further than merely the erotic. Recently in "Pan Pipes: Conjugal Friendship in *The Longest Journey*," Haggerty examined Forster's novel vis-à-vis the Platonic ideal of friendship to exemplify the potential of male-male bonds, or what he refers to as "conjugal friendship." Outside of reproductive futurity, Haggerty demonstrates that friendship has the power to stake out the significance of recognizing the fruits of physical and intellectual intimacy beyond what is simply sexual. Conjugal friendship, in other words, is about what can be created, rather than negated, within the context of same-sex intimacy. By referencing the *Symposium* in its original language, Haggerty focuses on a cultural understanding of friendship based in classical terms. While his approach differs from Jose Muñoz's framework of a Marxist-Blochian utopia, I read Haggerty's conjugal friendship as endorsing a similar sense of relational politics that brings the past into the present for a better future. When the understanding of conjugal friendship is mapped onto Owen's relationship with Sassoon, it becomes apparent that Owen's verse performs the very relational politics that are at the heart of Muñoz's work in *Cruising Utopia*.

Owen and Sassoon first met on August 18, 1917, when an admiring Owen asked the older, established poet soldier Sassoon to sign copies of his recently published collection of poems *The Old Huntsman*, a moment that Owen biographer Dominic

Hibberd describes as “the most important literary event of his life” (22).²³ Sassoon encouraged Owen to find his own poetic voice and to “sweat your guts out writing poetry,” which Owen did, developing an archaic but fitting use of pararrhyme, or a partial rhyming of words with different vowels by matching their consonants (*Letters* 486). Within months, Owen and Sassoon forged a friendship based on their poetic craft, spending much of their time together at Craiglockhart War Hospital.²⁴

It was there at Craiglockhart under the care of Dr. Arthur John Brock, who encouraged Owen to write poetry as a means of therapy, and under the tutelage of Sassoon, that Owen would revive and develop Brooke’s lost critique of a queer futurity. Dr. Brock placed Owen as the editor of *The Hydra*, Craiglockhart’s magazine and means through which the patients could articulate their past war traumas and detail their current lives in the hospital to readers outside its walls. It was not until Owen went to Craiglockhart that his poetry took on the subject of war. Although Samuel Hynes notes a contrast between Brooke’s popularity with the masses and Owen’s experimental verse aligning with the modernists, he points out that both poets, through different formal means, crafted verse that critiqued a heteronormative conception of the future and championed the intimacy of same-sex friendship between soldiers.²⁵ In fact, it is known that Owen had a copy of Brooke’s *1914* with a photograph of the deceased poet’s grave tucked in as bookmark. As he looked ahead to his own future fate in the war, Owen must

²³ Owen’s brother and literary executive, Harold, claims this event, described in chapter six of Sassoon’s *Siegfried’s Journey*, is “an essential part of any account of Wilfred’s life” (*Letters* 485 fn 2).

²⁴ In a letter to Robbie Ross, Sassoon irreverently referred to the hospital as “Dottyville” (Hibberd 22).

²⁵ When first published, Owen’s poetry appeared in journals of “advanced literary taste—*Coterie*, *Arts and Letters*, *Wheels*” (Hynes 302). His work did not sell more than Brooke. Owen’s first collection was published in 1920 by Chatto & Windus who pressed just 730 copies and repressed only 700 copies, hundreds of which were left unbound. At that time, Brooke had sold 300,000 copies.

have been struck by the way that Brooke's five-sonnet sequence of *1914*, begins—rather than ends—with “Peace,” disrupting any simple starting or ending point to wartime. With Brooke's death and poetry in the back of his mind or at the bottom of his rucksack, Owen could not move beyond the shame of Brooke's intimate moments of wartime without the sympathy of “The Friend,” Sassoon.

Owen's excited exclamation to his mother that he and Sassoon “have more friends in common, authors I mean” attests to the shared literary heritage as British officers, a literary history recently effected by Brooke's posthumous publication of *1914 and Other Poems*. In spite of this common heritage, Argha Banerjee claims that “the ennobling notion of the war, in accordance with the Brooke myth,” was undercut and dismissed by later writers who changed the outlook on war, “shifting the primary focus of critical attention to poets like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon” (4). Rather than separate a nationalistic Brooke and a disillusioned Owen, properly contextualizing the two poets' wartime experiences makes it clear that had Brooke lived long enough to witness the Somme as Owen did, he may well have revised or recanted his earlier patriotic verse. Douglas Kerr rightly notes that when Owen volunteered in October of 1915, the public opinion of the war had begun to falter so that wartime was “a world away from the jump Rupert Brooke had famously volunteered for in his *1914*, as of ‘swimmers into cleanness leaping’” (149). In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Gertrude Stein locates the shift in regards to national in no man's land, where “it was strange...And it belonged to no country” (Stein 187). Without a shared literary lineage, Owen and Sassoon very well may not have found one another at Craiglockhart, following their respective “parallel

trenches” deep in no man’s land. Reading Owen and Sassoon’s work as a continuation of Brooke’s verse retraces the connections across the strange land that belonged to no country.

In outlining the process and stakes of the birth of Owen’s war verse, Haggerty’s “conjugal friendship” provides a way of understanding relationships that are “richly intimate and deeply connected in intellectual and physical ways”, thereby complicating the very definition of friendship (167). For Haggerty, these friendships evade the over-determined category of homosexuality since “they are erotic, but not merely that” (167). While Great War literary critic Santanu Das “does...not deny the homoerotic intensity of trench life,” he has persuasively specified that “romance and eroticism in the trenches have to be attuned to a different emotional key, taking place against the hovering presence of danger and death” (25). This ideal bond of conjugal friendship and ever-present danger of trench time attune readers of Owen’s poetry to the proper emotional key at the heart of his war verse. By poeticizing a queer futurity outside of heteronormative notions of time, Owen shapes the remembrance of the temporal experience of the trenches, where the fleeting intimacy between friends could be fostered. And, Owen’s emergent trope of doomed youth would come to define how writers of the war books boom like Erich Remarque and Dalton Trumbo sequenced the queer temporality of the trenches that Owen commemorated in his verse.

However, cast as the “damaged man,” Owen’s readership of the 1920s often remembered him with pity rather than remembered him for his pity. Although Owen would write in his preface that his “poetry is in [his] Pity,” and that his “subject is War,

and the pity of War,” Dyer claims that that “his subject might also be termed memory” (32). Dyer observes that only five of Owen’s poems were published in his lifetime.²⁶ In effect, his poetry “came to the notice of the public not as gestures of *protest* but as part of a larger structure of *bereavement*” (30). In other words, Owen’s poetry was framed by his death and the historical moment of the post-war world in which his work was published and not by the context of the spatiality and temporality in which he wrote. In effect, Owen joined the aggregate of the war dead and his poetry has been read as an uncanny prophecy about his death for a post-war readership focused on mourning their own dead.

I intend to expand on the scholarship of Owen’s poetry that has reframed his work as gestures of protest penned in wartime for an audience at war. Jon Stallworthy’s seminal study *Wilfred Owen*, is the first thorough consideration of the relationship between Owen’s life—drawing from family records and letters—and his poetry—using manuscripts. His trenchant treatment of Sassoon’s edit of Owen’s poetry at Craiglockhart was the first in-depth analysis of Sassoon’s influence upon the younger poet’s form and politics (216-222). Since Stallworthy, Paul Norgate has complicate Owen’s attitude of the war, claiming that after his experience on the Somme, Owen’s views became of “a more subtly provisional discourse” than either the patriotism voiced in Brooke’s verse or the subversion of such ideologies by Sassoon (526, 530). Responding to Norgate, Kerr traces the development of what he calls “Wilfred Owen’s voices,” the title of his book, and shows that the “provisional discourse” of Owen’s wartime attitudes should not be mistaken for indifference toward the men under his command. In particular, Kerr’s

²⁶ “Song of Songs,” “The Next War,” “Miners,” “Hospital Barge,” and “Futility” were the only poems Owen published during his lifetime.

interpretation of Owen's representation of the rank and file through the trope of silence reveals as much about Owen's literary strategies and poetic pathos as it does his intimate connections solidified in the trenches. Lastly, Jane Potter broadened Owen's impact beyond Craiglockhart, Sassoon, and the men under his command in order to bring his poetry into conversation with "the less elite literature of the Great War:" women's writing. Through fruitful comparative readings of Owen and Women writers like Enid Bagnold and Kate John Frizi, Potter reveals women's experiences—along with Owen's—and reclaims their "continuity with the past" (224).

But rereading Owen's poetry, particularly "Anthem for Doomed Youth" as the primary focus, and drawing out the presence of conjugal friendship recuperates the specific moment of the poem, when Owen learned his poetic pity with Sassoon as empathy—a "feeling with." With Sassoon, Owen shaped the temporal experience of the trenches by contrasting it with the utopian expectation of a better future, a future that became his readership when the poem was published. Owen learned poetic pity to enable his readers to feel with the war dead reimagine a future beyond a simplified historical timeline progressing from war to peace.

"I have to write it down for the sake of future reminders":

Owen's Letters From the Front Back Home

Owen's letters home to his mother provide a telling narrative of his experiences in the trenches, and they reveal the important aspects Owen needed to develop before becoming the "poet everyone knows" (Dyer 29). During the first days on the front in

January of 1917, Owen wrote home, expressing how the war emptied him of sympathy, “I can’t tell you any more facts. I have no Fancies or Feelings. Positively they went numb with my feet” (424). By capitalizing all that he has lost, “Fancies” and “Feelings,” Owen rejects the sentiments of a Romantic poet because the war broke Owen’s ability to discern fact, or reality, with feeling, both emotional and physical senses of the word. Based on biographical accounts of Owen’s short life and his collected letters, it appears that Susan Owen was the only one he had to turn to during wartime. The next month, Owen would write again to his mother that “I easily forget the unpleasant, and, look you, I even have to write it down for the sake of future reminders, reminders of how incomparable is an innocent and quiet life, at home...that does not shriek all night with flights of shells” (432). In his letter to his mother Owen makes it clear that the war itself requires one to reframe their expectation of the quotidian with the inevitability of destruction. For Owen, wartime subsumes routine time to the point that one is often no longer shocked by trauma. These reminders—perhaps letters written more with himself in mind than the addressee, his mother—would be the sources of Owen’s war poetry. Before the influence of The Friend, Sassoon, Owen lacked form. More importantly, Sassoon would also teach Owen how to process the physical trauma of war by once again feeling—*feeling with* sympathy. Although his mother could not reciprocate this kind of feeling, physically distant as she was back home, Owen’s letters to her articulate his desire to connect his life as soldier and civilian, reflecting the instinctual impulse of a commemorative war poet in the making.

I read both his letters home and the manuscript of “Anthem For Doomed Youth”

as objects of Owen's archive that capture ephemeral moments in wartime, invoking Muñoz's treatment of the "object" as a conduit between the present and the future that "might represent a mode of being and feeling that was then not quite there but nonetheless an opening" (9). Often times the object's utopian potential disappoints but that disappointment is one of the necessary effects of the object to imagine a better future. Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth" captures the lost potential of male intimacy during trench time. This potential stakes out a similar "relational field" that Muñoz theorizes as a space and time in which "men could love each other outside the institutions of heterosexuality and share a world" (9). Owen and Sassoon share the world of the trenches, and their commemoration of it is in turn shared with readers who are obliged to imagine a different way of dying and living.

There is a brief hint of the potential of Owen's sympathy not yet put to verse when he wrote to his mother explaining what it was like to be "in front...[of] the front," in "seventh hell" (427). Stuck in the sucking mud of the trenches, he writes that he and his fellow soldiers were "three quarters dead, I mean each of us 3/4 dead." His ironic reversal of numerical values, revising and specifying "three quarters dead" to "each of us 3/4 dead," suggests the fatigue of trench warfare as well as the physical conditions of three quarters of one's body sinking into the mud. This uncanny sense of space in feeling buried alive gives way to an uncanny conception of time when Owen notes, "Towards 6 o'clock, when, I suppose, you would be going to church, the shelling grew less intense and less accurate: so that I was mercifully helped to do my duty and crawl, climb and flounder over No Man's Land to visit my other post. It took me half an hour to move 150

yards” (428). With a consistent attention to numerical details of time and distance contrasting the “less accurate” shelling, Owen juxtaposes his experience with his mother’s. This clear temporal connection back home becomes an important source, or “future reminder,” that Owen would use in the composition of “Anthem for Doomed Youth,” which I analyze as comprised of two stanzas, one set on the battlefield during wartime and one set during a funeral for the war dead. By comparing timeframes and contrasting spaces in the sentences of his letter home and the stanzas he would later compose for “Anthem for Doomed Youth,” Owen taps into a rhetoric of relationality, bridging the spatial gap between home and the front of a shared wartime.

From January through April, Owen faced a series of traumatic events that further altered his relationship to trench time. These traumas culminated in the death of Hubert Gaukroger, which he explains in a letter on April 25th, 1917. The words in the letter become a future reminder articulating an early connection between Owen, the then survivor, and the war dead. Owen describes Gaukroger’s death by situating his remains in the space of the trench and writing, “My brother officer of B Coy, 2/Lt Gaukroger lay opposite in a similar hole. But he was covered with earth, and no relief will ever relieve him, nor will his Rest will be a 9 days-Rest. I think that the terribly long time we stayed unrelieved was unavoidable; yet it makes us feel bitterly towards those in England who might relieve us, and will not” (452-3). While the physical body remains within the space of the trench, Gaukroger’s death has an important effect on Owen’s sense of time. It turns his feelings about waiting in the trenches from a sense of passivity due to the “unavoidable” conditions of getting relief to a sense of bitterness towards those back

home. Just like his letter to his mother back in January that considered her activities occurring concurrently with his “flounder[ing] over No Man’s Land,” Owen once again strikes an uncanny temporal parallel between soldier and civilian.

There is a key difference between his letter from January and this one from April: Owen identifies himself as speaker for the war dead. When he writes, “*we* stayed unrelieved” and “it makes *us* feel bitterly” (emphasis mine), Owen makes a distinction between speaker and reader, an essential distinction to his rhetoric of relationality and commemoration of wartime. Although he feels *for* the war dead in this letter, the dead cannot reciprocate. He needed a friend for such an exchange. Less than a week later, on May 1st, Owen had a breakdown and was sent to Craiglockhart, where he would find a sympathetic friend in Sassoon and, with Sassoon’s help, he would also find a form to shape his war experiences into verse. Sassoon’s reciprocation of friendship enabled Owen to truly feel *with* another. Feeling with another is one of the effects of his commemorative verse, which imagines a different way of being through a rhetoric of relationality, altering readers’ assumptions about peacetime by returning to trench time.

“You have fixed my life—however short”:

Sassoon’s Timely Edits of “Anthem for Doomed Youth”

Although the real-life friendship between Owen and Sassoon can never be fully known, The Friend’s effect upon Owen can in part be measured by analyzing the changes made to Owen’s “Anthem for Doomed Youth,” changes that reflect the friendly sympathy needed to make it a lasting poem. By November, after a few months of

friendship, Owen expressed his deep affection writing to Sassoon, “Know that since mid-September, when you still regarded me as a tiresome little knocker on your door, I held you as Keats + Christ + Elijah + my Colonel + my father-confessor + Amenophis IV in profile. What’s that mathematically? In effect it is this: that I love you, dispassionately, so much, so very much, dear Fellow, that the blasting little smile you wear reading this can’t hurt me in the least...you have fixed my life—however short” (505). Sassoon “fixed” Owen in both senses of the word; in one sense he *corrected* the young poet’s sense of sympathy, while in another sense he historically *placed* Owen as a popular poet by helping him create the signature form to commemorate the war dead. Through the changes Sassoon helped Owen make in the drafting of “Anthem for Doomed Youth,” Owen’s “dispassionate,” or rational, love has its roots in a Greek notion of friendship and how such love would come to characterize the memory and mythos of the temporal experience of the trenches. As Haggerty notes in Plato’s *Symposium* when Diotima speaks to Socrates of love and the different forms of pregnancy, “some prefer pregnancy in the body and turn to women and childbirth, but others are pregnant in their souls, because there surely are those who are even more pregnant in their souls than in their bodies” (158). In the *Symposium*, Diotima goes on to explain, that those who are more pregnant in their souls than in their bodies are “creators...poets and all artists who are deserving of the name inventor.” As poets and co-inventors pregnant with the shared memory of the war, Owen and Sassoon produce the lasting verse inherited by the post-war world in a form that resists traditional structures of futurity. Owen and Sassoon seek a poetic means of commemorating what Sarah Cole characterizes as “moments of

generosity, mutuality and commonality” in place of “long-lasting bonds and commitments” (152). As an alternative to marriage, exclusively available between a man and woman, Owen and Sassoon hold up the model of conjugal friendship, a pregnancy of souls, as a different way of commemorating doomed youth and connecting the front and home.

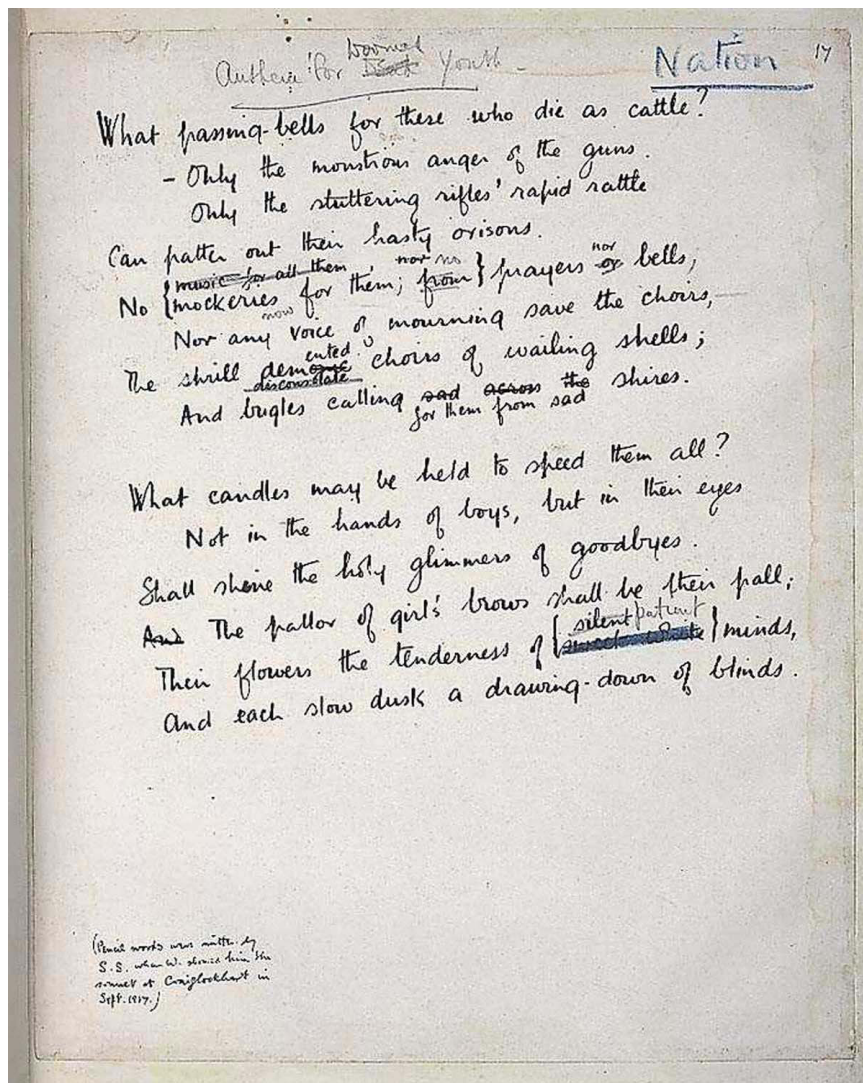


Fig. 1 “Anthem for Doomed Youth”
 September-October 1917 Craiglockhart, Scotland
 Includes corrections made by Owen and Sassoon. No. 96, “The Complete Poems and Fragments”
 © The British Library Board Add. 43720, f. 17

One of the most important changes Sassoon made to Owen's draft of "Anthem for Doomed Youth" was changing its title. Originally titled "Anthem for Dead Youth," the poem addressed the war dead from the voice of a distanced speaker. "Dead" was a holdover from an even earlier version of the poem in which Owen addressed the war dead in the second person.²⁷ The earlier version of the poem with second-person address bears a striking resemblance to Owen's "To a Comrade in Flanders," written a year earlier without Sassoon's influence. The earlier poem's "rough knees of boys [that]...ache with rev'rance" prefigures the "holy glimmers of goodbyes" "in [boys] eyes" in Owen and Sassoon's anthem. However a comparative reading of the two poems shows Owen leaving behind his Romantic references to Fairyland, Lethe's tide, Styx, Mecca, Asgard, Nirvana, and Paradise for the reality of modern war. By changing the address to a neutral third person and turning the dead into the doomed, the speaker of "Anthem for Doomed Youth" inhabits an interstitial space between the living and the dead. This in-between place was a necessary position for a poet seeking an alternative means of commemorating the dead without associating the future with a progressive connection to tradition or physical reproduction. Marked in pencil, Sassoon's revision of "dead" as "doomed" had important implications for the temporal station of the war dead as well. As Dyer argues, this alteration allowed the subject of the poem to be figured as "those who *are going to have died*" (33 his italics). Doom not only stakes out as an interstitial space between life and death; doom also frames the speaker of Owen's poem as temporally distorting the commemoration of those who are fighting in no man's land

²⁷ In its one of its earliest form, the poem began, "What passing bells for you who die in herds?"

during the composition of the poem. As a prescient dirge written at Craiglockhart in September of 1917, it forecasts its own presence in the milieu of future commemoration. By reading this manuscript as Muñoz views an “object”—as expressing a way of being, loving, and relating to an other outside of heteronormative frameworks—Sassoon’s changes highlight the poem’s opening to a better future on the horizon beyond the trenches. In reality, this better future beyond trench time gave way to Owen’s posthumous publication in the 1920s. As Dyer points out, Owen’s poetic voice lost its message of protest and instead served a readership in mourning. Nonetheless, Owen and Sassoon’s anthem politicizes the proper way to memorialize the war dead by obliging its readers to compare the future they imagined in the poem with the reader’s own temporality outside wartime.

Owen liked the revision so much that he sent his mother a copy of the poem and wrote to her, “Sassoon supplied the title ‘Anthem’: just what I meant it to be” (*Letters* 496). Based on the numerous manuscripts of “Anthem for Doomed Youth,” it appears that “Anthem for Dead Youth” was the title of the poem before Sassoon’s final edit. Owen developed most of the title on his own, but Sassoon’s alteration of “doomed” in place of “dead” obliged Owen to give Sassoon credit for the full title of the poem. His sentiments that Sassoon’s suggestion was “what [he] meant [the title] to be” reflect the Platonic friendship and intellectual intimacy the two fostered during the composition and editing of the poem as if the two shared one mind. The object of Owen and Sassoon’s friendship, the offspring of their conjugal friendship, is “Anthem for Doomed Youth.” The poem functions just as Muñoz claims art and culture should, as an “anticipatory

illumination” that “cuts through fragmenting darkness and enables us to see the politically enabling whole” (64). The speaker strives for this friendly sharing of the minds with the reader, either doomed soldier or mourning civilian, thereby connecting the hitherto parallel spaces of the front and home as a politically enabling whole beyond the fragmentation, chaos, and destruction of the war.

The two-stanza structure of “Anthem for Doomed Youth” separates no man’s land from the home front. While the first stanza focuses on the immediate threat of death on the Western Front signaled by the sounds of modern warfare, the home front is a nearly silent space of seemingly solemn reverence for the fallen. And yet the interstitial speaker of the doomed maintains an ambivalent connection between both spaces, drawing out the uncanny temporal slippages between war and home, uniting the parallel spaces that Owen first inscribed in the letters to his mother. What makes “Anthem for Doomed Youth” an especially enduring poem is its interaction between the front and home, an interaction made by an interstitial speaker, much like Owen or Sassoon, who was no longer on the front nor discharged. Das notes that Owen’s later poems are not so much “a seamless blend of the private and the public” (151). Rather, he claims “there is usually a conflict between the two, creating a powerful frisson,” which produces an “erotic undertow [that] complicates the political but also gives it a lyric intensity” (151). As readers of “Anthem,” we can see the seams that bind the public and private when we pay close attention to the speaker’s position between the front and home. Owen’s verse, bearing the mark of Sassoon’s editorial eye, became an enduring anthem by enshrining men whose deaths were imminent within a shared space and time with those who

survived. By crossing between the front and home, Owen and Sassoon affect the kind of lyric intensity that summons the specter of doomed youth to haunt their generation. This ghost-like offspring embodies the immediate threat of the trenches during wartime, which divorced the doomed from past tradition and future hope.

The overlooked but significant change Sassoon made to Owen's first stanza of adding the temporal cue of "now" to the fifth line imbues the anthem with a sense of shared immediacy between those on the front lines and those at home. On the manuscript, Owen first wrote, "No music for all them, nor prayers or bells," but crosses this out for "No mockeries for them from prayers or bells." Owen's change reflects his awareness of the inherent contradiction of proclaiming that there would be "no music" in his anthem. He alternatively turns his attention to the travesty of aligning a war memorial with institutionalized religion. Sassoon's alliterative alteration of Owen's line to "No mockeries *now* for them; *no* prayers *nor* bells" focuses on the present of trench time while maintaining the original dismissal of institutional memorialization (italics mine, emphasizing Sassoon's revision).

The interstitial speaker crosses between the juxtaposed spaces of no man's land and the domestic by inhabiting the temporality of the present. Owen's anthem discharges unfamiliar guns, rifles, and shells to replace familiar sounds of pastoral bells, orisons, and choirs; Owen metaphorically substitutes Pan's flute with an officer's trench whistle. Sassoon's revised temporal cue amplifies the artillery barrage bombarding the speaker, suspending him outside of the chronological progression that traditional elegies have relied upon since at least the sixteenth century when Edmund Spenser wrote *The*

Shepherd's Calendar.²⁸ The temporality of the poem disrupts any simple reconciliation of the war dead to an inscription into linear history. Instead, the poem commemorates trench time as a present in which the past, traditional forms of remembrance are dismissed for a different kind of future memorial of the doomed. Das highlights the importance of physical contact, or touch, to the “emotion and affect” of Owen’s elegies (159). He emphasizes that the expression of loss has, at its “emotive core,” the “elusive sense as death takes away the mutuality of the embrace” (159). In place of the reciprocation of physical and emotive contact between the dead and living, Owen structures Anthem in such a way as to bring the dead home. By mixing the familiar burial conventions with the unfamiliar sights and sounds of the first modern war, Owen produces what Sandra Gilbert astutely observes as an “uncanny” expression of no man’s land (183). With Sassoon’s help Owen then maps the spatial uncanniness onto the temporality of trench time through a poetic form that uses the conventions of the past as a means to abandon them. Gilbert claims that Owen’s “anti-pastoral” form is an expression of how traditional elegiac sentiments of “consolation” and “resurrection” “seem to have been exploded in the mud of No Man’s Land” (183). His poetic articulation of the space of the Great War, what she refers to with Eliot’s phrasing as “Rat’s Alley,” isolates wartime from future hopes by dooming youth and, as the second stanza makes clear, dooming himself as a patient, enduring speaker for those in the trenches.

The sounds of war trumpeted from sad shires at once enshrines the spatial bounds

²⁸ See Alison’s Chapman’s “The Politics of Time in Edmund Spenser’s English Calendar,” for an explanation of how Spenser structures time in the elegy to reflect how “the calendar was crucial to forming contemporary sense of nationhood” and “synchroniz[e] collective experience” (3). The essay can be found in *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*. 42.1 (2002): 1-24.

of no man's land within auditory perception and accords trench time with immediacy as the present slips into a future inhabited by those who are going to have died. The "rifle's rapid rattle" signifying a "hasty orison" for those doomed to die as "cattle" reflects the speed of modern warfare and a subsequent passive reaction, recalling the very sentiments Owen expressed in the letter to his mother in April detailing the death of Gaukroger. In *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* Stephen Kern claims, "Long-range artillery, machine guns, trenches, barbed wire, and gas immobilized men for long periods of time in cramped quarters under circumstances of great stress" (297). Rather than react to these conditions with any sense of agency, soldiers were forced to wait in a state of passivity. In effect, Kern concludes, "the immediate future was dominated by a sense of passive waiting, [while] the distant future, a time after the war, came to seem ever more remote." Owen's anthem bridges the soldier's passivity in the face of death with the mourner's lack of agency at home. The speaker strikes this uncanny connection by parahrhyming, or matching ends of verse by consonants rather than vowels, in lines two and four with the phrases "anger of the guns" with "hasty orisons." As George Johnson notes, "parahrhyme [in Owen's verse] would thus seem to create an effect of haunting" (163). Johnson reads this haunting to be an effect of "cognitive dissonance" over Owen's own conception of his "homosexual orientation." Owen's haunting verse is not merely personal. The preceding parahrhyme from "Anthem for Doomed Youth" hauntingly negotiates the temporal dissonance of wartime, between those who hear the firing of guns on the front and those who listen to orisons secure at home. His personal friendship with Sassoon may be the source of this poetic haunting, but its relational effect with readers retains a

political purpose. By setting the violence of the war doomed as ever-present—*now*—Sassoon accords the sounds of no man’s land with a sense of immediacy, recording the impossible speed of trench time that older traditional verse forms could not do justice to in their adherence to temporal linearity and calendar time. Within this slippery temporality of the trenches, the speaker can truly sympathize and feel with the doomed.

To make the temporal slippages, the speaker manifests a limbo-like position, dooming himself as forever between the dead, dying, and doomed of the front and the mourners at home. Sassoon altered the second stanza by introducing the word “patient” in line thirteen to describe the mourning “minds,” suggesting the need for survivors to persevere. In effect, he emphasizes the obligation to remember the war dead over the inadequacy of the candles used to “speed” them into the afterlife of cultural memory. By paralleling the speed of warfare and the potential to forget, Owen and Sassoon call attention to the temporal disjunction that their anthem must negotiate as an enduring alternative to traditional, forgettable means of remembrance. Sassoon’s alteration of “silent minds” for “patient minds” also hints at their shared condition as patients at a military hospital for shell shock. This biographical hint importantly frames the speaker’s marginal position, caught between the spaces of the front and home.

While the din of modern warfare replaced the sounds of pastoral funerary rites in the first half of the poem, mourners’ emotive expressions replace the consolatory function of candles, the pall, and flowers in the last half. This parallel structure further evinces the uncanny, shared temporality between trench time and the experience of wartime at home. The poem’s final line, prefaced by the need for “*patient* minds” (italics

mine, emphasizing Sassoon's revision), fixates not on another physical feature, but on the act of drawing-down the blinds. After dismissing all the accoutrement of mourning, it is strange that Owen would end his anthem with what his readers would have imagined as an iconic image of a domestic space in mourning. The direct rhyming of "*patient* minds" with "closing-down of blinds" reframes the process of mourning in tension with a linear progression toward consolation. Nonetheless, Jahan Ramazani interprets the drawing-down of blinds to signal "the closure of the poem itself with every reading" (73). Such a reading assumes that mourning inevitably leads to consolation. Ramazani's reading also aligns the speaker with those mourning at home. Rather than limit the temporal scope of the anthem, I read the patient speaker traversing the immediate present of trench time with the constant closing of blinds at home. In this way, the anthem marked by Sassoon's astute attention to time views the drawing down of blinds not as a fellow mourner drawing down his own blinds but as a haunting presence from outside the domestic. Such a gesture may seem like a sign of hopelessness. This reimagined domestic space could also be interpreted as an "active political refusal" in the same vein that Muñoz understands representations of failure as nevertheless utopian (176). Sourced as it is in the conjugal friendship of Owen and Sassoon, the anthem's foreclosure of the domestic opens up the space to imagine an alternative space and time, one in which the doomed youth are not forgotten but are preserved through the relational bond between speaker and reader.

If we read the speaker as having a patient mind, the kind of mind that sits with sorrow, then the poem becomes an apology for feeling with the doomed. Owen's and

Sassoon's anthem can be understood as a thinking through of such patience, pushing readers toward opening the blinds anew each day to see their lives without their loved ones doomed to die in no man's land. Their patience must have been tried as they composed the poem at Craiglockhart while their friends on the front faced the immediacy of roaring artillery and imminent death. Owen and Sassoon, men who led lives likened to parallel trenches before meeting at Craiglockhart, have in mind a notion of patience that is not unlike the deep bond that John Addington Symonds writes of between Achilles and Patroclus in *The Iliad*. When Patroclus dies at Hector's sword, Thetus motivates the melancholic Achilles to return to the battlefield to avenge his fallen friend. Achilles's vengeful choice, as the gods warn, dooms him. Symonds provides insight to the nature of their friendship as he explains, the Greek notion of male love emphasizes "companionship," "communion," "spiritual" bonds, "loyalty," and "comradeship" as an alternative to the "tie...which bound man to woman" (174). The conjugal friendship between Achilles and Patroclus is so strong that it becomes their shared source of motivation to fight. And Owen, who owned Symonds edition of *Shelley*, would have most likely been familiar with the critic's even more famous writing on male love. While the kind of bond Symonds writes of is forged out of death and destruction and the kind of bond Haggerty theorizes is bourn out of spirit and creation, they mark two sides of the same coin of Owen and Sassoon's friendship. As an alternative to national obligations or civil unions to the opposite sex, the Greek notion of same-sex friendship in "Anthem for Doomed Youth" becomes a model for civilians—men and women alike—to mourn the loss of love accruing each day of the war.

Just as Achilles returns to battle sympathizing with the dead Patroclus and sealing his own fate, Owen returned to the front with a sympathetic identification for those he memorialized in verse as going to have died, consequently dooming himself. In a letter marked by his literary executor as “4th or (5th) October 1918, In the field,” Owen wrote to his mother, “I came out to help these boys—directly by leading them as well as an officer can; indirectly, by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a pleader can. I have done the first. Of whose blood lies yet crimson on my shoulder where his head was—and where so lately yours—I must not now write. It is all over for a long time. We are marching steadily back. Moreover / The war is nearing an end” (580).

Reading this letter and quoting another portion of it, Kerr claims, “Here was a broad but reasonable interpretations of the lieutenant’s duty to act ‘not only as a platoon commander, but also a go-between,’ though it is not to a higher military command but to a civilian public, that he must represent the common soldier’s case” (219). To do so, the patient Owen sought to carry on the sympathy he learned from *The Friend*, Sassoon.

Owen pauses between his uncanny corporeal connection between the war dead and his mother and the immanent end of the war, which he saw on the horizon of the trenches. The commemorative poet pleading on the part of the doomed nods toward a time outside of the trenches, a spatiality and temporality that leaves him speechless and perhaps anxious that the world might close down its blinds, shutting the war and war dead out.

In another letter written a little more than two months earlier to Sassoon, Owen explains his inability to speak since his return to the front: “I have been incoherent ever since I tried to say goodbye... What more is there to say that you will not better

understand unsaid” (571). Owen’s and Sassoon’s unspoken intimacy cannot be explained away. The poetry they composed after beginning their friendship at Craiglockhart suggests a sustained intimacy between the two poets who returned to their parallel trenches and retrospectively regarded wartime from a temporal station beyond it. Owen’s “Strange Meeting,” drafted in early 1918 places the speaker in hell as one of the war dead, meeting an enemy he killed in battle who calls out to him, “I am the enemy you killed, my friend” (148-150), while Sassoon’s “Reconciliation,” written in the month of Owen’s death and the signing of the Armistice, November of 1918, imagines a mother in mourning meeting “the mothers of the men who killed [her] son” (136). Owen—soon to join the war dead—and Sassoon—a mourner—anticipate the memory of the war as a strange time and place in need of reconciliation between friends and enemies as well as the dead and the living. In this way, they extend the reach of their relational politics and the communicative potential of conjugal friendship in the post-war world. The fruits of their friendly collaboration are ever present in their poetry that would be inherited by authors of the late 1920s and 30s who would in turn sequence the temporality of the trenches that the friends commemorated.

“To heaven or, better yet, to something just like it”:

Toward a Utopian Horizon in Erich Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Erich Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* sequences the temporal experience of the trenches by isolating the young men fighting within the present of wartime and outside of a future beyond the war. The novel begins, “We are at rest five miles behind the front” (1). From the outset, Remarque makes explicit his intention to

capture the collective sense of trench warfare. As literary critic Richard Firda notes, the novel begins with a statement applying to a collective “we” and not an individual “I,” giving readers the sense that the protagonist, Paul Bäumer, has a common identity rather than a single sense of self (42). Bäumer’s “we” is not a blanket identification with all German soldiers in a nationalistic sense. Rather, the eighteen-year-old Bäumer makes it clear that wartime drastically altered the assumed authority of the elder generation. In the first chapter, the narrator clearly defines “we” not in contrast to the Allies on the other side of the trenches but to the older generation who “ought to have been mediators and guides to the world of maturity, the world of work, of duty, of culture, of progress—to the future” (12). However, Bäumer’s generation will not carry on into the future of their elders who seem to inhabit a different world altogether. Bäumer and his doomed youth are suspended from maturity during their first experience of trench warfare, which he characterizes as a shattering of futurity: “The world as they had taught it to us broke to pieces...also we distinguished the false from true, we had suddenly learned to see. And we saw that there was nothing of their world left. We were at once terribly alone; and alone we must see it through” (13). This shared loneliness that Remarque writes of—paralleling what Stein aptly characterized as the “concentration of isolation”—is articulated through contrasting pronouns, “we” and “they.” His us-versus-them combative tone at once defines and negates Bäumer’s lost generation’s sense of place and time.

Because the doomed youth were temporally and spatially disrupted from a shared sense of time with their countrymen, the isolation within the confines of the trenches

created an unlikely bond with the other young men across no man's land. Samuel Hynes argues that the war entered the British cultural imagination as a myth that fractured generations—each remembering and imagining the war in a different way—into antagonistic factions (384). In particular, Hynes claims that the Lost Generation, or what he calls the “War Generation,” were alienated from the “Old Men” who sent them to war.²⁹ Remarque's novel suggests that Hynes's astute claims could also be mapped onto post-war Germany.

And yet Remarque's novel ultimately suggests that the Lost Generation who went to war can express their disillusionment by envisioning a better future, at least in the lives of his readers. In a passive voice Bäumer explains, “Our early life is cut off from the moment we came here, and that without our lifting a hand” (19). The young men begin and end their lives within wartime, while the older generation has “a background which is so strong that the war cannot obliterate it” (20). Severing the youth from their memories of the past, “The war,” Bäumer narrates, “swept us away...For the older men, it is but an interruption. They are able to think beyond it. We, however, have been gripped by it and do not know what the end may be. We know only that in some strange and melancholy way we have become a waste land. All we saw, we are not often sad” (20). Without a sustainable background or means to think beyond the war, his generation is arrested in development and becomes absorbed into the landscape, some literally sinking into the sucking mud and others surrendering all hope deep within the waste of the trenches.

²⁹ He goes on to explain two other generational factions: the “Edwardians” whose pastoral mode of communication proved no longer tenable and the “Pre-War Avant-Garde” and Post-War generation who did not participate in battle (Hynes 384-8).

Although Fussell makes it clear that the Allies and the Central Powers experienced different fighting conditions based on how and why they constructed their trenches, both sides shared a displacement from the future. Fussell contrasts the “temporary” trenches of the English who pushed the front offensively with the “permanent” trenches of the Germans who fought defensively (Fussell 50). Nonetheless, the commonality of the trope of doomed youth across both sides of no man’s land—from Owen’s trench to Remarque’s—reflects the collective sense of their fate to exist temporarily and of their utopian desire to find permanence in cultural memory.

In spite of the isolation of their melancholy, the young men are “not often sad” in Bäumer’s company. At the heart of this paradox—between the negation of a future and the hope for some other way of being—lies the power of their intimacy. In order to tease out how this paradox defines the temporal sequence of trench time in Remarque’s novel, I rely on Muñoz’s formulation of a queer utopia, which lies spatially on the horizon and temporally in the future. Queerness has a transformative effect upon spatialities, “allowing for new horizons and a vastness of potentiality” (Muñoz 141). It enables an alternative opening to the future other than straight time, or linearity. While Muñoz argues that “straight time is a self naturalizing temporality,” “queerness’s ecstatic and horizontal temporality is a path and movement to a greater openness to the world” (25). For Muñoz, a queer utopia “should lead us to heaven or, better yet, to something just like it” (146). Literature, which represents time through formal constraints of verse forms or plot, is an effective way to imagine and get at this utopian space that Muñoz theorizes. The plot of *All Quiet on the Western Front* leads readers through the experience of trench

time and ends with its protagonist's death during the last days of the war. Although such a bleak sequence of events might read more like a descent into hell than an opening to heaven, I argue that what drives the plot of his war novel is the means through which the men at war strive toward the horizon of the trenches. By turning readers away from the immediate objectives on the front and toward the intimate quotidian of trench life, Remarque reframes our focus on the means over the ends of wartime. Ultimately, Remarque sequences wartime as a horizontal temporality, challenging the naturalized, straight trajectory of history.

In other words, Remarque does not locate the end of war at its armistice or resolve his novel with peace, nor does he sequence wartime by its end or with the hope of an afterlife. The horizon in *All Quiet on the Western Front* stages something better than peace or heaven; it carves out a space and time for the fleeting intimacy of doomed youth. Remarque's utopian narrative preserves the physical ephemerality of the doomed youth's bonds by plotting their presence and permanence in the cultural memory, mythos, and history of the Great War. Remarque's sequencing of wartime as endless aligns with Muñoz's application of Bloch's wish-landscapes. Bloch explains that in paintings by Leonardo and Rembrandt, the vanishing point was set at infinity, reflecting "a vastness of wish" (qtd. in Muñoz 140). Muñoz elaborates upon this "vastness of wish" by locating it in the "centrifugal space" and queer temporality "beyond the horizon, wherein lies potentiality, hope, and utopia" (140). Remarque expresses his "vastness of wish" by plotting his novel centrifugally, temporally moving away from the center of wartime, never completely outside of wartime but nonetheless striving toward a horizon of

“potentiality, hope, and utopia.” Remarque does so by beginning his novel during wartime and ending it with the death of the protagonist in the final days of the war. Within the temporal boundaries of the war, the plot of *All Quiet on the Western Front* obliges readers to rethink the temporal progression of wartime outside of linearity and narrative time beyond the death of the narrator. Remarque forges a relational pact with readers who trace horizontal pathways between trench time and their own, temporal pathways that run alongside history as alternative means of representing the temporal experience of the war.

Bäumer refers to this intimacy in the trenches as “comradeship” (27), explaining the process of how the men forged their bond. Before going to the front, training made them “hard, suspicious, pitiless, vicious, tough—and that was good” (26). He goes on, “We did not break down, but adapted ourselves; our twenty years, which made many another thing so grievous, helped us in this. But by far the most important result was that it awakened in us a strong, practical sense of *esprit de corps*, which in the field developed into the finest thing that arose out of the war—comradeship” (26-7).³⁰ Their youth not only helped them physically adapt to the soldierly demands of wartime; it kindled a sense of *esprit de corps*, or group morale, which in the field would become comradeship, or a feeling of friendly familiarity that consequently arises out of spending

³⁰ The original German publication of *Not So Quiet, Im Westen nichts Neues*, reads: “Zur Kameradschaft!” (28). The prepositional use of “zur”—or “for”—underscores the sacrifices made in service to as well as the functionality of “Kameradschaft”—or “Comradeship.” By offsetting comradeship with a dash in the English version, the translator A.W. Wheen seems to convey a similar connotation. However, the exclamation in the original German translation heightens the emotional intensity of the statement, which is lacking in the English translation. Perhaps in an attempt to dampen any associations with German nationalism, the English translator uses a period, creating a tone of sincerity and seeming to emphasize the universality of comradeship in the trenches for non-German readers.

time together. In *The Sexual History of the World War*, originally published in 1930, German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld speaks of the erotic charge of comradeship in specific reference to Remarque:

The comradeship which developed between the soldiers who shared the trials and dangers of war, this splendid fruit of the war so much praised by Remarque, must have been especially pleasing to the homosexuals for obvious reasons... Very frequently, even among normal people, it penetrated beyond the outer limits of the homoerotic and was thus... characterized by libidinous components. (117)

While his disciplinary language as a sexual scientist suggests that homosexual pleasure from a queered comradeship is not “normal,” he explicitly opens up the cultural dialogue to discuss such “libidinal components” often repressed. Hirschfeld goes on to note that while homoerotic bonds were celebrated in classical literature in tales like the holy band of Thebans, such same sex intimacy was kept a secret during the Great War. With a combative tone, British author Richard Aldington denies any sexual charge to these relationships when he writes, “Let me at once disabuse the eager-eyed Sodomites among my readers by stating emphatically at once and for all that there was nothing sodomitical in these friendships” (28). Aldington could very well be accurate in reporting chaste relations in his trenches. After all, the kind of intimacy Remarque and Hirschfeld write of is not merely erotic. Perhaps Aldington reveals more about his own sexual insecurities and bias than any actual factual claim to the comradeship of the trenches. The bond that made Bäumer’s survival possible and “penetrated the homoerotic” according to Hirschfeld cannot be so easily dismissed or separated from intimacy.

Nonetheless, literary criticism about camaraderie in Remarque’s novel often simplifies the complexity of male relations to serving the machinations of the state. Brian

Murdoch maintains that “nothing else good emerges in Bäumer’s war, not even the vaunted comradeship, which is merely a defense mechanism, a fellowship in adversity which expresses itself in unified action, a state upon which military life always depends, even if here the bonding sometimes works against the very forces that have inculcated that fellowship” (36). I quote Murdoch here at length because he points out a very complicated dialectic at work in the nature of camaraderie. On one hand, camaraderie to some extent ensures a collective discipline and submission to military authority while on the other hand it provides an alternative priority to obedience and organizing center to their lives. Although Murdoch reduces comradeship to mere “escapism” and diminishes its subversive potential as only “sometimes” affective, Remarque makes it clear that the bond between the men is a vital force in their everyday lives. This force has the power to keep Bäumer and his men from “break[ing] down,” push some relationships beyond the homoerotic as Hirschfeld observes, and even cause some such as Aldington to conjure the possibility of physical intimacy by attempting to deny its presence.

By analyzing the affective force of friendship during war, I argue that Remarque privileges a similar kind of pragmatic collectivity that Muñoz writes of in his explanation of a queer utopia on the horizon. Muñoz’s utopia is figured as “a modality of critique that speaks to quotidian gestures as laden with potentiality” (91). The camaraderie in Remarque’s novel reshapes everyday relationships between the men at war and reconfigures wartime’s relation to the post-war world. Firda gets closer to the subversive potential of friendship in *All Quiet on the Western Front* in his claim that “their hardness (in Bäumer’s eyes) leads to an end that the officer caste cannot accept: the German

enlisted man's grievance against the political and military machine" (36). Although Firda points out an important class antagonism fitting Remarque's historical context, he, like Murdoch, seems to explain comradeship in the novel by describing what it is not. These arguments suggest a limited notion of friendship and a partial understanding of the narrative trajectory of Remarque's novel. The early stages of the soldiers' bonds are expressed as affirmations of a collective pragmatism necessary to survive trench warfare as well as an intimacy that gives Bäumer's waste land of a generation a sense of meaning to see it through—even if they do not see it all the way through. Such sentiments will come to drive the rest of the plot and act as the active force behind Remarque's sequencing of trench time. These bonds may boost morale and thereby serve the state during war. These same bonds also hold the potential to affect the everyday lives of readers on the horizon of wartime.

“The front is a mysterious whirlpool”:

Remarque's Centrifugal Sequencing of Trench Time

Blossoming out of the waste land of the trenches, Bäumer's camaraderie with Kaczkinsky, a middle aged farmer, is likened to a relationship superior to marriage. Remarque reflects the depth of their intimacy that goes beyond national obligations or a simplified notion of escapism. He admits, “Kat and I...We don't talk much, but I believe we have a more complete communion with one another than even lovers have” (94). Bäumer's connection with the elder Kat is the only exception to the novel's separation between doomed youth and an older generation. This exception is especially interesting

because Kat has a family back home. Nonetheless, Bäumer makes it clear that his elder friend's life is not merely interrupted. Kat is first introduced as one of "our friends" and "the leader of our group" (3). In spite of the age gap—and because of Kat's deep insight into the tragedy of warfare, his compassion for his men, and his impending doom on the battlefield—the older soldier joins Bäumer's doomed generation in his narrative of their time in no man's land. Their "complete communion" suggests a pregnancy of souls like Owen's and Sassoon's conjugal friendship, although Bäumer and Kat have a reticent one. Nonetheless, their fictionalized bond reflects the intimacy of camaraderie that could only be fostered in trench time, a temporality divorcing the doomed youth of *All Quiet on the Western Front* from the past and future outside of wartime and concentrating their friendship into a complete communion. By emphasizing the reciprocity of their friendship rather than the bonds they hold with their families at home, Remarque depicts a different way of being outside of a culturally prescribed life after war.

Remarque's characterization of the bond between Bäumer and Kat as a communion opens up the ambiguity of their relationship. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, communion refers to "the action or fact of sharing or holding something in common with others; mutual participation; the condition of things so held, mutuality, community, union." Communion, in its primary definition, fittingly describes the commonality of a group of men at war. Within the Christian connotation, communion, or Holy Communion, refers to the reception of the Eucharist, a physical reminder of the spiritual bond limited to the congregants of particular denominations who fulfill certain requirements of their respective churches. This other connotation attributed

to Bäumer and Kat's relationship with one another suggests a physical and spiritual connection exclusively reserved for those in the trenches. Indeed, as Das explains the war occasioned a "different order of male experience, one that accommodated fear, vulnerability, support and physical tenderness" (136). While Das speaks specifically about the British experience of the trenches, Remarque's emphasis on the bond between Bäumer and Kat suggests that homosocial conventions between men were in flux during wartime on both sides of no man's land. Bäumer and Kat's comradeship not only reshapes their everyday relationships with one another as deeply intimate; it also reaches out to revise the reader's notion of the quotidian, restructuring the relation between trench time and the reader's temporality outside of wartime. Bäumer and Kat's complete communion between rests somewhere and sometime on the horizon of the trenches, opening a spatial and temporal gap between the wartime of the novel and the post-war context of the novel's publication. By requiring the reader to traverse this gap to grasp their queer intimacy, Remarque repurposes the power of their ultimately doomed bonds to center his centrifugal sequencing of trench time in *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

And their intimacy provides a centering power anchoring the men within the torrential force of trench warfare. Bäumer confesses to the reader:

To me the front is a mysterious whirlpool. Though I am in still water far away from its centre, I feel the whirl of the vortex sucking me slowly, irresistibly, inescapably into itself. From the earth, from the air, sustaining forces pour into us—mostly from the earth. To no man does the earth mean so much as to the soldier. When he presses himself down upon her long and powerfully, when he buries his face and his limbs deep in her from the fear of death by shell-fire, then she is his only friend, his brother, his mother; he stifles his terror and his cries in her silence and her security; she shelters him and releases him for ten seconds to live, to run, ten seconds of life; receives him again and often for ever... Our being, almost utterly carried away by the fury of the storm, streams back through our

hands from thee, and we, thy redeemed ones, bury ourselves in thee, and through the long minutes in a mute agony of hope bite into thee with our lips! (55-6)

Likening trench warfare to a cyclical vortex, Remarque emphasizes the paradoxical temporality of the trenches through the fluid yet static image of “still water.” In it, Bäumer stands defenseless, a passive target for shell-fire above and sinking survivor in the sucking mud below. The incorporation of the soldier’s body into the trench landscape effaces “our being,” or their collective sense of self as comrades. What emerges in its place is the isolated security of the friendly and familial embrace of the earth which stretches the experience of “ten seconds” of trench time into the “long minutes” for those lucky enough to live—or into “for ever” for the dead. The stretching of time during battle in *All Quiet on the Western Front* emphasizes the immediate present of battle and prioritizes survival, much like French novelist Louis-Ferdinand Céline’s explanation in *Journey to the End of the Night* of “the one thing any of us really cared about:” “living for one more hour, one more hour is a big deal in a world where everything has reduced itself to murder” (32). By anthropomorphizing the trenches as friend/brother/mother, Bäumer represents his experience of a concentration of isolation by leveling distinctions of kinship, age, and gender. In this way, he reflects how the temporal experience of trench time distorts soldiers’ perceptions as he strives to survive his immanent murder. Das characterizes the mud’s function in Remarque’s novel as something that “both enwombs and entombs” (46). In this uncanny landscape where soldiers are caught between life and death, Kat is at once friend, sibling, and parent to the doomed youth of the company.

By addressing the trench landscape in the reverential register of “thee” as it is bitten into by the men buried in mud filling them with “mute agony of hope,” Bäumer likens the physical and spiritual effect of the whirlpool of trench war to the transubstantiation of consuming the Eucharist. The bread and wine are replaced with the whirlpool of the “earth” and “shell-fire,” while the body and blood of Christ are replaced with the daily sacrifice of the doomed youth who comprise casualty lists. If we recall the “complete communion” between Bäumer and Kat, this deeply physical and spiritual connection between the men and the spatiality of the trenches intensifies the concentration of intimacy of their holy bonds, bonds that stretch beyond the institutions of the church or the state. Rather, the movement of trench time encircles their doomed lives, transforming their physical link with a future after the war and their spiritual connection to an afterlife.

Bäumer clarifies how this centrifugal movement of trench time is inconsistent with a linear sense of time. “Every time it is the same,” he writes. “We start out for the front, either cheerful or gloomy: then come the first gun-emplacements and every word of our speech has a new ring” (54). Not only is their sense of perception distorted by the experience of warfare, but the very means of expression resonate in a new context. To underscore the temporally recurrent effect of the trenches, Bäumer follows his statement about the effect on soldiers “either cheerful or gloomy” by elaborating, “We march up, moody or good-tempered soldiers—we reach the zone where the front begins and become on the instant human animals” (56). Within the immediate moment, the present is transformed along with their individual sense of self. Just as the whirlpool of trench time

alters the subjective experience of time by elongating the present and cutting the men off from a past and future, this “zone,” in both spatial and temporal senses, displaces the foundation and the potential of their humanity.

By temporalizing trench time in this recurrent way on the level of plot, Remarque subtly reverses the Schlieffen plan, which outlined the initial failed German offensive to push through Belgium and attack the French army from the rear south of Paris.

Geographical representations of the plan typically show arrows cutting west through Belgium and around the southern end of Paris France. Historian Terence Zuber rightly points out that “the Schlieffen plan is one of the principal pieces of evidence for German war guilt. Schlieffen has been cursed as the personification of German militarism and the Schlieffen plan as its embodiment. The great arrows of the Schlieffen plan slashing across the map of France are interpreted as graphic representation of German aggression” (302). Yet, the actual implementation of the plan was drastically different. The persistence of the plan’s image, as Zuber argues, reflects a problematic of privileging grand schemes of generals over the individual experience found, I argue, in war poetry and novels. Zuber explains that the commander who enacted the plan, “[Helmuth von] Moltke, as well as the Army commanders and Chiefs of Staff, wanted to fight much safer, set-piece linear battles” (299). For this reason, many historians in the wake of the war charged Moltke for the failure of the plan due to what they perceived as his lack of force and use of manpower. In fact, John Keegan points out that one of the most popularly read pieces in the British army before the war was a short story entitled “A Sense of Proportion” written by General Edward Stinton (265). The short story follows a

protagonist modeled after General Moltke, who spends his time peacefully fishing rather than directly leading the men he sent to fight. The short story's resolution justifies this general's choice. From our contemporary retrospect, such a narrative evinces the disconnection between generals far from no man's land and the men fighting in the mud. And as *All Quiet on the Western Front* repeatedly proves, the assumed linearity inherent in the implementation of grand schemes by generals does not cohere in the fog of battle.

Rather than surround the enemy as the Schlieffen plan outlined or engage in linear battles as Moltke commanded, Remarque's novel moves centrifugally away from the center of the war, the front, and toward the horizon of the future. Unlike the plans implemented by commanders in wartime, the novel is read by those who survived the war and live in a future in which such plans and choices made by generals like Moltke or Stinton can be seen with retrospective clarity as disconnected from the reality of trench time. Remarque brings readers into the trenches in order to show such grand schemes' physical effects upon bodies and less tangible effects upon what it means to be human at time of war. Reduced to "human animals" and relying on the "second sight" of instinct to survive a bombardment of shelling (56), camaraderie divorced from national allegiance becomes the soldier's only recourse to preserve their humanity as a different way of being in a warzone.

Bäumer's relationship with Kat illustrates how their comradeship enables the novel's protagonist to navigate the recurrent and troublant waters of the trenches. When Bäumer wakes up after wire duty, he wonders if it is morning or night lying in the "pale cradle of the twilight" (60). He "listen[s] for soft words which will come, soft and near."

“Am I crying?” he wonders. He places his hand on his eyes and asks himself, “Am I a child?” He feels his own “smooth skin” but this perception “lasts only a second,” giving way to the outline of Kat watching over him. Kat explains to Bäumer that he woke up frightened from the landing of a “nose-cap,” or the front end of a missile. During this “twilight” hour on the front, each side would have a mandatory stand-to. In the evenings, such as the one of Bäumer’s nap, the sun would set on the side of the British, briefly setting the silhouettes of any visible “Tommys” in relief. On the other side of the trenches, Céline explains the uncanny nature of trench time in which the dangers associated with nighttime are transferred to daytime. He describes, “The night, which had terrified us at first, seemed almost pleasant by comparison. In the end we longed for the night and waited for it. It was harder for them to shoot at us then than in the daytime. That was the only difference that counted” (26). This unreal time period marking the transition to night, along with the other stand-to at sunrise, “constituted a highly ritualized distillation of the state of anxious stalemate and the apparently absolute equivalence of force that had led to the stasis of mutual entrenchment,” according to Fussell (58). It is no wonder, then, that the twilight of trench time would put Bäumer in such a disoriented state of insecurity, centrifugally moving him away from the center of the front and toward a more secure time associated with childhood. This movement is not mere escapism or regression; rather, if we depathologize Bäumer’s infantile state we can alternatively read his subjective experience of the trench as a temporal leap in twilight indicative of a concentration of isolation, in which time itself is concentrated and

isolated. Linear time could not capture Bäumer's temporal dislocation in trench time; only a centrifugal sequencing could capture his psychic trauma.

Moments later when his company is bombarded, Bäumer reciprocates the comfort and safety that Kat offered by cradling a doomed youth. The "fair-headed recruit in utter terror... pushes off his helmet and like a child creeps under [his] arm," when Bäumer secures the helmet on the youth's behind, his exposed area (61). The youth proves "gun-shy" and loses control of his bowels, "dismally" looking at Bäumer who reassures him that "many's the man before you has had his pants full after the first bombardment" (62). The childlike vulnerability of the unnamed soldier and Bäumer's friendly/brotherly/maternal sympathy reflect the role of comradeship; it allows the youth to physically survive the violence of warfare and mentally sustain the damage done to his humanity and masculinity. Kat and Bäumer's intimate sympathy enables a different way of being during war; rather than killing the enemy in a centripetal movement as the Schlieffen plan devised or overtaking the opposition in linear attacks as Moltke ordered, Bäumer and Kat centrifugally move away from the center of trench time in these moments of intimacy.

These moments emphasize the means rather than the ends of experiencing the war and demonstrate literature's role in sequencing the passage of time outside of historical linearity, which privileges ends. Muñoz aligns an emphasis on means over ends with utopian thought because "utopia can never be prescriptive of futurity" (100). In other words, utopian thought does not tell us *what* a future *should* be; it leads us toward *how* the future *could* be. For Muñoz, "utopia is an idealist mode of critique that reminds us

that there is something missing, that the present and presence (and its opposite number, absence) is not enough” (100). The momentary presence of physical intimacy is not enough to sustain the men of Remarque’s *Western Front*; by the novel’s end, all are doomed to die. Nonetheless, the camaraderie of these doomed youth—like Brooke’s queer moments, and Owen’s conjugal friendship—reflect the reciprocal potential to trench warfare’s destruction. Their intimacy reaches toward the horizon of trench time, when and where readers reside. The affect of camaraderie in *All Quiet on the Western Front* reflects the potential of what the future beyond wartime could be when it was seen on the horizon within wartime.

Just as Bäumer confuses awakening with his own birth, he displaces the violence of trench warfare with the waking of the dead. Trench time distorts a simple linear conception of time, overturning assumed temporal markers like sunrise, sunset, birth, and death. His company is bombarded once again just as they find a graveyard. Bäumer claims that this occurrence was “not a moment too soon” (66). Bäumer is not only referring to the fortuitous happenstance of finding cover at the perfect moment; the timeliness of this moment also frames the narration of this violent sequence as planned with a foreboding sense of doom. Bäumer pronounces to the reader, “We must stay here in the graveyard,” as the first explosions of battle give way to a bombardment in which “the wood vanishes, it is pounded, crushed, torn to pieces” (66). Falling into a shell hole next to a dead corpse, Bäumer mistakes the living for the living dead: “there, I get a smack in the face, a hand clamps onto my shoulder—has the dead man waked up?—The hand shakes me, I turn my head, in the second of light I stare into the face of

Katzinsky,” who yells a command to use the gas mask and pass it on (67). Through the trope of doomed youth, Bäumer awakens like a newborn in the beginning of the chapter only to be beckoned by the dead to join them in the muddy landscape obliterated by shell holes that blur the line between cemetery and trench.

The dead do not awaken and the act of passing the gas mask reflects the reciprocation of safety and comfort that enables the men to survive if only for another moment. Stopping all other action and putting on the gas mask united the men in a collective act in which they safeguarded themselves and one another. Their expressions of mutual care and shared physical proximity with the potential of death charges this moment of pragmatic survivalism with the kind of intimacy one does not typically associate with the violence of modern war. Das has persuasively suggested that in the trenches such intimacy must be understood as a “triumph over death” or a “celebration of life” (118), which Bäumer’s recognition of Kat and the passing of the gas masks suggest.

Following the recursive current of trench time, Bäumer inevitably re-encounters the young recruit, but this time the boy is fatally wounded in the hip, the very area Bäumer protected earlier. Bäumer and Kat “lay the hip bare. It is one mass of mince-meat and bone splinters. The joint has been hit. This lad won’t walk anymore” (71). Bäumer observes how the effect of the wound puts the young man in a regressive state, no longer able to walk, which is often considered a literal step beyond infancy. When Bäumer and Kat attempt to leave to get the boy a stretcher bearer, “he whimpers like a child and plucks at us” (72). Fully infantilized by his wound at this point, “the youngster will hardly survive the carrying, and at the most he will only last a few days,” Kat and

Bäumer mutually acknowledge (72). Then Bäumer further sequences the doomed youth's temporal experience of being wounded on the front: "In an hour he will become a screaming bundle of intolerable pain. Every day that he can live will be a howling torture. And to whom does it matter whether he has them or not—" (72). Like an infant, but swaddled in agony rather than in a crib, the recruit is doomed to an existence of pain until death. When Bäumer asks to whom would it matter if the boy died, he articulates the isolation of the men's intimacy; only he and Kat will know about the lad's death. By emphasizing the physical pain of the boy's body, Remarque demonstrates that death is not so much a deliverance into heaven, but, as Muñoz might say, something even better. Death in this context reflects Bäumer's deeply intimate connection to his own life and the lives of the men around him.

By ending life for the boy, he and Kat seek to reclaim a semblance of control over the inevitable doom of trench time. Although Kat and Bäumer agree to put the doomed youth out of his misery, a stretcher bearer comes and prevents them from pulling the trigger. The very hope of controlling the duration of pain is denied to the characters of the novel. The author's obligation to the war dead to bear witness to such misery evinces the traumatic role of plotting their doomed lives in wartime. By refocusing our attention to the means of war over its ends, Remarque redirects our attention to this humanity and compassion amidst the destruction of war.

The chapter concludes how it began, with monotonous wiring fatigue and voices crying "mind, wire" until Bäumer and his men "are again half asleep" (74). The pervasive sense of passivity and its uncanny recurrence leave Bäumer in a constant liminal state—

between alive and dead, awake and asleep. The recurrence of trench time is not merely characterized by endless repetition; instead, Bäumer's narration of his experiences of trench time is sequenced as if the plot centrifugally moves outward from the center of a whirlpool. This recurrent movement in the plot of *All Quiet on the Western Front* reveals the multiple layers of trauma inherent to remembering one's war experiences and attempting to place them in time. For Bäumer, the predictable passivity of the soldier coupled with the unpredictability of the violence of warfare distorts the trenches into an uncanny spatial-temporal experience that brings him back again and again to a seemingly endless present. From the survivor's point of view, Bäumer depicts the doomed youth's experiences of trench time as inevitably circling around the whirlpool of battle.

**“Let the months and years come,
they can take nothing from me, they can take nothing more”:**

The Utopian Potential of an Irresolute Wartime

Bäumer survives his comrades—including Kat—who fall in battle, but he does not survive the war to conclude his sequenced narrative of wartime. With a tone of fatalism, Bäumer claims,

I am very quiet. Let the months and years come, they can take nothing from me, they can take nothing more. I am so alone, and so without hope that I can confront them without fear. The life that has borne me through these years is still in my hands and my eyes. Whether I have subdued it, I know not. But so long as it is there it will seek its own way out, heedless of the will that is within me. (295)

In a passive state of victimization, Bäumer insinuates that time itself took everything—or rather everyone, his comrades—from him. He no longer has anything to lose since

everyone else has been lost in trench time. Although he still feels life with his hands and sees it with his eyes, he does not feel in possession of any agency as the sole man left in no man's land. He wonders on that day, "Do I walk?," reducing himself to the infantile state of the doomed recruit he could not save from a hip wound. Yet Bäumer can walk, and he does, turning "one circle, one circle, and [he] stands in the midst. All is usual. Only the Militiaman Stanislaus Katczinsky has died. Then [he] knows nothing more" (291). Bäumer's repetitive circling, a feeble attempt at mastering the disinterested progression of time, leaves him immobile like the still water outside the whirlpool of the war. Bäumer's failed attempt to get beyond the whirlpool of trench time mirrors the unsuccessful Schlieffen plan. Just as Helmuth von Moltke failed to follow through on the plan due to attrition on the actual battlefield, Remarque's centrifugal plotting slows its pace with the death of each character.

Without his comrades, Bäumer despondently ponders a future after the war, which with all the talk of armistice seems on the close horizon. Bäumer does not see a place for him or his generation in a post-war time:

And men will not understand us—for the generation that grew up before us, though it has passed these years with us already had a home and a calling; now it will return to its old occupations, and the war will be forgotten—and the generation that has grown up after us will be strange to us and push us aside. We will be superfluous even to ourselves, we will grow older, a few will adapt themselves, some others will merely submit, and most will be bewildered;—the years will pass by and in the end we shall fall into ruin. (294)

His generation—those doomed to die in the trenches like Owen and Bäumer as well as those who survived the war such as Sassoon, Remarque and their veteran readership—are removed from a progressive place in history, particularly as it is framed in the context of

generation, procreation, and inheritance. Through Bäumer, Remarque speaks directly to readers who comprise the generation born after the veterans of WWI. And his words speak across time, to generations in the twenty-first century, who adhere to the logic of his rhetoric. As Dyer argues, the “sense of imminent amnesia is, has been, and—presumably—always will be immanent in the war’s enduring memory” (16). Readers today, like readers from the 1930s feel an impulse to disagree with Bäumer, and prove him wrong by remembering his narrative and integrating his experience of trench time into the existing memory, mythos, and history of the Great War.

As a spokesman of his lost generation, it is fitting that Bäumer dies before the war’s end. Remarque forever places his narrator within the temporality of the war, aligning his life’s end to its end. Much like Owen who died a week before the armistice in November of 1918, Bäumer “fell in October 1918, on a day that was so quiet and still on the whole front, that the army report confined itself to the single sentence: All quiet on the Western Front” (296). His death, like the death of the recruit, seems destined as a narrative necessity for the resolution of the novel. Through such a resolution, Remarque reminds readers that the narrative is one of fiction rather than memoir, giving credence to Murdoch’s point that “Bäumer was not an historical figure, but a fictional one” (8). By disrupting the reader’s connection with Bäumer, the novel’s narrative mode transitions from first-person to third-person. Temporally disoriented, the reader of *All Quiet on the Western Front* survives the narrator, reminded of her or his own mortality and—better yet—the mortality of all those who died at the front. In spite of his loss of life, Bäumer’s dead body remains as a visual reminder amid the silent landscape of the Western Front.

Remarque's stylistic attention to *All Quiet on the Western Front's* resolution suggests a self-awareness behind plotting and sequencing wartime within the pages of a novel. At last, we read that Bäumer "had fallen forward and lay on the earth as though sleeping. Turning him over one saw that he could not have suffered long; his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come." The ambiguity of Remarque's language further instantiates the fictionality of Bäumer, locating him in a time and place beyond the historical timeline of WWI. Bäumer's liminal position is never resolved, even in death. Remarque qualifies descriptions of Bäumer's corporeal remains "as though sleeping" and "as though almost glad the end had come," hypothetical claims that could only be arrived at if one "turn[ed] him over." As his corpse is turned over, Bäumer retains a liminal status if only on an "as if," metaphorical level. By resolving his novel in language that Firda characterizes as increasingly "impressionistic" (51), Bäumer's death is not an end in and of itself, much like the deaths of Brooke and Owen. Rather, the war dead persist as physical reminders of the psychic intimacy between like-minded men. Remarque's impressionistic irresolution mirrors Owen's letter to Sassoon shortly before his death explaining, "What more is there to say that you will not better understand unsaid?" Like Brooke's queer moments punctuating his posthumous poetic legacy and the closing down of blinds in Owen and Sassoon's anthem, the turning over of Bäumer's body is a silent act. This act transcends the words on the page of the novel, highlighting the relational bond between doomed narrator and surviving reader that lives beyond *All Quiet on the Western Front's* impressionistic ending.

The comparisons between Bäumer's dead body and sleeping or dying recur back to earlier scenes in the trenches when Bäumer—awakening from a nap and mistaking his friend's hand for one of a corpse, or pacing in grief—turns over to look upon Kat. Reversing the position, the reader who has been turning the pages of the novel is asked to turn Bäumer over and regard his dead body. Murdoch claims that Remarque uses Bäumer's death to leave the end of the war open and consequently leave the question of who won the war unanswered due to expectations of his Weimar readership (22). Remarque's ambiguity also suggests the incomprehensibility that the war could ever end, a notion that goes beyond a nationalistic purpose to create a universal resonance across the globe of Remarque's post-war readership. With each turn of the page, Bäumer's death and all the preceding deaths of his comrades become a recurrent means through which readers of *All Quiet On the Western Front* come to understand the preserving properties of intimacy in trench time.

Although bleak, the resolution of *All Quiet on the Western Front* holds a utopian potential. Bäumer's death, plotted in the final moments of trench time, upholds the doomed comrades of the novel and their intimacy—what Muñoz would call their “vastness of wish”—beyond the horizon of wartime for the reader of the post-war world. By placing the end of the war outside the pages of the novel, Remarque sets the vanishing point of wartime at infinity and infuses the comradeship with a sense of urgency and potentiality. This potentiality voiced in the abstract language of the “as if” pushes readers toward a horizon beyond trench time—to a different way of being in a time and place filled with the potential and hope of utopia. Peace, in this reconfiguration, is not merely

the time after the war's ends. It becomes a whirlpool of a temporality that readers of the novel must reconcile with their own present. The death, destruction, intimacy, and love between the men at trench time cannot be explained away upon a historical timeline. Rather, the whirlpool of battle better characterizes the spatial movement of warfare on the Western Front and the temporal progression of trench time.

Unlike Bäumer, Remarque survived the war. In fact, he became known in both the European and American press as “the Last of the Lost Generation” when he died in September of 1970. Firda likens this label to “his role as a sensitive, unhappy witness to, and judge of, the precipitous confluence of history, politics, culture, and art in the twentieth century” (8). Remarque did so by sequencing the temporal experience of his generation of doomed youth. *All Quiet on the Western Front*'s recurrent plot whirlpools around the intimacy of camaraderie, which reframes the focus upon the *means* of trench time rather than the *ends* of trench warfare. While history clarifies the ends of wars by providing dates of declarations and armistices as well as casualty numbers, literature serves a different function. Remarque's novel sequences the means of being within the trenches in order to inscribe that temporal experience for future readers. By sequencing trench time, Remarque establishes a horizon beyond Bäumer's death, the war, peace, and even the author's own life.

Tracing the Line Between “The Dead” and “The Living” in

Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*

American author Dalton Trumbo extended the temporality of the trenches into the

next World War with his 1939 novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*. While Remarque emphasized the centering force of male intimacy within the whirlpool of trench time, Dalton isolates his protagonist by literally cutting him off from everyone and everything he knows within the purgatorial time and space of the plot of *Johnny Got His Gun*. Trumbo splits the novel into two books, “The Dead” and “The Living,” to detail the post-war experience of a war casualty who slowly regains his place among the living as he convalesces for his war wounds. Trumbo’s sequential structuring of wartime mirrors the same reliance upon the trope of doomed youth that Brooke, Owen, and Remarque exhibit. These doomed war poets and narrators—British, German, or American each reflect the deeply entrenched presence of doomed youth as an embodiment of trench time from the outset of the war in 1914 to today.

While the war dead in the works thus far analyzed gain a cultural currency in the wake of death, Trumbo’s narrator remains a casualty of the war, a living and breathing reminder of what is left over after the armistice. Sentient but divorced from any physical connection to the world via his senses, Johnny “was the nearest thing to a dead man on earth. He was a dead man with a mind that could still think. He knew all the answers that the dead knew and couldn’t think about. He could speak for the dead because he was one of them” (117). Trumbo’s novel, published on the brink of the Second World War, evinces the persistent power of the trope of doomed youth, which resurfaces as a means to confront the approach of WWII. As the last major Great War novel published between the world wars, *Johnny Got His Gun* sequences the end and aftermath of the Great War from the perspective of a war casualty. I read Trumbo’s novel as sequencing trench time

where Remarque left off. Johnny embodies an alternative future that Bäumer would experience if he survived that fateful day in September of 1918. In Trumbo's two-part plot—"The Dead" and then "The Living"—readers come to realize that wartime cannot be contained on a timeline. Such linear thinking merely sets the precedent for the next war. Rather, Trumbo sequences Johnny's temporal experience of the trenches in a centripetal way, bringing readers from the dead of the Great War, to the supposed peace of Johnny's convalescence, and back toward the wartime of WWII. By circling his plot around wartime rather than through it, Trumbo expresses his anti-war message explicitly stated in the final lines of the novel. By the end of the narrative, Trumbo issues readers the ultimatum of joining the dead of the next war or continue with the living into peace.

"It was like a full grown man suddenly being stuffed back into his mother's body":

Wartime in "The Dead"

Lying in his hospital bed as a quadriplegic war casualty, Johnny is divorced from any of the connections that other writers rely upon to commemorate or sequence wartime. There are no remembered moments of intimacy like those found in the verse of Brooke, no bonds like the conjugal friendship between Owen and Sassoon, and no comradeship like that between Bäumer and Kat. Using Johnny as ambassador, Trumbo sequences wartime by taking readers from death to life in order to reveal the stakes of maintaining the relationality between the war dead and the living, especially as Trumbo's immediate readership were on the cusp of the next world war.

The temporal reversal from dead to living should not be confused with

resurrection or a conjuring of the war dead. The effect of poets' commemoration and novelists' sequencing of wartime brings the living readers into the landscape of the trenches to witness the doomed fate of the war dead. The trope of doomed youth forces readers to confront the dead—to consider the possibilities of Brooke's conditional phrase, "If I should die..." to wonder with Owen who asks in his anthem, "What passing bells for these who die as cattle;" and to metaphorically turn over the body of Remarque's Bäumer before physically turning the final page of the novel. These doomed youth embody the traumatic effect that war violence has upon conceptions of the future beyond the war, and they oblige readers to reckon with this traumatic effect in order to atone for the dead before their own lives can continue. Trumbo's Johnny experiences a similar temporal severance from the future around the same time as Owen's actual death and Bäumer's fictional death:

All he knew was that on a day in September in 1918 time stopped. There was a howl somewhere and he dived into a dugout and things blotted out and he lost time. From that instant to the present he might as well figure that there was a chunk of time he could never regain. Even if he discovered a way to check up on time from now on that which was gone was lost forever and he would always be living behind the rest of the world because of it. He could remember nothing after the explosion until he woke up and realized he was deaf. His wounds were very serious and he might have been unconscious for two weeks two months six months before he awakened who could tell? And then afterwards the faintings in and out and the long periods when he simply lay in between thinking and dreaming and imagining things. (126-7)

Trumbo's novel loosely sequences Johnny's wartime experiences by way of his thoughts, dreams, and imagining things. The run-on sentences that close the quoted passage above,

which lack punctuation—particularly commas—typify Johnny’s narratorial voice.³¹ The choppy conjoining of independent clauses convey the physical effects of his war trauma, which left him unconscious and unable to perceive time or the world around him. While Remarque’s novel set during the war is sequenced in a centrifugal fashion and brings the war dead into the lives of his living readership, Trumbo’s war narrative plotted in the wake of the war is sequenced in a centripetal way and brings the living readers to identify with the dead and dying. “Simply l[y]ing in between” death and life, Johnny ushers the living readers into the temporality of trench time.

Although I have shown how the commemorating poets and the sequencing authors thus far have the ability to capture wartime in language, the expression of Johnny’s inability to do so emphasizes his lack of connection to the world around him, particularly his loss of time. He lacks the compassion that Brooke had for his men, the kind of friendship Owen had with Sassoon, and the camaraderie of Bäumer’s unit. Without a place in trench time, Johnny loses his very sense of self and ability to represent himself in words. This potentially accounts for Trumbo’s choice to narrate the novel in third person. Doing so, Trumbo emphasizes the war novel’s role of demonstrating that terror and loss. Trumbo connects readers with Johnny in spite of his terrifying loss of time, language, and selfhood—a lack of relationality on all fronts—in order to reflect the political stakes of war literature, which Trumbo and the authors and poets of this chapter collectively prove has the potential to repair broken connections to the world.

³¹ See Antonia Hirsch’s *Komma*, which emphasizes Trumbo’s compositional choice to omit commas throughout the novel. Hirsch’s project, originally an art installation, suggests that the missing commas evoke the bodily trauma experienced by war casualties and Trumbo’s own experience of censorship by making legible what is absent.

In the first half of *Johnny Got His Gun*, “The Dead,” the third-person narrator articulates Johnny’s disillusionment and lack of relationality as he lies in a hospital bed, hooked up to feeding tubes in the following metaphor: “It was like a full grown man suddenly being stuffed back into his mother’s body. He was lying in stillness. He was completely helpless” (80). Johnny’s still and helpless state resonates with the very passivity that characterized the “youth” “caught” by God and sent to war in Brooke’s “Peace,” the “doomed youth” and “passing bells” that signify “these who die as cattle” in Owen’s anthem, and the younger generation whose “younger life is cut off from the moment” that they are sent to the Western Front in Remarque’s novel. Trumbo calls upon this resonate literary figure of doomed youth and pushes it to its temporal extreme. It does not just reflect the lack of a future beyond the war; it reverses the natural progression of life, pushed back into the womb. Johnny’s uncanny recursion back into the space of the maternal overturns the rite of manhood with which propaganda equated military service. Rather than progress like “a baby in its mother’s body [who] could look forward to the time when it would live,” Johnny “would be in the womb forever and ever and ever. He must remember that. This was his life from now on every day and every hour and every minute of it...And this life wouldn’t last only today or tomorrow or until the end of next week. He was in his womb forever. It wasn’t any dream. It was real” (81). Trumbo places readers in the uncomfortable position of identifying with Johnny through the physical reality of his war wounds and the psychic experience of that trauma.

Johnny’s trauma becomes real to readers as they take account of the days, hours, and minutes of his suffering as if they are with the protagonist in real time. If “the family,

any family has naturally the quality of the concentration of isolation” and if “what makes war...is that concentration of isolation,” as Stein writes, then Trumbo’s metaphor of a violently reversed birth—or perhaps abortion—concentrates the reader’s isolation within the mental space of a war casualty. There, Trumbo sequences the distorted temporality of trench time through a deeply relational attachment to a man divorced from all connections to the world except the one with the reader. By exclusively directing the relational bond between Johnny and the reader, Trumbo expresses the urgency for readers on the threshold of a new wartime to atone for and appease the war dead and dying of the previous War by avoiding the next.

“What do you want?”: Wartime of “The Living”

To truly end wartime and war itself, Trumbo argues that we must reach out and listen to the dead. Johnny, the figure of doomed youth, eventually finds a way to communicate and relate with the living. By tapping his head against his pillow, Johnny sends the message of “SOS. Help” (195). A nurse understands his embodied plea described as “a cry from the darkness a voice from the dead a wail in the silence for friendship and someone to talk to” (109-210). The nurse responds by tapping on his forehead in Morse code:

$\overline{\dot{W}}$ $\overline{\quad}$ $\overline{\dots}$ $\overline{\dot{H}}$ $\overline{\dot{A}}$ $\overline{\dot{T}}$
 $\overline{\dot{D}}$ $\overline{\ddot{O}}$
 $\overline{\dots}$ $\overline{\ddot{O}}$ $\overline{\ddot{U}}$
 $\overline{\dot{W}}$ $\overline{\quad}$ $\overline{\dot{A}}$ $\overline{\dot{N}}$ $\overline{\dot{T}?$

What do you want? (217-218)

This moment of physical reciprocation and relationality is the turning point for Johnny, the point at which his life resumes and time progresses, marking the transition from “The Dead” to “The Living.” He imagines the future possibilities of having someone to talk to, one who “he would tell all the secrets of the dead,” one who could “trumpet through the hospital like the angel Gabriel telling them to come and listen to the voice of the dead” (216). Trumbo uses the nurse to figure his ideal reader as one who would reach out and touch the dead and dying, asking them what they want and spreading their message. Johnny’s message, articulated by the “voice of the dead,” seems to suggest that what makes war endless is the inevitability of the next.

Robert Leed and Santanu Das respectively provide insight into the auditory and haptic experience of the trenches with which Trumbo requires readers to identify. Leed claims that the explosions in no man’s land expanded the sense of space and heightened the perception of mayhem (117). Das elaborates providing the statistics that “in the eight days commencing 24 June 1916 in the Somme, 1,732,873 shells were fired by the Allied Fourth Army; prior to the Messines assault, from 26 May to 6 June 1917, British artillery fired more than three and half million shells in support of the attack, something in the order of three and half shells per second for a twelve-day period” (79). Such statistics of the seemingly unending assault help explain why soldiers like Owen had nervous breakdowns since they were unable to perceive an end to the violence of trench time. Das notes how the explosions would produce sound waves that would “literally touch the surface of the body” (79). As Céline writes, “The kind of noise you wouldn’t have

thought possible. Our eyes, ears, nose, and mouth were so full of that noise that I thought it was all over and I'd turned into noise...myself...the noise stayed in my head, and my arms and legs trembled as if somebody were shaking me from behind" (12). Constantly absorbing the shock and rumble resounding the inevitable violence around them, soldiers like Johnny, Bäumer, Owen, and Brooke incorporated and embodied this sense of doom pervading trench time. The limbless, deaf, and blind Johnny cannot touch, see, or speak, but he can be touched and listened to by responsive readers who hear his story with the same attention he paid to the sounds of the trenches.

Trumbo's attention to Johnny's physical body, providing access to his psychic interior, presents readers with evidence of the war as an alternative to state-sponsored propaganda pressed during the war and linearly conceived historical accounts published after. The self-conscious narrator explains how Johnny wants to "be an educational exhibit," but he realizes that "people wouldn't learn much about anatomy from him" (224). "They would learn all there was to know about war." Unlike propaganda and history, which is constructed selectively, Johnny as exhibit signifies meaning for viewers by what he lacks—his missing limbs and wounds—not by what is present. The novel works in a similar way; as a textual site, it is an educational exhibit for readers to learn about the horrors of war. The missing punctuation, like his missing body parts, signify the psychic and physical trauma of trench time. The missing body parts, punctuation and sense of time intertwine as Johnny realizes "that would be a great thing to concentrate war in one stump of a body and show it to people so they could see the difference between a war that's in a newspaper headlines and liberty loan drives and a war that is

fought out lonesomely in the mud somewhere a war between a man and a high explosive shell” (224). Instead of buying bonds to pay the price of war, Trumbo obliges readers to recognize its true cost. Johnny’s stump of a body, merely a head and torso, figures what Elaine Scarry explains as the way in which “the record of the war survives in the bodies, both alive and buried, of the people who were hurt there” (113), on the battlefields. In *The Body in Pain*, Scarry writes that the infliction of pain in the form of the wound or death leaves the body of the victim in a “nonreferential” state, and therefore subject to the signification placed upon it by the state or a competing definition of the enemy state (119). Such institutional appropriation of the war dead’s referentiality has been a common theme throughout this chapter. Here, Trumbo seeks to undo these binary options of signification endorsed by the home or enemy states by stripping away the political referentiality of the wounded body and building in its stead a personal relationality with the reader. Trumbo successfully claims Johnny’s body. While Johnny’s “stump of a body” demonstrates the referential potential that Scarry theorizes, his urgency as an “educational exhibit” for a readership entering the next world war challenges Scarry’s exceptional distinction between the temporalities of the “world-destroying” end of war and the “world-rebuilding” beginning of peace (108). Instead, Johnny’s lack—lack of body parts, senses, and relationality—figures the world-destroying continuum that lasted well beyond the Great War’s Armistice.

Moving from “The Dead” to “The Living,” the narrator becomes increasingly didactic with the novel’s anti-war message through Johnny’s physical and emotional

misery. Although he communicates with the nurse, Johnny's suffering does not end.

Questioning why, he has a vision of himself as a Christ-like prophet:

He had seen the future he had tasted it and now he was living it. He had seen the airplanes flying in the sky he had seen the skies of the future filled them with black and now he saw the horror beneath. He saw a world of lovers forever parted of dreams never consummated of plans that never turned into reality. He saw a world of dead fathers and crippled brothers and crazy screaming sons. He saw a world of armless mothers clasping headless babies to their breasts trying to scream out their grief from throats that were cancerous with gas...He was the future he was a perfect picture of the future and they were afraid to let anyone see what the future was like. Already they were looking ahead and they were figuring the future and somewhere in the future they saw war. (240-1)

Rather than reject or challenge assumed associations between the family and the future as Brooke, Owen, and Remarque all do, Trumbo relies upon its associations with reproductive futurity in order to stake out a political opposition against future wars. The “dead fathers,” “crippled brothers,” “crazy screaming sons,” “armless mothers,” and “headless babies” each reflect a part of Johnny's status as victimized war casualty and each reaches out to connect on a universal level with the reader. Johnny embodies the prophesized fate of those doomed to face a future war orchestrated by the insidious, intangible “they.”

Trumbo closes his novel by further instantiating a collective “we”—similar to the kind of “we” with which Bäumer begins narrating *All Quiet on the Western Front*, but staunchly positioned against “they,” those in positions of power who want to begin a new war. He writes as if composing lines of a pacifist manifesto, warning “they” in a direct address, “We are men of peace...But if you destroy our peace... if you try to range us one against the other we will know what to do (242). Closing ranks, the narrator elucidates the true meaning of the novel's title; Johnny got his gun on a literal level when

he first enlisted, but he gets his gun in a broader political sense at the end of the novel as the narrator stockpiles a rhetorical arsenal against generals and those in positions of power. With a newfound sense of political agency this narrator clarifies what Johnny's army of pacifists will do, proclaiming, "We will use guns you force upon us we will use them to defend our very lives and the menace to our lives does not lie on the other side of a no man's land that was set apart without our consent it lies within our own boundaries here and now we have seen it and we know it" (242). Reversing the concluding claims of David Jones's long poem, *In Parenthesis*, that "it's difficult with the weight of the rifle/ / Leave it—under the oak." (183), Trumbo tells readers to pick up the rifle and point it at those who want to send them to future wars. And amplifying Stein's observation that no man's land "belong[s] to no country," Trumbo rejects any and all patriotic obligations to bear arms. Rather than focus on remembering queer moments, friendships, or even camaraderie of wartime, Johnny's narrative sequences wartime after the supposed end of WWI and its inevitable continuation into WWII. Rather than sequence the wartime intimacy of the trenches as Remarque does, Trumbo opts for a future intimacy built upon a shared commitment to pacifism.

After the Armistice, Brooke's queer moments, Owen's conjugal friendship, and Bäumer's comradeship exist only as memories. And although the intensity of these remembered bonds have the potential to challenge prescribed national allegiance at time of war, Trumbo's direct rejection of state obedience is one of the most radical literary responses to the temporal experience of the trenches. If there is a difference between wartime and peace to Trumbo, it is that during the latter the line between friend and foe is

clarified beyond national obligations. Granted in the fog of war, it is often hard to decipher who the true enemy is. Céline describes the “promise of death and destruction” when on night patrol; he narrates, “the only uncertainty was the uniform of the killer” (20). He further probes, “Would he be one of us? Or of them?” (20). As a pre-emptive response to Céline’s question, Trumbo unequivocally reacts in the post-war setting of *Johnny Got His Gun* by subversively setting his sights on those in power in his own country.

If we recall that Trumbo’s protagonist, Johnny, embodies the future when wartime cuts one off from everyday life—from walking, talking, eating, singing, laughing, feeling, and loving—then it is clear that the novel’s resolution places readers on the horizon of another warzone and wartime, when and where they have the power to turn the guns around to point them at those in power. He concludes the novel by making his message explicitly clear, “Make no mistake of it we will live. We will be alive and we will walk and talk and eat and sing and laugh and feel and love and bear children in tranquility in security in decency in peace. You plan the wars you masters of men plan the war and point the way and we will point the gun” (243). Trumbo centripetally moves readers back toward the center of war. While Remarque centrifugally sequences his novel away from war and toward a peaceful and utopian horizon when *All Quiet on the Western Front* was published in 1929, the terrain of that political landscape had changed a decade later according to the resolution of *Johnny Got His Gun*. Nonetheless, Trumbo maintains a similar utopian plea by transitioning from “love” to “bear children” in “peace” as a contrast to the inevitability of WWII that Johnny embodies. Trumbo relies upon

reproductive futurity to add a certain credibility—or “security” and “decency”—to his political claim for peace. Whether intentional or not, Trumbo’s evocation of reproductive futurity to call readers to arms reveals the inherent contradiction of maintaining peace with the means of warfare as well as the (il)logic of reproductive futurity itself, which has the potential to begin and end war, to enact earth shattering and rebuilding. In a broader sense though, Trumbo maintains a queer temporal continuum between WWI and WWII by figuring Johnny as the embodiment of the novel’s centripetal movement toward wartime. Beginning the novel’s plot with the earth shattering return to wartime in “The Dead” in place of what should presumably be the beginning of the world rebuilding of peace and bringing readers back into the impending doom of the next war in “The Living,” Trumbo reflects the resonance of trench time that carried into the next World War.

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Chapter Two

Mobilized Time: The Shock of Wartime and the Spectacle of Peace

Do we then, all each of us, recognize the importance of individual quality for the sake of mass momentum?

--*William McCormick Blair, "Four Minute Men News," 1918*

In order to mobilize nations for total war, the Allied and Central powers exerted control over space and time by moving individual soldiers and civilians across the world in sync with the tick and tock of wartime. The lived experience of mobilized time went well beyond the conscription of men, which required an unprecedented level of participation of the masses.³² By intervening in areas of public and private life, the American government assumed the role of what Bruce Porter characterizes as a "collectivist state" (Porter 8), dictating the living conditions of its citizens by syncing them to wartime. Through a series of legal measures, the commander-in-chief, Woodrow Wilson, complicated America's entrance into the Great War before April 6, 1917 when he declared war on Germany, a "war to end all wars." President Wilson first took control of the railroads, which "put standard time into effect, dividing the United States into four different time zones" before the war began (Dudziak 19). With the Army Appropriations Act of 1916, Wilson set the nation in motion by controlling transportation well before he sought control of armaments (Porter 164, 271). With the Lever Act of the following year, Wilson established temporal guidelines to which citizens synced their daily lives through

³² During the years of the Great War, the United Kingdom conscripted 6.2 million men, Germany 13.25 million, and France 8.2 million, roughly 20 percent of Germany and France's populations and 13 percent of the United Kingdom's (Porter 171).

price controls and rationing, which set rules for the amount of food to be consumed in a monthly period.

Even propaganda was primarily a function of time. The government set up the War Industries Board with the Overman Act to control mass media and implement censorship of any deviation from the war effort. George Creel headed the Committee on Public Information, which “wanted all Americans to hear and see the same propaganda messages at the same time” through every means available: prominent posters, public speakers, theatrical newsreels, magazine ads, and newspaper articles (Brewer 56). Such measures sought to express Wilson’s assertion of “the TRUTH” as the “only possible antidote for the German poison that is being spread...over the land” (qtd. in Brewer 48). And yet when Wilson’s truth—a linear narrative of wartime—is read as propaganda, it is clear that the government mastered and manipulated time to mobilize people as another resource.

By 1914, the cinema was paradoxically a conduit for propaganda while it had the potential to be a populist form of information and cultural expression.³³ War films dominated the box offices between 1914-1920 and focused audiences upon the global conflict (Campbell 25). The government used the space of the movie theater as a “recruitment station” (54). Even the time spent between switching newsreels was attuned to mobilization. Speakers known as the Four Minute Men made brief patriotic speeches as reels were changed. Comprised of seventy-five thousand volunteers, making one

³³ Before the war began in Europe, there were hundreds of movie theaters in urban cities and a prominent number in smaller towns across America. By 1914, New York had 900 theaters while Omaha had thirty-two (Campbell 6).

million speeches to approximately four hundred million people, the Four Minute Men utilized the available technology and made a timely intervention to shape the public's conception of the war to Wilson's version of the truth (Brewer 63).³⁴

A Four Minute Men news bulletin from 1918 exemplifies both the broader scope of the government's intervention in the public and private lives of its citizens as well as the theater's pervasive presence in mobilized time:

Between 8 and 9 in the evening perhaps 5,000 theaters are covered by speakers from Portland, Me., to Pittsburgh, and south to Atlanta. As the clock moves westward another brigade of speakers visits theaters in the central-time States from St. Paul down to Louisiana and Panama. Another hour and the speakers' slides are being thrown on in the Rockies; another hour and speakers are rising in front of audiences along the Pacific coast. Sixty minutes pass, and then there is a group in Alaska making similar speeches. Two hours more and the Four Minute Men are addressing their audiences in Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii, all talking on the same topic, delivering the same message, presenting it in 25,000 different ways. (Blair 1)

William Blair, Director of the Committee on Public Information, reveals the temporal control the Four Minute Men exerted through the mass media available before the viability of radio broadcasts. Reaching across the time zones of the U.S., one of The Four Minute Men's homogenized messages recounted the "shudder" inducing news of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, whose lookouts did not see the German submarines in time, and warned against repeating such a mistake. Four Minute Man A.H. Snyder proclaimed to an audience in Des Moines, Iowa, "I am appealing to you to help out men on these ships to see the submarines and see them *in time*" (6). Referring to the citizen victims of the

³⁴ The Four Minute Men were a product of the cinematic environment of the early twentieth century. In fact when the Office of War Information attempted to institute a group like the Four Minute Men, called the Victory Speakers, During WWII, they realized that other technologies and media outlets such as radio and movies made the Four Minute Men model appear antiquated (Brewer 102). Roosevelt's radio-broadcasted "fireside chats" proved a much more effective means of reaching Americans in the 1940s since 90 percent of the populace were listening for at least four hours a day (Brewer 102).

Lusitania, Snyder appeals to pathos and frames the first U.S. war dead as the tragic cause to the immediate effect of patriotic support for mobilization. By claiming the war dead and sequencing the temporal progression of the war effort through the cinema, Blair and his Four Minute Men stressed what they envisioned as “the importance of individual quality for the sake of mass momentum.” This mass momentum ensured by the Four Minute Men’s synchronized efforts garnered the approval of Wilson whose letter was reprinted in the Four Minute Men’s news bulletin praising theaters for participating in this partnership. However, Wilson never officially commended the film industry as he did other major industries (Campbell 122), suggesting that cinema as a medium itself held a more populist and subversive potential to frame the war dead and sequence mobilized time outside of Wilson’s truth, outside of a linear narrative of wartime.³⁵

John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway, two American Great War novelists, accounted for mobilized time by incorporating the cinematic into their narrative form. Outside of a nationalistic narrative and propagandistic platitudes expressed in such outlets as the Four Minute Men, Dos Passos and Hemingway reappropriate the cinematic as an alternative way to sequence their experience of wartime and commemorate the war

³⁵ As Kern historicized in his study, cinema had already become a prevalent cultural influence and shaped preconceptions of the experience of time before the Allied and Central Powers mobilized for war. As early as 1910, cinema was commercially successful and ideologically pervasive with an international draw requiring the weekly production of around two hundred one-reel films (Kern 70). Subsequently, Imagist poet, Ezra Pound, viewed this populist medium as merely low-brow entertainment for “the age [that] demanded an image / Of its accelerated grimace” (22-3) in his post-war, 1920 poem, “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley” (32). From Pound’s perspective, the ability to make film “with no loss of time” reflected its fleeting importance and inferiority to higher art forms (31). Unlike Pound who disparaged film’s cultural value in relation to literature, Dos Passos and Hemingway celebrated the potential of wedding cinematic techniques to their prose and thereby represent the simultaneity of perception off-screen and on the page. By demarcating the temporality of the war, 1914-1918, Hemingway and Dos Passos reflect the close relationship between the Great War and the emergence of cinema.

dead. Informed by the camera lens, their critical eyes focused on their experiences as ambulance drivers in the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Corps.³⁶ While Dos Passos understood the war as “an enormous, tragic digression” that left him in a “suspended state” (*The Fourteenth Chronicle* 152, 222), Hemingway likewise thought of war as leaving “no future in anything” (*Selected Letters* 503-4). In personal letters, each writer describes his experience of war as divorced from a past and future; they emphasize the present of wartime as a suspended temporality in which they are passive observers of the war dead and wounded as well as the larger state powers mobilized for a globally modernized war. In their war fiction, they present war not as a lost moment as the writers of *trench time* did through the trope of doomed youth. Rather, Dos Passos and Hemingway’s cinematic aesthetics capture the fleeting movement of veterans and civilians alike, suspended in the endlessness of *mobilized time*. Their subjective crisis of observation characterizes reflects the larger collective experience of mobilization that assumed obedience to state authority and acceptance of Wilson’s “truth.”

The two novelists take particular approaches to challenge such assumptions by sequencing the lived experience of mobilized time and commemorating the dead. Dos Passos reflects the larger circulation of public mourning by penning a montage of simultaneously occurring scenes in the plot of his war novels. In effect, he proves that mobilized time enacted by the government holds the public in a “suspended state” in both senses of the word; on one hand, they are suspended as an experienced condition and, on

³⁶ As Dos Passos explains in a 1952 letter to his biographer Charles Bernardin, “First met Hemingway when he was in Section 3 and I was in section 1 of the Red Cross Ambulance, somewhere near Brenta” (See Box 1, “Correspondence with Charles Bernardin,” Insert 49).

the other hand, they are suspended as a collective nation. Hemingway plots war novels in which there is “no future in anything” by splicing together his narrator’s temporally separate perspectives of a single event, the war, suspending two temporal stations: the present plot set in wartime and the retrospective future outside of the war when the narrative is written. Whereas Dos Passos reflects a suspended state through public mourning, Hemingway’s character-driven novels enact a personal melancholy that reveal how deeply internalized the experience of mobilized time was and how it remained in the post-war world. Their cinematic aesthetics distort the assumed linearity of narrative time to capture the fleeting movement of veterans and civilians alike, suspended in the endlessness of *mobilized time*.³⁷

While their war literature depicts cinema as more than an outlet for propaganda or a soapbox for the Four Minute Men, cinema was already deeply implicated in popular culture as a dominant medium expressing the temporality of modernity. Cultural theorists have repeatedly argued that cinema—more than any other form of media leading up to the Great War—best captured the interest in marking and representing the experience of time. In the first part of the twentieth century, cinema was among many emergent media that formed a new “mediascape” between 1895-1930 that, as Stephanie Harris argues, altered understandings of time and “marked...an inability to keep time (in both senses of

³⁷ Historian and philosopher, Jonathan Crary, has breached the subject of temporal suspension in his work *Suspensions of Perception*, but in relation to the attention of a nineteenth-century subject rather than the effects of twentieth-century cinematic technologies. I rely upon and extend his definition of “suspension” throughout my discussion of Dos Passos’s representations of wartime. Crary defines suspension as two contradictory states. First it can be understood as “a looking or listening so rapt that it is an exemption from ordinary conditions, that it becomes a suspended temporality, a hovering out of time” that implies “the possibility of fixation, of holding something in wonder or contemplation” (10). It can also be understood as “a cancellation or an interruption...a disturbance, even a negation of perception itself.”

the word)” (5). Mary Anne Doane likewise characterizes cinema as a cultural response to the contingency of modern time. With the rise of capitalist modernization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, time was reconceptualized as contingent upon laws of chance and indeterminacy, but such contingency was made legible and rational through abstraction, particularly with the development of cinematic technologies (Doane 10-11).³⁸ For Doane, cinema represented “the promise of indexicality...the rematerialization... [and] restoration of a continuum...of time” (10). Cinema exemplified the paradox of modernity in its ability to both capture time and “free” it from determinacy; it fed the conflicting cultural obsession with “abstraction/rationalization and... the contingent, chance, and the ephemeral” (10). James Lastra situates cinema at the forefront of the mediascape, claiming that it above all has come to stand for ‘modernity’ itself” (4). More than the telegraph, telephone, phonograph and photography, the cinema “concretized” the “new modes of mass production, distribution, and consumption” as a “prosthetic sensory organ” perceiving “sounds and sights from disparate times and from all parts of the world,” even before the emergence of the talkies, according to Lastra (4, 92-3).³⁹ These globally screened moments reflect how cinema engendered a collective experience and made the representation of simultaneity possible since its invention between 1893-1896

³⁸ Doane claims that there were many other cultural outlets that attempted to rationalize contingency: “aesthetics, debates about photography, physics, biology, and the growth of social statistics and statistical epistemologies in general” (10). While this paper argues for cinema’s cultural influence on modernism and the conception of time, it was not the only form of modern technology to have such a pervasive effect. See David E. Nye’s *Narratives and Space: Technology and the Construction of American Culture*, where he argues that the earlier invention of the electric light created “the landscape’s brilliance,” which “expressed an implicit ideology that valued simultaneity, fragmentation, and montage” (88).

³⁹ Lastra explains that the “coming of sound” is a particularly fraught aspect of cinema history (92). He explains, “during the early cinema period...we can indirectly witness a confrontation between competing sensory regimes” of the auditory and visual (93). I will develop this notion of the split and overlap of visual and auditory perception in the proceeding section on Dos Passos’s filmic aesthetic.

(Kern 70). It performed the vital role of capturing and disseminating the contingent and fleeting present of a culture obsessed with time, a culture on the cusp of entering the first modern war on a global scale. Experimental modernist writers would tap into this cinematic conception of time in order to break outside of a conventional narrative structure as well as question the assumed beginning and ending of the war.

Dos Passos and Hemingway discovered their writerly voices within this technological context, crafting conscious objections to the homogenized temporality of mobilization. Entrenched in exploring the unknowability, contingency, and simultaneity of wartime through the prosthetic-like application of cinema, their literary works resonate with legal scholar Mary Dudziak's recent study of wartime. In *Wartime: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences*, she interrogates how governments manipulate laws in times of war and in effect distort citizens' and soldiers' temporal experience of war. Dudziak contends that beginning with the First World War, the state has justified expansions of power at wartime by presenting it to citizens through propaganda as an inevitable and exclusive timeframe necessary for peace (136). Dudziak's argument is derived from a critical understanding of clock time, which emphasizes the people using material markers of temporality over the objects themselves.⁴⁰ By emphasizing emergent cinematic technology as one way people measured and represented time, Dos Passos and Hemingway view the war through their camera eyes to denaturalize mobilized time as an

⁴⁰ See Thomas Allen's *Republic in Time*, an in-depth study of clock time in the nineteenth century. Dudziak's argument about wartime follows Allen's claims about normative understanding of clock time which "is produced by human beings working within specific historical circumstances," circumstances that contextualize "a set of ideas produced not by clocks, but by the people who use them" (Dudziak 21).

unreal story with no end, a state-sanctioned interruption in the lives of veterans and citizens, members of a generation perpetually lost in the war's afterimage.

Cinematic techniques such as double-exposure, on-screen doubles, and montage, offer Dos Passos and Hemingway ways to sequence and commemorate mobilized time, creating what I characterize in this chapter as kinematic prose. Early cinema was often associated with the word, "kinema," which connotes both senses of the word "to move," in terms of motion and emotion.⁴¹ Film's kinematic properties—converting still images into moving pictures and affecting viewers' emotions—garnered the technological medium with a "double, or paradoxical, nature" (Marcus 2). Cinema's "paradoxical nature" comes out of its method of capturing a period of time, particularly how it enables filmmakers to at once freeze frame images and animate them, or suspend time and progress it. Directors create so-called simultaneous events and perspectives through techniques of double exposure. One popular double exposure method was to create on-screen doubles, or *doppelgängers*, by filming the same actor twice on opposite sides of the frame with a black diaphragm covering the opposing side. Another popular technique was the montage balloon in which tangential action would occur in a double exposed bubble on-screen signifying a meantime.⁴² In comparison to double-exposure methods, parallel editing, also known as contrast editing or intercutting, has endured as film's

⁴¹ The term "kinematic," used almost interchangeably with cinematic in the early 1900s, was taken from the scientific term coined in the mid 1800s naming the study of motion, kinematics.

⁴² From a psychoanalytic and historical perspective, Sharon Packer claims that "...by the time cinema arrived as the nineteenth century closed, the concept of the double was well entrenched in the world of art and ideas. The double was more than a mere holdover from the days of superstition and spiritualism; it morphed into a new form through turn-of-the-century depth psychology..." (Packer 146). For *Doppelgänger* films, see Ewer's *Student*, Gerhart Hauptmann's *Phantom*, Wiene's *Caligari*, Lindau's *Anderer*, Wegener's *Golem* all of which comprise the "doppelgänger boom" (Kittler 155). For film using the montage balloon, see Porter's *The Life of An American* (Kern 71).

primary means of expanding the present. The on-screen doppelgängers or the sum of intercut scenes and shots add up to a montage in which filmmakers “splice open a moment and insert a number of simultaneous activities” or perspectives (Kern 71). Kern’s perceptive theorization of cinema’s creative potential to expand the experience of time is crucial to contextualize Dos Passos and Hemingway’s representations of wartime. His study separates cinema and war as distinct phenomena that have effected our understanding of the experience of modern time. And yet, Dos Passos and Hemingway prove that cinema was entwined with the global synchronicity of mobilization that suspended them from a foreseeable future outside of wartime. Their war prose, infused with filmic aesthetics, suggests that war and cinema cannot be theorized or historicized exclusively.

Through the filmic techniques, Dos Passos and Hemingway sequence the shock of mobilized time and commemorate the war dead not as a price paid to end all wars, but as an extended burden to carry after the armistice through public mourning and private melancholy. Dos Passos and Hemingway’s reappropriation of cinema’s kinematic functions in their war novels blurs literary genres just as it blurs the temporal demarcation between war and peace espoused by propaganda. By physically and psychically “moving” readers through wartime, Dos Passos and Hemingway enhance the limitations of a traditional narrative’s obligations to linearity. They repurpose the functions of poetry to commemorate and novels to sequence in the context of the war. Alternatively, the incorporation of the cinema into Dos Passos’s prose demystifies the emotionally affective power of cinema, which the Four Minute Men exploited in their real-time, in-person

speeches to attribute meaning to the war dead and control the temporal progression of mobilized time. And Hemingway's war fiction demonstrates that the cinematic could capture the problematic nature of the veteran's abilities to see, remember, and express his experiences. Their technologically experimental forms expand the sense of the present as a counter to the technological innovations of modern warfare that sped up movement on the battlefield and accelerated emotional responses to the breaking point of shell shock for many veterans.

This chapter develops the important link between cinema and war, which Susan McCabe's recent *Cinematic Modernism* (2005) broaches. I expand on her emphasis on the subjective conditions of shell shock and hysteria by accounting for the larger political and social effects of mobilized time as a cultural shock enacting temporal continuities with pre- and post-war peacetime. From the tinting of lenses matching the color of mustard gas to the mechanical operation of loading and shooting a camera corresponding to the preparation and usage of artillery, cinema's cultural influence as a mediator of perception became fully realized on the Great War's battlefield. Dos Passos and Hemingway repurpose the very cinematic technology and its cultural resonance that helped perpetuate the state's propagandized narrative of a war to end all wars, a war for peace. In effect, their kinematic translation of the temporal experience of mobilized war into prose questions the linear progression from war to peace.

Sequencing and commemorating mobilization as an endless temporality, Dos Passos and Hemingway dispute the distinction between war and peace through experimental literary form. In their novels, wartime is suspended from the pre- and post-

war temporalities of peace. And yet, the authors demonstrate that in the process of expanding the present, the past and future are pushed further away. Dos Passos reflects the dispersal of public grief through a multimodal composition in *1919* (1932), which contains multiple plots narrated at a seemingly simultaneous pace. In effect, he shows that modern war “is nothing but an enormous, tragic digression in the lives of . . . people” (*The Fourteenth Chronicle* 152). Hemingway’s *In Our Time* (1925), *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) kinematically represent the stasis of private grief through protagonists who, in their states of melancholy, cannot connect their retrospective narration with the narrative present set during the war. As passive observers of their own lives, they demonstrate that there is “no separate peace” outside of wartime. Through the filmic techniques of double exposure and parallel editing, Dos Passos and Hemingway pen doppelgängers and montages that capture the mobilized powers during wartime and question the return to peace in its aftermath.

“I’m still in a suspended state—”:

John Dos Passos and the Shock of Mobilized Time

In *1919* the trope of doomed youth is already a cliché, familiar to the fictional character of Dick even before he sets off to war:

he told [his friend] Ned that he was going to France they got very drunk on orvieto wine in their room and talked a great deal about how it was the fate of Youth and Beauty and Love and Friendship to be mashed out by an early death, while the old fat pompous fools would make merry over their carcasses. In the pearly dawn they went out and sat with a last bottle on one of the old tombstones in the graveyard, on the corner of Harvard Square. They sat on the cold tombstone a long time without saying anything, only drinking, and after each drink threw their heads back and softly bleated in unison Blahlahblahlah. (73)

Capitalizing abstract ideals like youth, beauty, love, and friendship alongside the nonsensical cry of blahblahblah, Dos Passos voices his critical awareness of the Romantic literary context out of which the trope of doomed youth would be inscribed by Brooke, Owen, Sassoon, and Remarque, among others. Although Dos Passos seems to lament the inevitable fate of such ideals in the presence of the war, his dismissive blahblahblah suggests that by the publication of *1919* in 1932, the trope of doomed youth was outmoded at least within the experimental modernist circles within which Dos Passos traveled. Earlier in 1915-16, Dos Passos published a series of prose and verse in *Harvard Monthly*. “First Love” is a short story composed with Romantic language about a boy daydreaming in class, while the poem “From Simonides” most closely aligns with the abstract ideals Dick and Ned dismissed in the face of the war. He concludes the poem, “And when the thought is fled from the flame of desire, / The fervor of youth and youth’s tremulous flowers, / Friend, embrace with me” (100). Six months later, in “A Humble Protest,” Dos Passos, effected by the tragic turn of the war after the Somme, critiqued science and industrialization for merely producing inessential commodities and degrading human life. Leaving Romantic form behind, Dos Passos began to see the shock of modern life exaggerated by the war and, in a decade long search, found the literary means to express it in the *USA* Trilogy.

In *1919*, Dos Passos frames his literary depiction of the temporal experience of the war by focusing on mechanistic time. On his way to France, Dick’s memories of his friends from Cambridge “faded in his mind like paragraphs in a novel laid by unfinished” as he was wrecked with anxiety “coiled up tight as an overwound clock with wondering

what it would be like over there” (73). The clock metaphor, emerging out of the passé Romantic ideals as a material marker of modernity, foregrounds time as an important part of the experience of war and a source that complicated the ability to inscribe the ineffability of modern war beyond a traditional literary form reduced to the interjection, blahblahblah.

The image of the over-wound clock ticking off the seconds of mobilized time symbolizes Dos Passos’s own concerns over writing about the lived experience of the war before he discovered and incorporated cinema’s potential to capture and expand the present. In a diary entry written in Paris on July 31, 1917, just a few weeks before seeing action on the front, Dos Passos expressed his anxiety of finding a proper voice to articulate “how damned ridiculous it all is” (*Fourteenth Chronicle* 90). He admits, “I’m dying to write—but my methods of doing things in the past merely disgust me now, all former methods are damned inadequate—The stream of sensation flows by—I suck it up like a sponge—my reactions are a constant weather vane—” (89). Following up his critique from “A Humble Protest,” he goes on in the diary to question how the war’s disruption of modern progress—both in terms of industrial materiality as well as intellectual creativity—left him bereft of a past or future to depend on. He asks a question that he later incorporates into his first Great War novel, *One Man’s Initiation—1917* (1920): “The long generations toiling—skimping, lashing themselves screwing higher and higher the tension of their minds, polishing brighter and brighter the mirror of intelligence to end in this?” (89). While writing this diary entry near the front, he could only respond, “My God what a time—” (90). Dos Passos’s need for a form that belies

tradition and progress—a form that would allow him to express the suspension of culture and life engendered by the accelerated tick of mobilized wartime—indicates that his anxieties over literary aesthetics and the temporal experience of the war were inextricable from one another.

Cinema, particularly the kinematic functions of physical and psychic movement, offered the mode of capturing and expanding the suspension of the over-wound present induced by mechanized time. In October of 1918, nine months before discharge, Dos Passos closed a letter to his close friend, Rumsey Marvin, by explaining that his military service left him feeling as if he was “still in a suspended state—” (*Fourteenth Chronicle* 222). Before he could conceptualize the collectively experienced shock of mobilized time that reduced the enlisted man to an over-wound clock, he had to work through his subjective experience of the war that heightened the tension within his own mind.

Deeply entrenched within the propagandized jingoism in the cinema and anticipating the violence at the front, Dos Passos was too close to the screen to see film’s utopian potential. His state of suspension reflects continuity with his initial feelings from the previous year that the war was an “enormous, tragic digression in the lives of the people,” and his emotions inscribed to his friend more immediately recall Dos Passos’s alienation from the men around him who fell victim to the emotional manipulation of cinematic propaganda. A week earlier, Dos Passos writes in his diary about viewing “a particularly inept movie...for the edification of young America” (219). This diary entry as well as the passage he would later develop it into in his second novelization of the Great War, *Three Soldiers* (1921), critiques propaganda’s kinematic manipulation of

emotion that moved the masses for mobilization. As the men watch the propaganda film in that novel, “here and there a pair of eyes glinted in the white flickering light from the screen. Waves of laughter or little exclamations passed over them. They were all so alike, they seemed at moments to be but one organism” (22). The affective reactions from the men lead one of the three soldiers of the eponymous novel, John Andrews, to remind himself that “this was what he sought when he enlisted,” a sense of camaraderie and community (22). While Andrews “would take refuge from the horror of the world that had fallen upon him” in wartime by adding to the laughter, Dos Passos could not. Unlike his European counterparts in the trenches who wrote of the loving bonds between men—the camaraderie of Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* or the “conjugal friendship” of Owen’s war verse—Dos Passos taps into the propagandized hatred of the Hun as a means to mobilize. While European soldiers fought side by side in the trenches forming the kinds of bonds discussed in *trench time*, many Americans attuned to *mobilized time* were exposed to years of wartime media, which inspired skepticism of their countrymen’s nationalism before they entered the Great War in its last year.

Dos Passos’s recognition of cinema’s specious ability to mediate viewers’ emotions was his first step toward thinking through how to represent a collective conception of mobilized time. Ultimately, he would come to realize cinema’s proletariat potential to track the mass movement of mobilization and alleviate the tension of his own mind. Dos Passos notes in his diary, “a wave of hatred go through the men” (*Fourteenth Chronicle* 219), rather than the “waves of laughter” that Andrews hears (*Three Soldiers* 22). Both the laughter of the novel and the verbalized hatred recorded in his diary express

Dos Passos's close attention to the emotionally manipulative power of cinema, which bolstered the "typical American spirit with regards to the war" as "warmad" (220). Bowdlerized from his diary entries, the mobilized warmad of *Three Soldiers* figure the initial stages of Dos Passos's understanding of the threat of cinema's emotionally affective pull. Critic David Seed observes that in *Three Soldiers*, "the film forms a part of the military machine to which recruits would be sacrificed" (130). More importantly Seed posits, "It also forms part of Dos Passos's subject rather than of part of his method." By integrating the kinematic influence of film into the form of his later *U.S.A.* Trilogy, Dos Passos traced the emotional outpouring of public mourning for the war dead as a counter to the synchronized movement of the war.

The author's critique and incorporation of the cinematic in his prose delineates the paradox of cinema in modern life as a kinematic force at once animating and assuaging the shock of mobilization that synced the emotions and movements of the masses to wartime. Dos Passos's ambivalence towards cinema parallels Walter Benjamin's own conflicted views regarding the emergent medium in "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," written in exile in Paris in the middle of the 1930s.⁴³ This essay is one of Benjamin's attempts to "pass through" the inescapable influence of media in modern life (qtd. in Hansen 146). James Lastra explains, "by coming to grips with the technologically mediated conditions of modern sensory experience, by 'working through' these technologies rather than by dismissing them, Benjamin hoped the utopian potential of the technological media might be redeemed" (7). On one hand, Benjamin

⁴³ The first version of the essay was published in Paris in fall of 1935. The second version was written in late 1935 through February of 1936. All quotes come from the second version of the essay.

heralded cinema as “a shattering of tradition which is the . . . renewal of humanity,” but on the other hand, he tempers such praise by noting that it “is inconceivable without its destructive, cathartic side: the liquidation of the value of tradition in the cultural heritage” (104). Benjamin elaborates on the “destructive cathartic side” of cinema by theorizing how cinematic crowds regulate themselves through a “massive reaction . . . determined by the imminent concentration of reactions into a mass” (116). Miriam Hansen clarifies Benjamin’s point by explaining, “The mass circulation of images of human behavior in film and photography makes the consumers of these images themselves into objects of standardization and commodification” (95). Benjamin’s concern over cinema’s ability to influence crowds to conform—a concern exploited by the Four Minute Men—is taken up in *1919* by Dos Passos who saw a utopian potential within the medium to renew humanity in the context of the post-war world, providing a lens to critically view the internalization of a standardized wartime symbolized by Dick’s over-wound mental tension. While Benjamin attempted to pass through cinema’s inescapable ideological effects as the Fascists gained power in the 1930s, in the same timeframe, Dos Passos plotted his way through cinema’s propagating powers by way of literary form. In order to delineate how Dos Passos thought out the relationship between cinema and the shock of mobilized time, I draw upon his manuscripts, notes, and letters detailing the drafting of *1919*. Dos Passos’s hurried handwriting—one letter dissolving into another to form a written montage—reflects the sense of immediacy and instantaneity his published Trilogy expresses in print.

Montage provided Dos Passos the medium to work through the duality of cinema—its propagandistic and populist potentials—just as it provided him the key to represent the suspension of everyday life and the synchronization of mobilized time. Before he reckoned the kinematic effect of montage to move viewers in visual and emotional ways, Dos Passos was stuck within wartime without the means to animate the sense of temporal suspension. Between the moment of writing about his initial perceptions of wartime in 1917 and the publication of *1919* in 1932, Dos Passos's formal aesthetics developed in response to cinematic montage, which reflected a broad range of aesthetic practices of the modernist circles within which Dos Passos traveled. Montage enabled the author to channel his artistic influences and material markers of modernity, or what he called the “creative tidal wave” or “explosion” “made up of “the music of Stravinski and Prokofieff and Diafeleff's Ballet hail[ing] from...Paris, ...the windows of Saks Fifth Avenue, skyscraper furniture, the Lenin Memorial in Moscow, the paintings in Diego Rivera in Mexico City and the newritz styles of advertizing in American magazines” (vii-viii).⁴⁴ He synthesized these influences from around the globe through

⁴⁴ The passage from which these quotes were taken, Dos Passos's foreword to his translated and illustrated edition of Cendrars's *Panama: or, the Adventures of My Seven Uncles* (1931), reflect the broad cultural context that impacted Dos Passos and which literary scholars have interrogated by honing in on the specific influences of painters or particular film directors. See George Knox's “Dos Passos and Painting” in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 6.1 (1964): 22-38 for a discussion of the modernist painterly aesthetics in Dos Passos's work through the *U.S.A. Trilogy*. See Stephen Hock's ““Stories Told Sideways Out of the Big Mouth’: John Dos Passos's Bazinian Camera Eye” in *Literature/Film Quarterly* 33.1 (2005): 20-27, which traces the relationship between Dos Passos and Andre Bazin in terms of documentary realism. See Justin Edwards's “The Man with a Camera Eye: Cinematic Form and Hollywood Malediction in John Dos Passos's *The Big Money*” in *Literature/Film Quarterly* 27.4 (1999): 245-54, which claims that Soviet Filmmakers like Eisenstein had the greatest influence on the author's cinematic aesthetic. Gretchen Fosters' “John Dos Passos' Use of Film Technique in *Manhattan Transfer* and *The 42nd Parallel*.” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 14.3 (1986): 186-94 and Carol Shloss's “John Dos Passos and the Soviet Cinema” from *In Visible Light* (1987) both find the source of Dos Passos Camera Eye sections of the *U.S.A. Trilogy* in Dziga Vertov's montage method of “Kino-Eye.”

the filmic technique of montage to represent the simultaneity of the collective experience of modernity within the *U.S.A.* Trilogy.

Rather than overtly present cinematic effects as he did in *Three Soldiers*, Dos Passos more subtly incorporates filmic aesthetics in the *U.S.A.* Trilogy. As the author explained in an interview in 1962, unlike his “unconscious” use of montage in his earlier novel, *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), he consciously chose to incorporate cinematic techniques in the *U.S.A.* Trilogy (qtd. in *Fourteenth Chronicle* 247). The three novels can be read as a chronicle, or what Dos Passos described in his “informal memoir,” *The Best Times*, as “a narrative panorama to which I saw no end” (172).⁴⁵ Although the final section titled “Vag” of the third novel of the *U.S.A.* Trilogy, *Big Money*, provides a clear bookend to the trilogy, Dos Passos’s focus upon the present while composing his chronicle reflects how steeped the author was in the modernist aesthetic of cinematic montage to structure narrative time. *1919*, more than any novel of the trilogy, is concerned with the present as it deals with the shortest timeframe, spanning 1917-1921, while the first novel, *42nd Parallel* roughly covers 1900-1917 and *Big Money* takes up the post-war decade. By placing the slowest paced plot at the trilogy’s center, Dos Passos suggests that the lived temporal experience of soldiers and citizens mobilized and suspended in wartime is endemic to the narrative present of Dos Passos’ literary panorama as well as to the broader understanding of modern time.

Dos Passos sequences wartime in *1919* by montaging public grief in a suspended present, revealing the endlessness of wartime. Even its very title ironically references the

⁴⁵ See *L’Initiation d’un homme*, trans. Marc Freeman (Paris: Michel de Maule, 1989): 14 for a letter Dos Passos wrote in French while on the front detailing his reading, which includes Cendrars’s poetry.

first year of presumed peace to label a novel set almost exclusively within the timeframe of the war, thereby foregrounding the temporal slippages between war and peace. The narrator of *1919* cuts and sequences wartime in a montage characterized by four modes: Newsreels, Camera Eye, fictional narratives, and poetic biographies. Dos Passos relies on media—print and cinema—to do what Benjamin claims the production of moving pictures cannot: raise class consciousness, particularly a populist critical awareness of the assumptions behind wartime. Benjamin argues that although film audiences have an invisible authority and “control” over the production of films, “film capital uses the revolutionary opportunities implied by this control to counterrevolutionary purposes” (113). These filmic spectators, the source or “mirror image” of the big screen pictures by virtue of buying movie tickets, are entertained, placated, and further homogenized just like the warmad Dos Passos wrote of in his wartime journal who become standardized objects of a mobilized state. As an alternative to what Benjamin understood as film’s failure to raise consciousness, the theorist ascribed to cinema a therapeutic function (Hansen 99); as Benjamin simply puts it, “In the cinema, people who are no longer moved or touched by anything learn to cry again” (qtd. Hansen 195). In other words, cinema acted as an emotive counter shock for post-war audiences numbed, confused, and disillusioned. Through print narrative, Dos Passos avoids the cooptation of film capital’s counterrevolutionary purposes and makes his subversive message manifest to emotionally move his readers to physical action in the post-war world. Cinema could renew humanity in the wake of so-called peace, therapeutically treating the cultural shock induced by the experience of mobilization.

While a montage aesthetic structures the narrative sequence of *1919* in a suspended present, its final segment, “The Body of an American,” stands as the sacred ground over which Dos Passos commemorates the human remainder left over from the war. This ground of commemoration is spatially centered in Paris, France, where most American troops passed through before the front and where the peace treaty was signed. Dos Passos wrote in retrospect, “Paris really was the capital of the world that spring of the Peace Conference” (*The Best Times* 76). He later reiterated this idea to his biographer Charles Bernardin, claiming, “Everyone’s capital was Paris during the whole war and post war period” (The Papers of John Dos Passos, “Correspondence with Charles Bernardin,” Boxes 1-2). If Paris was Dos Passos’s capital, he did not stay long as he nomadically traveled during and after the war to Spain, America, and the Middle East, among other locales. These geographical and temporal leaps are sourced in Paris, 1919.⁴⁶

Traversing time and space in non-linear leaps, “The Body of an American” counters the state’s propagandized narrative of wartime as an inevitable temporality exclusive from peace. While this montaged section is filled with juxtapositions, “The Body of an American” brings a sense of unity to *1919* a continuity with the pre-war past—the first novel of *U.S.A.*, *42nd Parallel*—and the post-war future—the final novel of

⁴⁶ Interestingly, in Dos Passos’s notebooks planning the *U.S.A.* novels, Paris was the origin and center of plotting the war. Donald Pizer first noted Dos Passos’s sketch of “Geography of *Nineteen Nineteen*” which he claimed is a “graphic illustration of his effort to translate” the notion that Paris was the center during the Peace Conference “into fictional character and event” (136-7). However, in Dos Passos’s notebooks planning *The 42nd Parallel*, there is a page entitled “War Section” in which he wrote, “The Red Cross in Paris” (see The Papers of John Dos Passos, Box 48). On back of this page, he wrote a follow-up section titled, “War Women,” with a list of notes about different characters such as “little old woman with the lice.” These drafting notes suggest that Paris was not only the capital of the Peace Conference; rather, wartime was the temporal source of the first novel of the Trilogy and Paris was its first conceived setting.

the trilogy, *Big Money*. In this way, he represents wartime not as an inevitable temporality set apart from peacetime as propaganda dictated, but as an expansion of the present that suspended life. By viewing wartime kinematically, Dos Passos records the shock and ineffability of modern warfare, particularly the accelerated motion on the battlefields during war and the emotions of shell shocked soldiers and mourning citizens left suspended in its wake.

Sequencing Mobilized Time:

Montaging the Body of an American as an “Organically Conceived Whole”

By juxtaposing simultaneous and seemingly noncontiguous events in *1919*, Dos Passos reveals the complicated scale of mobilization and rejects the state’s specious simplicity of reducing the complexity of wartime, particularly as it propagandized the unknown soldier as an embodiment of the war’s resolution. Dos Passos’s cinematic montage deconstructs the audio-visual effects of such war propaganda. And in a counter narrative to this propagated linear war espoused in newsreels and the Four Minute Men’s theatrical speeches, Dos Passos sequences mobilization through montage to create an alternative conception of wartime. Cutting between the montage segments of “The Body of an American,” the author sequences the spatial and temporal conditions of a mobilized soldier doomed to die, fated in death to anonymously represent the war dead and mark the end of war. In response to the state’s symbolic claim upon the unknown warrior, Dos Passos plots the anonymous soldier’s life in a personal narrative extending beyond the timeframe of mobilization. In effect, “The Body of an American” reanimates the

unknown soldier's corporeal remains as an "organically conceived whole," a phrase that Dos Passos's contemporary Sergei Eisenstein used to characterize montage. Once embodying the state's resolution of wartime, the body of an American is reclaimed by Dos Passos's kinematic, populist prose to embody the endless, suspended present of mobilized time.

Dos Passos freeze-frames the simultaneous perception of the masses and separates the sensory stimuli imposed upon by propaganda. As a subversive critique of this mobilized mass, he deconstructs the broader signifying network of the public's grief for the representative war dead, a network manufactured by the state in the form of press releases and other mass-produced media. The final segment begins with the compressed phrasing lifted from the first paragraph of President Harding's proclamation obligating American citizens to observe a two-minute silent prayer at noon on November 11, 1921 when the unknown soldier was buried at Arlington National Cemetery:

Whereasthe Congressoftheunitedstates byacurrentresolutionadoptedon the4thdayofmarch lastauthorizedthe Secretaryofwar to cause to be brought to theunitedstatesthe body of an American whowasamemberoftheamericanexpeditionaryforcesineuropewholost his lifeduringtheworldwarandwhoseidentityhasnot beenestablished for burial inthememorialamphitheatreofthe nationalcemeteryatarlingtonvirginia. (375)

Unlike the condensed syntax of the majority of the passage—one fourteen-word phrase is compressed without spacing—each word of the phrase "body of an American" is significantly spaced from one another, suspending the representative war dead in an extended present on the sentence level through the blank space of the page. In the first paragraph of "The Body of an American," Dos Passos calls attention to the state's mediation of the masses' perception of the war through everyday print media and

foregrounds the accelerated pace of modern war for veterans in no man's land and civilians reading about it at home.⁴⁷ This accelerated temporal experience of mobilized time—internalized by Dick as an over-wound clock and embodied by the unknown soldier who died in the mud of the Marne in 1918 only to be buried deep in the dirt at Arlington Cemetery in 1921—reflects the shock of wartime that left Dos Passos and his generation lost, disillusioned, and confused.

Through a montage aesthetic organized by the cinematic cut, Dos Passos counters the public circulation of grief sanctioned by state authority by reanimating the embodiment of the war's end, the body of an American, in a suspended present. From the state's official language, Dos Passos then cuts between state-censored newspaper clippings and passages voiced in the dialect of latrine talk and other forms of American vernacular to chronicle the selection process of John Doe over Richard Roe, his birth, training, death, decomposition, and memorialization. Critic Barry Maine has linked the white space between bodies of text throughout the *U.S.A. Trilogy* to a montage cut in order to argue that Dos Passos's form reflects a discontinuity between individuals and history (76-77). For Maine, Dos Passos's fragmented form divorces fictional and historical characters in the *Trilogy* from the noncontiguous events of the novel's plot. When interpreted as a montage aesthetic, the white spaces between historical and fictionalized segments of "The Body of an American" read as temporal openings between

⁴⁷ The machine gun was the source of eighty percent of WWI casualties (Kern 299). In effect, the machine gun was one of the primary reasons why the means of fighting wars changed with the First World War so that "firepower replaced manpower as the instrument of victory" (Bourne 133-4).

war and peace, inviting potential connections between the fictional and the historical as well as the war dead and survivors who live to inscribe the chronicle of the war.

The white space used throughout the *U.S.A. Trilogy* functions much like continuity editing by visually producing cinematic temporal effects for readers: simultaneity and temporal slippages between past and future. While the white space on the page of the novel reflects the workings of the cinematic cut, in a holistic sense the structure of the chronicle reflects the characteristics of a montage film. By cutting between scenes, Dos Passos composed a montage narrative for his contemporary readership, whom he understood as “an eye-minded people” visually bombarded by the clutter of modern media and advertising.⁴⁸ To contain and assuage the endless sensory overload of modernity—accelerated in wartime through propaganda—Dos Passos organized his chronicle as a montage through cuts that function like dissolves for his “eye-minded” readership. In Dos Passos’s notes from 1957-1967 for the film adaptation of the *U.S.A. Trilogy*, he wrote, “Dissolve” or “lap dissolve” between scenes, suggesting, perhaps, that this particular cinematic cut was what he envisioned as he originally composed the novels through the 1920s and 30s.⁴⁹ The lap dissolve enables a filmmaker to overlap one scene into another to emphasize connections between scenes without expressing a temporal gap like other continuity editing techniques like cross-cuts or wipes. Dissolve best captures the temporal rhythm of the trilogy, which is paced by

⁴⁸ See Dos Passos’s “Grozs Comes to America” in which he claims: “In the last twenty years [since 1911, when this article was published] a change has come over the visual habits of Americans...From being a wordminded people we are becoming an eye-minded people” (*Travel Books and Other Writings 1916-1941* 610).

⁴⁹ These manuscripts can be seen in The Papers of John Dos Passos, “Drafts and Notes of Proposed Film Version of *U.S.A.*,” Box 109. Manuscripts were edited by Nick Spano.

interconnections between fictional and historical characters as well a typeset that often omits page breaks between the four narrative modes.

The dissolve organizes the seemingly simultaneous temporality of *1919*'s plot in a montage of non-linear, juxtaposed scenes. While the state claimed the body of an American as a resolution to its narrative of wartime, Dos Passos juxtaposes the separate visual and auditory stimuli through the white space between sections of "The Body of an American," montaging the slippages between war and peace and suspending the unknown soldier's life and death in the endlessness of wartime.

Drawing from public speeches during the service of the burial of the unknown soldier but presenting them in print form, Dos Passos's typography in "The Body of an American" presents readers with an audiovisual experience akin to early silent film, with its placards of text intercut with and narrating visualized scenes. Taken as a whole composed of separated sections that I will analyze, "The Body of an American" expands readers' sense of time with multiple points of view occurring concurrently. Film scholar Mary Anne Doane understands the cinematic cut as "the incarnation of temporality in film" that "constituted the formal response to the restructuring of time in modernity" (184). Following Doane's temporal logic, the cut—specifically the dissolve—structures Dos Passos's response to modernity, particularly as it enables him to temporally blend the war's beginning and ending into pre- and post-war peacetime. As I will show, Dos Passos's expression of simultaneity suspends the novel's linear progression within mobilized time, revealing its continuity into peace, a time when the state made

proclamations for how long to mourn the war dead and even turned its guns around and sets its sights on its own citizens during the Red Scare.

While Dos Passos's personal views shifted politically to the right in the post-war decades, his literary form remained deeply rooted in a radical aesthetic, particularly as it related to montage. Dos Passos would later write, "It was puzzlement more than disillusionment I suffered from" when he turned to Soviet Russia in the mid-1920s as an alternative to the capitalist framework he thought mobilized the world for total war and left it suspended from progress (Papers of John Dos Passos, "It was Puzzlement more than Disillusionment I Suffered From," Box 115). The Soviet experiments of the 1920s reflected enticing political and artistic alternatives to reconceptualize everyday life. Dos Passos ultimately ended his conflicted attachment to communism in 1937 when, among other events, a communist controlled faction executed his friend, Jose Robles, within the Republic during the Spanish Revolution.⁵⁰ Russian cinema left an indelible mark upon his literary form throughout his life. Film director and theorist, Eisenstein, who Dos Passos met during his trip to Russia in 1928, provided Dos Passos the theoretical insight to work through the shock of modernity, a shock magnified by the Great War.⁵¹ Animating the simultaneous and discontinuous segments from "The Body of an American" Dos Passos emphasizes juxtaposition to understand the paradoxes of mobilization: the state's use of

⁵⁰ In an affidavit defending his friend Dr. William Horsley Gant during the security clearance proceedings of 1953, Dos Passos explained that his experience of the Spanish Civil War "brought about my complete disillusionment with Communism and the Soviet Union" (Papers of John Dos Passos, Box 127, 2).

⁵¹ See "Research," Box 120, "Biography S. M. Eisenstein," a dossier on Eisenstein that Dos Passos held in his research materials. It is a series of typed, first-person statements about the director such as "I have always endeavored to discover and introduce new forms and methods of cinematography, and am now attempting to compose a combination of the silent film, the chronicle and the absolute film," much like Dos Passos multimodal writing technique in the *U.S.A.* Trilogy.

cinema, a populist medium, to spread propaganda; the need for an individual to conform for the sake of the mass; and waging “war to end all wars.”

Montage, as Eisenstein conceived of it, was the very means of expression that Dos Passos needed to counter the cinematic propaganda put to prose in *Three Soldiers*. Dos Passos “agreed thoroughly about the importance of montage” with Eisenstein on their first meeting (*The Best Times* 180). Eisenstein called individual montage segments “montage cells” of an “organically conceived whole” in “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form.” Responding to other directors who made and theorized montage films such as Vsevolod Pudovkin, Eisenstein argues that in montage films the cinematic cut—what marks the movement from shot to shot within a single scene and produces the consequent length of each shot—is not what produces the spatial movement and the temporal pacing (48).⁵² Rather, he claims, “Montage is an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots—shots even opposite to one another” (49). For Eisenstein, the real dialectic behind the cinematic expression of time in silent film, what generated movement between space and time, was not the cut in and of itself but the effect of the cut on scenes. This effect, like a collision, produced a sense of juxtaposition, or “incongruence,” between individual cells (50). This incongruence then “engenders...the feeling of motion” for viewers and “becomes the real element of authentic rhythm” in a film (50). Driving the montage plot of *1919*, incongruence generates a sense of temporal

⁵² Dos Passos also had biographical information on Pudovkin among his research materials. Dos Passos’s dossier on the Soviet director explains his kinematic attention to motion and emotion, “striving to present clearly the strenuous rhythm of the present day life in Russia. In his methods of work he follows the system of working deeply and carefully on the actors material up to the smallest, sometimes purely mechanical detail, together with creating the images of the emotional condition of the actor” (See “Research,” Box 120, “Producer Pudovkin, V.1.”).

movement through the juxtaposition of separate scenes dissolving into one another. In effect, the body of an American is reanimated, emphasizing the personal significance of life over the politically framed commemoration of death.

As a critical alternative to Harding's "Proclamation for a Two-Minute Silent Prayer for the Unknown Dead on Armistice Day," the author captures the "authentic rhythm" of mobilized time by juxtaposing historical propaganda with his fictional take on the lived experience of John Doe, the American everyman: "John Doe was born and raised in Brooklyn, in Memphis, near the lakefront in Cleveland, Ohio, in the stench of the stockyards in Chi, on Beacon Hill, in an old brick house in Alexandria, Virginia, on Telegraph Hill, in a halftimbered Tudor cottage in Portland the city of roses" (376). The spatial scope of the potential hometowns of John Doe is indeterminant, reflecting the paradoxical nature of the public's attachment to the unknown soldier, specifically as it was dictated by Harding's proclamation, which claimed his body and the two minutes of silence from his nation that survived him. Yet by juxtaposing Harding's printed word with John Doe's possible birthplaces—his hypothetical beginnings—Dos Passos uses fiction to heighten readers' awareness of the actual possibilities of the unknown soldier's personal life.⁵³ These locations across America loosely fit along the forty-second parallel to hark back to the spatiality of the previous novel of the *USA* Trilogy set in the pre-war temporality.⁵⁴

⁵³ "There are many ways a man can be born," Dos Passos wrote before crossing it out in his earlier handwritten draft of "Body of an American" (Box 108). In this draft Dos Passos directly tells readers this message, but in the published version he uses montage to show it, opening up readers' critical awareness of the media's propagation of a simplified narrative of the unknown soldier and mobilized time.

⁵⁴ In a draft of an introduction to *The 42nd Parallel* Dos Passos traced the geographical sweep of the first novel of the Trilogy, "alternate areas of high and low pressure...forming slightly north of the Canadian

Subsequently, Dos Passos undercuts the state's claim to his corporeal body to commemorate the end of the war and dictate citizens' time of mourning. Dos Passos underlines this point when John Doe is mobilized; he goes "naked...into the army" where "they weighed you, measured you, looked for flat feet, squeezed your penis to see if you had clap, looked up your anus to see if you had piles, counted your teeth, made you cough, listened to your heart and lungs, made you read the letters on the card, charted your urine and your intelligence, gave you a service record for a future (perishable soul)...Atten'SHUN ... ForwarD'ARCH" (377). His nude state replays his birth, but what follows is the homogenized experience of every enlisted man. In fact, in an early draft of "The Body of an American" Dos Passos began this paragraph with "naked *we* go into the army" ("The Body of an American Manuscript Drafts"). Crossing out *we* for *he*, Dos Passos emphasizes the individual as part of the collective rather than merely subsuming John Doe into the collective. The state's evaluation of his physical and psychic condition before its literal claim upon his body for the duration of wartime and the future (should his soul perish in no man's land) is conveyed through montage as an inevitable momentum of an endless temporality. By setting the plurality of John Doe's beginnings in incongruence with the standardized procedure of mobilizing an American soldier for the front, Dos Passos sequences the soldier's temporal experience as part of the "organically conceived whole" of mobilized time in an alternative timeframe to the state's adherence to mechanized wartime.

boarder, frequently in the vicinity of Medicine Hat...cyclonic disturbances...blizzards in winter sweeping east and south following a well-defined track approximately along the forty second parallel" (Box 48). And as he drafted *1919*, he added in Memphis as well as Telegraph Hill, centering the collection of birthplaces along the forty second parallel. For these changes see Box 48, "The 42nd Parallel The Early Manuscript Drafts Folder One of Two."

As a montage cell within *1919*, “The Body of an American” juxtaposes John Doe’s lived experience of wartime with those mourning his death, an incongruence that reveals the temporal slippages between war and peace. In the newsreel section preceding “The Body of an American,” Newsreel XLIII, Dos Passos ironically juxtaposes the counterpoints of a printed newspaper headline describing the shocking visual image of state violence with the placating sounds of popular song lyrics:

MACHINEGUNS MOW DOWN MOBS IN KNOXVILLE
America I love you

...
And there’s a hundred million others like me (375)

Dos Passos juxtaposes what Michael North has called “the counterpoints” of the visual image on the screen and its accompanied music (52), echoing Eisenstein’s film theory, especially his explanation of the dynamic form of montage. Eisenstein first delineated the particular way that early cinema distorted time through incongruent visual and auditory stimuli.⁵⁵ Eisenstein articulated one important way that silent cinema expanded the present and how it provided Dos Passos the formal means to kinematically suspend his readers within a plot synced to mobilized time. North points out that Dos Passos formally separates the senses—sight and sound—in order to traverse subjective and collective experience; Camera Eye sections represent the author’s subjective position by separating

⁵⁵ The audio counterpoint, music, may seem surprising from our contemporary historical distance from so-called silent film. However, art historian Erwin Panofsky corroborates the co-dependence of visual and auditory stimulation as a film viewer by noting that the interplay between the pianist’s music and the on-screen moving images produce not only the rhythm or pacing of the film but also its subsequent incongruence (Marcus 356). The interplay between the pianist’s music and the on-screen moving images produce not only the rhythm or pacing of the film but also its subsequent incongruence that Eisenstein formulated in his writing and practiced in the production of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), a film that influenced Dos Passos’s writing according to his diary (see Seed 137).

sight from other perceptive outlets (145-6), while the Newsreels rely heavily on popular song lyrics to, as Dos Passos himself put it, “give the clamor, the sound of daily life” (143).⁵⁶ Unlike Eisenstein, who synthesized perception for viewers in the movie theater, Dos Passos separated and thereby deconstructed the senses of his readers on the page.

The temporal mark of the cut—manifested in the form of white space on the page between capitalized headlines—dissolves separate visual and auditory counterpoints into an organically conceived whole evincing that the war was not over despite Harding’s words. The juxtaposition between the state’s violent reaction to protestors and the italicized patriotic song produces a rhythm of simultaneity that arrests readers within a perpetual present in which violence is ever present in spite of the media’s attempt to obfuscate the state’s homogenizing efforts in post-war society. While Benjamin would later claim that “the newsreel demonstrates unequivocally that any individual can be in the position of being filmed” (114), Dos Passos first proved through this newsreel section that in a demobilized America, any citizen can be in the position of being shot—filmed or gunned down—in the state’s attempt to control its populace. Dos Passos reinvests the cinematic with a populist potential to dispute the fallaciousness of “demobilization” for his post-war readership looking back at wartime. Through montage, he comes to terms with the war’s continuity by dissolving its presence, embodied by the unknown soldier, into the lives of survivors.

⁵⁶ Dos Passos’s previous works—*One Man’s Initiation—1917*, *Three Soldiers*, and *Manhattan Transfer*—all include popular song lyrics of the day spliced into their narratives. The newsreels of the *U.S.A.* Trilogy evince a more complex synthesis of the auditory stimuli of modern life by blending lyrics with news headlines, and by producing incongruence between the auditory stimuli and visual print that is set off in capital letters. Cendrars wrote to Dos Passos after reading *1919*, and told him that in comparison to the first novel of the Trilogy, the newsreels of *1919* “no longer function as labels of time...but more like the parasitical noises of echoes still reverberating” (qtd. Bochner 339).

“A Time of Mourning...Too Meaningful and Tragic for Applause”:

The Asynchronous Heart Beat of an American and the Circulation of Public Grief

By temporally suspending readers through cuts between sensory perceptions, Dos Passos deconstructs the state’s rhetoric of wartime in a counter memorial for the body of an American. Montage cells visualizing the printed Word of the Law and military decorations reflect how the state controlled cultural meaning of the American’s body during Armistice Day’s two-minute silence. As an auditory counterpoint to Harding’s proclamation, Dos Passos voices the “speech of the people,” which prefaces the Trilogy, in “The Body of an American.” Consequently, the commemoration of the unknown soldier’s death resonates with the fictional, historical, and autobiographical narratives of the Trilogy as a whole, fictively imagining the subjective possibilities of the unknown soldier—from his birth to death—across simultaneous temporalities synced to mobilization. By mapping out the state’s mediation of the war dead on one montage cell and by amplifying the audible silence of Armistice Day in another, Dos Passos commemorates the body of an American as an organically conceived whole that embodies the incongruence, tension, and slippages within the cultural discourse delineating the temporal sequence of war to peace.

Dos Passos’s visual attention to print media and the ceremonial symbols affixed to and around the body of an American reveals the complex network of power behind the state’s memorialization of the war dead, which attempted to mark the linear transition to peace. The introductory lines of Harding’s proclamation opening the final segment of *1919* were printed in major newspapers such as the *New York Times* weeks before

Armistice Day. Like the Newsreels of the Trilogy, Dos Passos plundered newspaper clippings and reproduced them in this final section to heighten their visual presence. Hence the compressed syntax of Harding's proclamation and the indented, offset passages detailing the press's report of the actual burial of the unknown soldier, a "time of mourning" "too meaningful and tragic for applause" (376). Underplaying the assumed reverence of the two-minutes of silence, the clippings serve as a mocking visualization of the funeral procession, which he categorically details according to color in the following list: "the court uniforms of foreign diplomats, the gold braid of our own and foreign fleets and armies, the black of conventional morning dress of American statesmen, and varicolored furs and outdoor wrapping garments of mothers and sisters come to mourn, the drab and blue of soldiers and sailors." Equivalent to the newsreels before the introduction of talking pictures in 1926-1927, the clippings stand out like moving pictures not yet synched to sound, backed by what American newsreel historian Raymond Fielding has characterized as a "high-speed, invisible narrator" who details the minutia of the day (3-4). The visual emphasis during the prayer of silence makes legible, on one level, the state's inscribed instructions to properly mourn the war dead and, on another level, the written record of how to remember the war in a constructed temporality exclusive from peacetime.

Dos Passos's form montages and brings clarity to the state's legible answer to the question of when the war began and ended as well as how to remember it. The government's sanctioning for the collective memorialization of the American's body culminates in the final series of montage cells concluding *1919*:

Where his chest ought to have been they pinned
The Congressional Medal, the D.S.C., the Medaille Militaire, the Belgian
Croix de Guerre, the Italian gold medal, the Virtutea Militara sent by
Queen Marie of Rumania, the Czechoslovak war cross, the Virtuti Militari
of the Poles, the wreath sent by Hamilton Fish, Jr., of New York, and a
little wampum presented by a deputation of Arizonia redskins in warpaint
and feathers. All the Washingtonians brought flowers.

Woodrow Wilson brought a bouquet of poppies. (379-80)

The body of an American's very corporality, constructed by an assemblage of medals and flowers, evinces the complex and dispersed significations of the First World War's end. The unknown soldier ultimately embodies Dudziak's claim that the end of war is a political question not necessarily answered by a ceasefire order (38). The final image of then former president Wilson and his bouquet of poppies on November 11, 1921 stands in incongruence with the earlier poetic biography of "Mister Veelson," which chronicles America's entrance into the war and the state's inscription of its end, the signing of the Armistice (191).

In an earlier draft of *1919*, Dos Passos ended Wilson's biography with this image the ailing president laying poppies for the unknown soldier: "On armistice day that fall he laid a wreath of poppies on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier; two years later the body of President Wilson propped with cushions in a car was able to follow the body of Present Harding on its last trip from the White House to the Capitol" (145-6). This earlier, almost sympathetic depiction of Wilson's deteriorating frame perhaps unintentionally linked the former president's body with that of the unknown soldier. By integrating this image of Wilson laying poppies at the end of "Body of an American"—and at the end of the novel itself—Dos Passos intensifies the temporal slippage between war and peace. In effect, he

heightens the irony of Wilson's act of penance and invests readerly sympathy exclusively for the unknown soldier. By emphasizing the body of the unknown soldier over Wilson's, Dos Passos offers an alternative memory of mobilized time in place of the one propagated by the state—creating memory outside of Wilson's "truth."

In the published version, Dos Passos deploys montage to deconstruct the state's authoritative legibility signified by Wilson's poppies, written word, and newspaper headlines. As a politician, he ran for re-election with the slogan, "He kept us out of war," but declared a state of war with the words, "Force without stint or limit, force to the utmost" (194).⁵⁷ Wilson, for Dos Passos, manipulated language and "became the state (war is the health of the state)" (195). If leading Dos Passos scholar Donald Pizer is correct in his reading of "The Body of an American" as a critique of the "language of belief that the war occasioned" (39), then Wilson is identified as a source of such skepticism and his language stands in incongruence with the narrative voice of the trilogy, the speech of the people.⁵⁸ By juxtaposing the corporeal body of the war dead with its material markers of commemoration, Wilson's poppies with his earlier declaration, and Harding's proclamation with the press's disseminated instruction of a submissive silence for a time too tragic and meaningful for applause, Dos Passos turns a

⁵⁷ Another legal scholar, Mariah Zeisberg, corroborates Dos Passos's critique of the former commander in chief in her recent study *War Powers* (2013), which claims Wilson's use of executive power and the lax regulation on big business created the conditions of the Great War (210). The emergent relationship between business and government laid "the groundwork for the full expression of the military industrial complex" before it went by that name (207-8).

⁵⁸ In 1962, Dos Passos wrote *Mr. Wilson's War*, a less critical and more even-handed historical representation of President Wilson in wartime. On one hand, Dos Passos provides a sensitive account of the proceedings of the peace treaty, the President's ailing health, and his post-presidency speeches on Armistice Day rallying his listeners to support the League of Nations and "the lost peace" (479, 497). On the other hand, Dos Passos critiques Wilson's disregard for leftist labor movements and his reluctance to discuss the peace treaty proceedings with the U.S. government (435, 484, 488).

critical kinematic eye upon the effacement of individuality, deconstructing how the state emotionally moved its populace and physically mobilized acts of mourning under the temporal guise of peace.

Dos Passos goes beyond merely deconstructing the state's narrative of wartime synced to mechanized time, offering an alternative means of memorializing the war dead as an "organically conceived whole." By juxtaposing the plurality of simultaneous temporal experiences of the masses—author included—Dos Passos montages a memorialization for the body of an American to mark the authentic rhythm of mobilized time through the universal symbol of life: the heartbeat. Dos Passos raises his authorial voice in the supposedly silent peace of the final segment of *1919* by self-consciously connecting autobiographical facts and plot points with the sound of the body of an American's heartbeat.⁵⁹ The meta-aware narrative voice recalls earlier montage cells of the novel to reflect the rhythm of the heartbeat and circulation of public grief during the so-called two minutes of silence:

John Doe's
heart pumped blood:
alive thudding silence of blood in your ears
down in the clearing in the Oregon forest where the punkins were
punkincolor pouring into the blood through the eyes and the fall colored trees and
the bronze hoopers were hopping through the dry grass, where tiny striped snails
hung on the underside of the blades and the flies hummed, wasps droned,
bumblebees buzzed, and the woods smelt of wine and mushrooms and apples,
homey smell of fall pouring into the blood,
and I dropped the tin hat and the sweaty pack and lay flat with the dogday
sun licking my throat and adamsapple and the tight skin over the breastbone.

⁵⁹ See Carol Shloss who has argued that Dos Passos uses montage to collapse time and make creative juxtapositions in order to produce a meta-fiction spoken by a self-aware voice, "the speaking voice of the text within the text itself" (161).

The shell had his number on it.

The blood ran into the ground.

The service record dropped out of the filing cabinet when the quartermaster sergeant got blotto that time they had to pack up and leave the billets in a hurry.

The identification tag was in the bottom of the Marne.

The blood ran into the ground, the brains oozed out of the cracked skull and were licked up by trenchrats, the belly swelled and raised a generation of bluebottle flies,

And the incorruptible skeleton,

And the scraps of dried viscera and skin bundled in khaki (378-9)

By syncing the unknown soldier's temporal experiences with his own, the self-conscious author reanimates the unknown soldier within a temporality that is simultaneously fictional and autobiographical to challenge the historically assumed duration of wartime.

The Argonne forest, colloquially called the Oregon forest, was in the Marne, the very same area of the Verdun offensive that Dos Passos saw action in from August 16-21, 1917. "Oregon forest" also recurs back to the last poetic biography of the novel, "Paul Bunyan," which chronicles the lynching of Industrial Workers of the World member Wesley Everest in the Centralia Massacre on Armistice Day, November 11, 1919.

Regarding the massacre and the long-term imprisonment of Ray Becker, Dos Passos later wrote in *Common Sense* that in an age filled with advertisements and yellow journalism "we have almost forgotten how to remember;" and he warns, "A people without a memory is a people without a history, past of future, a group idiot" ("A Case of Conscience" 16). Through montage, Dos Passos prompts his eye-minded readership to remember the experience of mobilization and see its continuity.

Figuring the body of an American as a doppelgänger of other soldiers throughout the novel—including the author himself—Dos Passos deploys the cinematic technique of double exposure to invest an unhomely quality in the unknown soldier’s memorialization, reconstructing the memory of mobilized time through temporal slippages and repetitions between war and peace.⁶⁰ For Benjamin, cinema had the ability to represent “repetition as difference” through editing techniques involving doppelgängers and through comic modes such as satire (Hansen 194). Such “repetition as difference” opened up the utopian potential to privilege “a productive future” over the “traumatic experience as primal event” (Hansen 194). As one of two on-screen doppelgängers, the author re-presents what the unknown soldier hears and sees in the last seconds of his life. Dos Passos’s different repetitions of the unknown soldier open the possibility to reconstruct the memory of his doomed life and the experience of mobilized time. Although there was no shell with the author’s number on it, both soldiers have their service records and identification lost by commanding officers among other uncanny connections shared by those in mobilized time, as Dos Passos establishes in earlier Camera Eye sections. When the juxtaposed Camera Eye sections of *1919* are read in context of “The Body of an American,” Dos Passos’s inscribed montage comes into focus as a reclamation of the unknown soldier’s anonymity from the state and an incorporation of it into the circulation of public grief, a

⁶⁰ Media theorist Friedrich Kittler claims the doppelgänger is “nothing less than uncanny” (153). Moreover, Marcus clarifies the doppelgänger’s uncanny role in early film when he writes that the double embodied the paradox between primitive and modern by reanimating ancient ideas with an emergent technology (75). By deploying this cinematic technique in his prose, Dos Passos reflects upon the traditional beliefs of death in context of the modern technologies like cinema that enliven what was once static as well as the technologies of modern warfare that wrought an unprecedented level of destruction of life.

commemoration juxtaposing Harding's proclamation and Wilson's poppies—a commemoration that seeks to reclaim history for the sake of a viable future.

To convert the still image of the unknown soldier into a moving image of collective post-war grief, Dos Passos repeats and displaces the sense of wartime through doppelgängers, thereby constructing an enduring memory. He taps into the Eisensteinian assumption regarding incongruence as the catalyst for kinematic momentum.⁶¹ What remains of the body of an American, a bloodied bundle of a uniform, ironically echoes *The Camera Eyes* (38) and (42), in which Dos Passos recounts his respective experiences of going AWOL after armistice is declared and, as punishment, scrapping iron. In *Camera Eye* (38), Dos Passos drops his serial number, the number that he “never could remember... anyway,” along with his uniform “into the Loire” where it went “down the drain with a gurgle and hiss” (230). Without the uniform, Dos Passos becomes “an anonymous civilian.” The unknown soldier, reduced to “scraps of dried viscera and skin bundled in khaki,” contrasts and comes to displace the AWOL Dos Passos, momentarily secure in his civvies in *Camera Eye* (38). Just as the anonymity of the body of an American is seized by the state and treated like a blank slate upon which to inscribe the war's end, Dos Passos is similarly reclaimed as property of the United States government.

As punishment for going AWOL, Dos Passos is put back into service scrapping the detritus of war as he negotiates the limbo-like state between armistice and demobilization in *Camera Eye* (42). His personal memories amid discarded scrap implies

⁶¹ McCabe lucidly clarifies this cinematic phenomenon: “While film perpetuates a continuous motion or present, its smoothness relies upon repetition and displacement” (61).

an uncanny, self-consciously subjective connection to the remembrance of the body of an American in the following stream of consciousness: “KEEP THE BOYS FIT TO GO up in the office the grumpy sergeants doing the paperwork dont know where home is lost our outfits our service records our aluminum numberplates...KEEP OUR BOYS FIT for whatthell the war’s over / scrap” (364). Without a service record, John Dos Passos becomes a John Doe. Being marked as unmarked, he presents his experiences of being an unknown soldier who cannot escape the grasp of the state. The phrase, “keep our boys fit to go,” excises the last word, home, reinforcing an unheimlich lack of direction. This senselessness comes out of the temporal chaos after the Armistice when the war left its participants collectively suspended. In an earlier draft, Dos Passos followed “the war’s over” without punctuation with “the peace is over,” a phrase later replaced with “scrap” (131). The “scrap,” or remains, of the war imply that peace never began for Dos Passos, the unknown soldier, or anyone else synched to mobilized time. Dos Passos’s connection to John Doe as collective scrap of the war “double[s] doubling itself,” an effect of doppelgänger films that Kittler explains reflects the image of a double for viewers who see “camera angles [as] their everyday reality” (155). Dos Passos enacts a similar cinematic verisimilitude to broadly critique the state’s priority in and out of wartime to identify and synchronize disciplined American bodies, dead or alive.

The doubling of the unknown soldier with an earlier named soldier, Curley from *Camera Eye* (34), further evinces the temporal suspension of wartime in contrast to the state’s narrative of its progression to peace by marking what is left out and left over. Dos Passos complicates the state’s claim to the body of an American by echoing Curley’s

fever-dreaming plea for directions back to his outfit. Like *Camera Eye* (42), there is no sense of returning home at the end of *1919*. Dos Passos's *Camera Eye* sections reflect what David Trotter characterizes in *Cinema and Modernism* as film's capability "to represent (as well as to record) *existence as such*" (181). In effect, Dos Passos's doppelgänger technique of montaging the unknown soldier with others and himself parallels film's potential to create a sense of what Trotter explains as, on one hand, "presence"—"of what is palpably *here, now*, in front of us"—and, on the other hand, "absence"—"of what had to appear and then disappear so that its palpable trace remains vividly for us" (181). The duality of absence and presence embodied by the unknown soldier and its repetition through doppelgängers reflects the simultaneity of wartime in *1919* cinematically captured the sake of future memory. By the end of *Camera Eye* (34), Curley's voice "dwindles to a whine" as the speaker, always mindful of the time, "looks at [his] watch again" and thinks, "Must be near day ten o'clock they don't relieve me till eight / way off a voice goes up and up and swoops like the airraid siren ayayoooTO" (136). The watch and siren, technologies that either mark the passage of time or signal a significant moment in time, are revealed to be ineffective means of capturing temporality. Instead, the amplification of Curley's voice, echoed through Dos Passos' cinematic aesthetic in the final segment of *1919* by the body of an American, remains as what modernist scholar David Trotter might call a "palpable trace," debunking the assumed temporal transition from war to peace and marking the oppositional circulation of public grief that reflects the suspension of mobilized time.

As these doubled voices make clear, the state's synchronization of the American's body is not met with obsequious silence. Rather, the beating heart within the body of an American, a humanizing universality keeping naturalized time, resonates outside of the suspended state of wartime materialized by ticking watches, sirens, and martial orders before demobilization. By juxtaposing his technologically reliant form with the organic pulse, Dos Passos self-consciously maintains an asynchronous link between his narrative voice and the state's narrative of wartime. This authorial voice memorializes the absent presence of the body of an American through filmic doubling across a network of grief enduring beyond the end of the war.

“Standing Outside the Present”:

Dos Passos's Ambivalent Resolution of Mobilized Time

Dos Passos's embodiment of the unknown soldier as the war's end inspired the praise of Cendrars, who was also working on his own project centered on the unknown soldier. After reading *1919*, Cendrars wrote, “You are a great creator, which is to say, standing outside the present (outside by virtue of having drilled the present)” (qtd. Bochner 340). From Dos Passos's perspective, a great creator, or writer, could only strive to capture the present as cinema could. He admitted, “I cannot see how even the most immortal writer is more than the best possible type of moving picture machine contrived to focus the present moment on the screen of the future” (qtd. in Harris 150). In *1919*, Dos Passos relies upon the cinematic techniques of montage and double exposure to represent the simultaneity of the present from different perspectives and thereby collapses

the untenable demarcations of wartime from a past and future peacetime. What is left is a drilled present, suspended for readers to view from outside.

Passos utilizes the temporal freedom of silent films in the final section of *1919* to suspend the counterpoints of the auditory, beating heart and the visual, written word as an interpretable “speech of the people” in contrast to the authoritative newsreel narrator or Four Minute Men. In phrasing that closely matches Eisenstein’s ideas about cinematic rhythm, Gertrude Stein articulates how silent film could “change the rhythm” of a film in way that was no longer possible with talkies (Stein qtd. Sitney 160).⁶² She explicates this difference by focusing on the role of voice: “If you had a voice accompanying naturally after that you could never change the rhythm you were always held by the rhythm that the voice gave them.”⁶³ Dos Passos’s plurality of voices backed by the heartbeat of the body of an American signal an incongruence between lived experience—figured in the physical body of the war dead—and the unified narrative of wartime—resolved by the promise of peace.

While the conclusion of *1919* focuses on the silent act of Wilson bringing memorial poppies, the kinematic circulation of the public’s grief, keeping time with the beating heart within the body of an American, offers an alternative resolution. Literary modernist critic Seth Moglen has posited that Dos Passos’s “unspoken words...are there for us to hear...; the work remains for us to take up in the present” (130). Although Moglen brings clarity to the political potential of Dos Passos’s message, the author

⁶² Stein’s quote, a passage from *Everybody’s Autobiography*, was claimed in response to a conversation she had with Charlie Chaplin after he filmed *City Lights*, his first venture into sound films.

⁶³ Stein’s comments on the transition to talkies correspond to Armstrong’s claims that “the coming of sound...offered a commercialized total prosthesis which disappoints modernist hopes for the silent film” (10).

himself was not so sure about the tone of *1919*'s resolution. He wrote in a letter to Hemingway, who read a draft of the novel, "About the note of hope in the end, gosh who knows?" (*Fourteenth Chronicle* 404). His ambivalent conclusion, expressed through his camera eye, leaves readers in silence with a palpable presence of the war.

The state's ability to mobilize its citizens in time of war, cinematic form, and the shock of modern life remained constant themes throughout Dos Passos's long literary career, despite his critically perceived political turn to right-wing conservatism. The final Newsreel of the Trilogy virtually replays the earlier massacre from the Newsreel preceding "The Body of an American." Set in Colorado during the beginning the Great Depression, Newsreel (LXVIII) from *Big Money* parallels the events in *1919*'s Newsreel (XLII) set in Knoxville during the immediate post-war period: "POLICE TURN MACHINE GUNS / ON COLORADO MINE STRIKERS / KILL 5 WOUND 40" (416). Throughout his life, Dos Passos's views on such events were not driven by party politics; rather, the author's political leanings were driven by his personal attachments to people persecuted by big organizations. He later claimed, "It was during the years of the New Deal that I rejoined the United States. I had seceded *privately* the night Sacco and Vanzetti were executed" (qtd. in Carr 307, emphasis mine). This private secession from the United States mirrored his private session from communism when Robles was executed in Spain in 1937. According to Dos Passos biographer, Virginia Carr, threatened Dos Passos that the price for speaking out against the communists in Spain during the war would be his literary career. In a series of articles he did speak against the Communist Party, which he wrote in a letter to a friend "is fundamentally opposed to our

democracy as I see it” (qtd. in Carr 408). For Dos Passos, “all you have in politics is the means; ends are always illusory.” Although Hemingway’s threat became a reality—no work beyond *Big Money* received such critical praise—his keen eye trained upon the means of politics nonetheless enabled him to remain critical of the American state as it transitioned into WWII. He noted before it officially declared war on Nazi Germany that America had already begun a second period of mobilized time: “it would be a mistake to create an American Expeditionary Force because there is no place to send one” (qtd. in Carr 410).

The ambivalent end of *1919* offered the glimpse of hope through assuaging the shock of the Great War in his montage form, but Dos Passos’s later works were reviewed as hopeless and cynical. In his 1960 novel *Midcentury*, he retrofitted his montage form to satirize what he called in a letter to his daughter, Elizabeth, the “television mentality” of the post-WWII era. Dos Passos critiques a centralized liberal government and the failure of the trade unions he once backed. Critics were divided upon release of the book, but more than any other work after the *USA* trilogy, it reflects Dos Passos’s consistent engagement with the shock of modern war and technology. In *Midcentury*, Dos Passos reprises the poetic biographies as well as narrative plots found in two of the four narrative modes of the *USA* Trilogy but replaces Newsreels with Documentary sections, *Camera Eyes* with first person prefaces to the novel’s sections. In one of the narrative plots, “Blackie Bowman Speaking (scene: a bed in a veteran’s hospital),” readers visualize flashbacks of a terminally ill war veteran who served in both world wars and lived through the rise of labor unions. He admits in a voice-over like narration, “It’s mass

organization that turns man into a louse...I was too sick to work...it really was the old TB I developed after I got discharged from World War I...Now they've got all kinds of drugs for TB. They've got the disease checked again but they've got me checked too. Checkmate I guess" (61). Although critics like John Gross of *The New Statesman* called such passages "a crotchety attack on labor rackets as the root of all un-American evil" (qtd. in Carr 529), contemporary critics could reapproach *Midcentury*. Rather than dismiss the once proletariat novelist as a crotchety conservative, the Dos Passos of the post-*U.S.A.* era could be interpreted as searching to capture the speech of the people, his life long task of assuaging the shock of modern life that intensified during the Great War when temporal experience was first organized on a mass scale to the tick of mobilized time.

"There is no future in anything":

Ernest Hemingway and the Spectacle of Peace

Similar to Dos Passos, Hemingway relies upon a cinematic aesthetic to mark the temporal suspension engendered by the war's destruction of life. Whereas the cinematic is immediate in Dos Passos's prose, it is implied in Hemingway's narration and plotting. While Dos Passos reflects a suspended mobilized state by dissolving multiple scenes simultaneously, Hemingway splices together individuals' temporally separate perspectives of a single event, the war. To do so, he suspends two temporal stations: one, the immediate present of the plot, which is usually set in wartime, and, two, the retrospective and supposedly post-war future from which the narrative is written. In

effect, Hemingway's narratives of personal melancholy plot the experience of mobilized time that endured well in to the post-war period. Recently, Moglen has argued that Hemingway's Great War Fiction emotionally suspends the present by expressing a modern melancholy without the possibility of moving on from the war. He argues that works like *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* reflect "a naturalist tendency" that attempts to make sense of the War's destruction.⁶⁴ Rather than read Hemingway's melancholic depiction through the rationality of naturalism as Moglen does, I read Hemingway's wartime melancholy through a filmic lens to focus on the irrationality of a War that shattered the hope of peace and left "no future in anything."⁶⁵

As I will show, Hemingway supplements his so-called "naturalist tendency" as well as his characters' limited vision focused on the suspension of the present by incorporating the cinematic aesthetics of montage and double exposure in his prose. In this section, I focus on the implied cinematic qualities of Hemingway's literary form in three of his Great War novels in order to chart the development of his representation of mobilized time. I interpret the short stories chronicling Nick Adams and the inter chapters of *In Our Time* as adhering to a montage story arc. I then turn to the juxtapositional irony

⁶⁴ According to Moglen, the protagonist of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederic Henry, "persistently seeks to explain the incomprehensible and unjustifiable carnage of the First World War by recourse to universalizing claims about the toxic destructiveness of the "'world' ...and 'nature'" (246, n. 14).

⁶⁵ See Hemingway's correspondence to Charles Scribner from 1940:

Charlie there is no future in anything. I hope that you agree. That is why I like it at a war. Every day and every night there is a strong possibility that you will get killed and not have to write. I have to write to be happy whether I get paid for it or not. But it is a hell of a disease to be born with. I like to do it. Which is even worse. That makes it from a disease into a vice. Then I want to do it better than anybody has ever done it which makes it into an obsession. An obsession is terrible. Hope you haven't gotten any. That's the only one I've got left. (*Selected Letters* 503-4).

His ironic tone and foreclosure of the future was not exclusive to his experience in WWII. Rather, Hemingway's irony and loss of faith in the future was learned during and immediately after the First World War as evinced by his writing from the 1920s.

of Jake Barnes's narration in *The Sun Also Rises*. Finally I consider *A Farewell to Arms*, like Dos Passos's *1919*, as the culmination of the author's cinematic vision of the Great War. In it, he contains wartime by plotting and narrating through doppelgängers both within the immediate temporality of mobilized time and outside of it in a retrospective station. The development of Hemingway's Great War fiction exposes the first globally modern war as a source of the temporal fragmentation of past, present and future, which engendered his lost generation's crisis of observational methods.

Functioning as a prosthetic, cinema enables Hemingway to sequence the temporal experience of war when his veteran protagonists fail to do so. Although his wartime protagonists—Nick Adams from *In Our Time*, Jake Barnes from *The Sun Also Rises*, and Frederic Henry from *A Farewell to Arms*—prove to be powerless observers who lack the ability to place mobilized time in retrospection, cinema enables Hemingway to develop across these works the means to capture a repressed past, suspend a melancholic present, and refuse the spectacle of peace stationed in an unattainable future. As Hemingway explained in the introduction of *Men at War*, there is a key difference in terms of temporal station between men at war and men who write about men at war: “Learning to suspend your imagination and live completely in the very second of the present minute with no before and no after is the greatest gift a soldier can acquire. It, naturally, is the opposite of all those gifts a writer should have” (xxvii). Writers, he suggests, must go beyond the present in order to sequence a period of time within a narrative plot. Soldiers—like Nick, Jake, and Frederic—are temporally suspended in a melancholic present, severing them from past, repressed traumas and future, repudiated hopes.

I rely upon and extend historian and philosopher Jonathan Crary's definition of "suspension" throughout my discussion of Hemingway's kinematic representations of wartime. Crary has theorized the notion of temporal suspension in his work *Suspensions of Perception*, but in relation to the attention of a nineteenth-century subject rather than the effects of twentieth-century cinematic technologies. In it, he defines suspension as two contradictory states. On one hand, it can be understood as "a looking or listening so rapt that it is an exemption from ordinary conditions, that it becomes a suspended temporality, a hovering out of time" implying "the possibility of fixation, of holding something in wonder or contemplation" (10). On the other hand, it can also be understood as "a cancellation or an interruption...a disturbance, even a negation of perception itself." These two technological effects of suspension—first, a fixation that takes the viewers out of time by way of absorbed wonder and, second, a dislocation that interrupts linear progression through disturbing shock—inform Hemingway's use of cinema to sequence mobilized time in his post-war fiction.

With the war over, Spain's bullrings provided him the literal arena to work out his compulsion to repeat the war trauma of violent death in a highly structured way. In this repetitive process of coming to terms with the melancholic present of peace, Hemingway attained a retrospective position from which to write about his wartime experiences, a temporal station that he could not foresee while on the front. *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) spells out how Hemingway found his writerly voice. He began "with the simplest things, and one of the most simplest things of all and the most fundamental is violent death" (2). Such an endeavor "could not be done with any shutting of the eyes;" however,

with his eyes open he had to do more than just “notic[e] things he needed for instant recording” as he did in his correspondence work for the *Kansas City Star* (3). Rather than write “what you were supposed to feel, and had been taught to feel,” Hemingway wanted to “put down what really happened in action,” and “what the actual things were which produced the emotion that you experienced” (2). Considering his highly visual tendency, these writerly principles he discovered watching bullfights matched those that informed the notion of kinema. “Kinematic,” used interchangeably with “cinematic” in the early 1900s, was taken from the scientific term, “kinematics” coined in the mid-1800s to name the study of motion. The power of cinema to capture and represent a moment in time for an audience was associated with the effect of moving in both senses of the word, moving actors and scenes in a moment in time on screen and moving audiences’ emotions. The kinematic action and emotion Hemingway writes of informed his process of “trying to learn to write” and consequently sequencing mobilized time (2).

To make sense of the motion and emotion of death in a bullring—and by extension death in the war—Hemingway had to go beyond recording the immediate present of the repetitive ritual of the bullring and develop an interpretive, retrospective frame. With a kinematic focus watching bullfights and writing about death, he became a self-proclaimed “*aficionado*,” a “lover of the bullfight” who “ha[d the] sense of the tragedy and ritual of the fight so that the minor aspects [were] not important except as they relate to the whole” (9). Just as his writerly principles aligned with the notion of kinema, Hemingway’s definition of an *aficionado* closely matches Sergei Eisenstein’s theorization of montage film. Eisenstein characterized it as composed of individual shots,

or “montage cells,” that moved in a juxtapositional rhythm to affect audiences and convey the totality of the film as an “organically conceived whole.” Like montage, the bullfight’s focus on finding wholeness in the fragmented movements viewed and emotions experienced by the audience came to stand as the temporal and spatial means of containing the repetitive spectacle of death and searching for meaning in a post-war world. Although the *aficionado* can read the motion and emotion of a proper bullfight within the confines of the stadium and duration of the fight, the veterans depicted in Hemingway’s war fiction lack a kinematic acuity to put down what really happened in action or understand the emotions produced from the violent shock of their war experiences.

There is an important moment in an inter chapter in Hemingway’s first Great War novel, *In Our Time*, that captures both the ideals of the *aficionado* and the prosthetic potential of cinema to extend human vision beyond passive observation in order to confront the meaning—or lack of meaning—that violent death presents in and out of war. The narrative voice of Chapter XIV of *In Our Time* takes us into the perspective of Maera, a gored and dying bullfighter: “Maera felt everything getting larger and larger and then smaller and smaller. Then it got larger and larger and larger and then smaller and smaller. And then everything commenced to run faster and faster as when they speed up a cinematograph film. Then he was dead” (131). To see beyond the immediate present—Maera’s death and the individual war dead, the minor parts of the larger tragedy—Hemingway adopts a kinematic vision akin to a cinematograph, which, directly translated from Greek, means “writing in movement.” Hemingway’s reference to the early form of

motion picture capture, development, and projection consciously links the suspended feeling of being a part and apart of a crowd watching a violent bullfight with the act of viewing a cinematic spectacle. Sigmund Freud noted his personal experience with the early form of cinema left him “spellbound” until he felt “too lonely in the crowd” (qtd. in Crary 369). Crary expands upon this paradox of suspended perception when he claims, “This state of fascinated absorption is not comprehensible apart from the sense of isolation that immediately follows” (369). In *In Our Time* and in his other Great War works that I discuss, cinematic montage enables Hemingway to kinematically suspend the emotion and motion of his post-war readership and impart the experience of mobilized time as a marker of both the fixation on and dislocation of death that endured into the spectacle of peace as melancholy.

**“It became something that was going on with a definite end,
and less of a spectacle with unexplained horrors”:**

***In Our Time's* Montage Story Arc and *The Sun Also Rises's* Juxtapositional Irony**

Montage enables Hemingway to confront the shock of wartime violence, particularly as it literally fragmented bodies and, subsequently, the veteran’s sense of time, particularly his ability to remember. In *In Our Time* the disjunction between Hemingway—the author—and Nick—the protagonist—reflects a temporal incongruence between a retrospective station held by the narrator and past experiences set in mobilized time. Hemingway wrote to Edmund Wilson that in the novel he wanted “to give the picture of the whole between examining it in detail...with 15x binoculars” (*Selected*

Letters 128). The picture of the whole becomes a moving picture when Nick's zoomed-in, seemingly static moments are cut with the inter chapters to create a montage emphasizing clarity of motion and emotion. In this way, Hemingway achieves a kinematic incongruence between what really happened in action and what Nick felt. Reading the story arc of *In Our Time* through montage theory reveals that narrative disjunction and temporal incongruence were the very means through which Hemingway disavows progress, consolation, promises, futurity, and peace after war—presumptions behind the propagation of mobilized time and the spectacle of peace that he critiques across the body of his war fiction.

Like an *aficionado* or montage film-goer, the reader of *In Our Time* must relate the minor aspects to understand the collection as a whole. The narrative disjunction and temporal incongruence are generated by the relationship between the short stories plotting Nick's experiences and the inter chapters focusing on specific moments during the war and bullfights in Paris. *In Our Time's* inter chapters serve a prosthetic function by mediating Nick's limited vision like parallel scenes in a montage. From its inception, *In Our Time's* short story arc closely adhered to the Eisensteinian formula of filmic montage. Hemingway wrote to his first publisher of *In Our Time*, Horace Liveright, that altering a single word would "spoil the whole story rhythm" and that repetitions and structure were intentional (Reynolds 10). The rhythm, repetitions, and structure that generate an incongruence and movement between the short story chapters and the inter chapters parallel the same dialectic that informed montage cinema as Eisenstein theorizes it. Through a montage short story arc, *In Our Time* exemplifies Harris's claim that

modern literature's fragmentation and experimentation archives "a certain asynchrony between literature and the mediascape in which it is situated" (6). Applying the logic of filmic montage to the short story arc of *In Our Time* enables readers to recognize its rhythm and comprehend the work as a whole.⁶⁶

The narrative disjunction between Nick's limited vision and Hemingway's clarifying narration by way of a montage story arc enacts a temporal incongruence, typifying the repression of past wartime experiences from a future retrospective station. Three scenes across the arc of *In Our Time* exemplify the kinematic acuity of Hemingway's narration and explicate Nick's inability to account for the action of what really happened in his immediate present after the trauma of his war wounds, detailed in an inter chapter. In "The Battler" Nick encounters Ad Francis, an ex-boxer on the bum with his African-American assistant, Bugs. The third-person narrator fills in the gaps of Nick's vision: "In the firelight Nick saw that [Ad's] face was misshapen. His nose was sunken, his eyes were slits, he had queer-shaped lips. Nick did not perceive all this at once, he only saw the man's face was queerly formed and mutilated" (55). In "Cross-Country Snow," Nick and his friend from his boyhood, George, drink beer at an inn after skiing. There, their server comes out to take their order and when she returns with the beer, "Nick noticed that her apron covered her swelling her pregnancy. I wonder why I didn't see that when she first came in, he thought" (109). Lastly, in "Big Two-Hearted

⁶⁶ Like *In Our Times*'s protagonist, Nick, one early reviewer of the novel lacked a kinematic vision to understand *In Our Time*. This anonymous reviewer wrote in the *Portland Oregonian* in 1926: "There must be something to this book...but for the life of [me I] cannot tell what Hemingway is writing about and whether it contributes in anyway to our knowledge of life, or has any aesthetic appeal" (qtd. in Reynolds 25). The review reflects how Hemingway's developing montage aesthetic, which emerged alongside cinematic montage, needed time, and our historical retrospect, to register. Without the ability to understand the collection's aesthetic form or minor aspects, there is no access to its larger thematics.

River: Part I,” a solitary Nick camps and fishes in his native Michigan. In contrast to the burned down town of Seney, Nick sees the fast-flowing river filled with fish: “At the bottom of the pool there were the big trout. Nick did not see them at first. Then he saw them at the bottom of the pool, big trout looking to hold themselves on the gravel bottom in a varying mist of gravel and sand, raised in spurts by the current” (133). These moments of significant action, which are highly visualized, convey emotions that cannot be fully articulated. By focusing on the cursory details like Ad’s facial mutilations, the server’s apron, and the surface of the river, Nick overlooks key details that lead to an angry outburst from a mentally unstable Ad, a curt response from his and George’s server, and his own overwhelming excitement and subsequent nausea from catching a trout on the river. The camera eye of the narration does have a kinematic sense that highlights Nick’s inability to perceive motion or emotion. By way of reversing Nick’s repression of the past, the kinematic narration captures the immediate sense of what really happened in the present action, placing Nick in time in spite of his refusal of a future beyond the war.

Hemingway’s montage short story arc physically and psychically situates Nick within a post-war stasis as peacetime progresses. After Nick leaves Ad behind with Bugs, he stands on an embankment and “could see the firelight in the clearing” (62). While that concluding line of the chapter positions Nick in a retrospective stasis, the narrator nonetheless captures the movement of the fire that Nick initially overlooked, which would have shed light on his predicament. “The Battler” evinces Hemingway’s claim in an interview with George Plimpton that in plots, “everything changes as it moves. That is

what makes the movement which makes the story. Sometimes the movement is so slow it does not seem to be moving. But there is always change and always movement.”

Hemingway’s notion of narrative movement characterizes his life outside of his fiction, and could be interpreted as a generalization about living as an expatriate among his lost generation in the supposedly demobilized time. The seemingly static but constant movement or change is also the theme of the sparse conversation between Nick and George, two representatives of Hemingway’s lost generation as aimless and dissatisfied as their author. Just as the feeling of skiing is “too swell to talk about,” the news that Nick’s wife, Helen, is expecting their first son reduces their conversation to factual one-word responses. Eventually George realizes that Nick’s expectation of his firstborn spells the end of their skiing vacations. Nick even understands that they could never plan another trip because “there isn’t any good in promising,” which implies the frozen suspension of their friendship, recorded and contained within the ski inn (112). And on his camping trip, Nick’s biggest change happens when he falls asleep. Although his symptoms of insomnia surface when his “mind was starting to work,” “he knew he could choke it because he was tired enough” (142). With eyes closed sleeping, Nick prevents any physical or emotional movement on his part. While Nick’s look back at Ad’s campfire, departure from George, and choking off his thoughts with sleep seem to suspend *In Our Time*’s protagonist in physical and psychic terms, these moments reflect Hemingway’s subject, not form; read as a montage, *In Our Time* sequences the paradox of the war’s temporal continuity in the lives of suspended, demobilized veterans.

Nick's physical stasis rooted in the war is thematically sequenced across the short story chapters that dynamically depict a seemingly suspended Nick. "The Battler," "Cross-Country Snow," and "Big Two-Hearted River" resonate with inter chapters, which repeat certain thematics in a juxtapositional rhythm that moves the plot to give the picture of the whole. In effect, Hemingway moves readers through a seemingly static post-war world characterized by Nick's personal melancholy. The brevity and speed of the inter chapters juxtapose the zoomed-in moments of the short stories, thereby producing a montage of the suspended temporality of mobilized time beyond the Armistice.⁶⁷

Hemingway uses montage to animate frozen moments of paralyzed and impaired masculinity in order to depict the war's spatial unboundedness and temporal suspension. In Chapter VI immediately following "The Battler," Nick, wounded in the spine, sits with his "legs stuck out awkwardly" "against the wall of the church where they had dragged him to be clear of machine-gun fire in the street" (63). Next to him "Rinaldi, big backed, his equipment sprawling, lay face downward against the wall." Nick tells him, "Senta Rinaldi. Senta. You and me we've made a separate peace...Not patriots," but Rinaldi does not respond for he "was a disappointing audience." Nick's appeal to Rinaldi to "listen," or more broadly, "sense," takes on an ironically tragic charge when juxtaposed with Nick's blindness to his friend's death, further evidence by his faulty perception

⁶⁷ Robert Slabey characterizes "the basic thematic movement" by arguing that the inter chapters set during the war reflect "the loss of values" while those set in post-war Spain are "the search for a code" (79). The loss of values incurred by the war, particularly the loss of an enduring model of masculinity as embodied in "The Battler" and the loss of the ability to promise in "Cross-Country Snow" respectively correspond to Chapter VI, which details Nick's wound, and VII, which depicts an anonymous soldier (who very well could be Nick) losing faith in a trench.

beyond the previously discussed short stories. His inability to move due to the spine wound is juxtaposed with the exposed back of a facedown Rinaldi. This image of paralysis on the front, a closed circuit of impaired masculinity speaking to a disappointing audience that includes itself, most clearly resonates with Nick's encounter with the failed battler, Ad. Through juxtapositions between short stories and inter chapters, the loss of masculinity goes beyond wartime—beyond the walls of the church where Rinaldi died to the railroad tracks running across America.

In Our Time's kinematic conceit, the incongruence arising from Nick's limited vision of the immediate presence of the war within the story arc's retrospection station in peace, generates inter-textual connections between the novel's characters and extra-textual connections with the author. These connections reflect the war's irreducible effects upon an author's ability to sequence time. While the loss of a masculine ideal is depicted by way of physical paralysis in Chapter VI, the loss of faith in the future is conveyed through a metaphysical spiritual crisis in Chapter VII, in which a soldier in a trench at Fossalta prays to "Dear Jesus," "If you'll only keep me from getting killed I'll do anything you say. I believe in you and I'll tell every one in the world that you are the only one that matters" (67). "The next night back at Mestre he did not tell the girl he went upstairs with at the Villa Rossa about Jesus. And he never told anybody." Slabey argues that Chapters VI and VII relate to one another since the "autobiographical location, near Fossalta, makes the identification of its nameless protagonist as Nick plausible since it was near Fossalta that Hemingway was wounded on July 8, 1918" (77-8). While Slabey has teased out the parallelisms between Nick's war experience and Hemingway's own,

Robert Gibb reads Nick as Hemingway's narrating doppelgänger. He notes that Hemingway confessed in the story "On Writing" that the short story from *In Our Time* "My Old Man" was written by Nick, who "in the stories was never himself. He made him up" (qtd. in Gibb 255). Gibb questions, "But whose confession is it? Hemingway the writer who wrote in the character of Nick Adams, or Nick Adams the writer who, by existing, shaped the idea of a man and his cosmos? Neither, it seems safe to say, could have existed without the other" (255).

While Gibbs focuses his reading of doppelgängers in *In Our Time* to "Two-Hearted River," I read the imbricated doubling between Nick and the author as a pervasive presence in the montage rhythm throughout *In Our Time*. Rather than privilege the primacy of the author or his protagonist, these connections between Nick, the nameless protagonist, and Hemingway attest to the power of montage to confront the temporal disruption that the war produced by generating a multiplicity of incongruent meanings all orbiting around the loss of faith in the future. Without a future, Nick is unable to make plans with George after their skiing trip and disillusioned with the institution of marriage and obligations as a father. Nick, other characters in the book, and even the author himself, cannot follow through on promises. Instead the temporal fragmentation of the collection affirms how the war, well beyond the signing of the Armistice, drastically altered relationships to time.

Hemingway's novels set in post-war peace capture the melancholic isolation of the individual caught up in a mobilized war that precludes a spatial separation or a temporal end by forming a separate peace. The resolution to *The Sun Also Rises*

maintains this melancholic suspension, enacting the kind of contained, repetitive temporality that Hemingway inhabited while watching bullfights in post-war Spain. Chapter XII of *In Our Time* captures such a moment as the narrative voice, an *aficionado*, explains to an inexperienced viewer/reader: “If it happened right down close in front of you, you could see Villalta snarl at the bull and curse him” (105). He then narrates the contained sequence of actions that rapidly occur in a moment of near simultaneity, “When he started to kill it was all in the same rush...He drew out the sword...sighted with the same movement and called out to the bull...and the bull charged and Villalta became one with the bull and then it was over.” This scene captures what Hemingway would call in *Death in the Afternoon*, “estocadas á un tiempo,” or “those in which the bull charges at the same time as the man goes in to kill. To be well placed they need much coolness in the matador” (456). The simultaneous movement, or single rush, of the fighter and bull within a moment contained by an end point mirrors the ideal nature of warfare that the first globalized modern war shattered. In stark contrast to the matador’s coolness and the bullfight’s contained expression of mortality, WWI is represented as an unending suspension of life.

Suspended in a perpetual and repetitive “estocadas á un tiempo,” Jake of *The Sun Also Rises* lacks the retrospection to see his life as a whole, but Hemingway’s juxtaposition of his protagonist’s first-person narration and the author’s plotting of the novel sequences peacetime as an ironic spectacle. Jake, an *aficionado*, tells the novice Lady Brett Ashley how to observe the bullfight: “I told her about watching the bull, not the horse, when the bulls charged the picadors, and got her to watching the picador place

the point of his pic so that she saw what it was all about, so that it became something that was going on with a definite end, and less of a spectacle with unexplained horrors” (171). Although Jake succeeds in seeing the minor parts as they relate to the whole when watching bullfights, he—like Nick—turns a blind eye to the emotions produced in reaction to the movement of his life. Through Jake’s narrative voice, Hemingway uses film aesthetics as a visual prosthetic to focus on the horrors of the post-war world his protagonist refuses to see. Jake, as his close friend Bill observes, does not “understand irony” and has “no pity;” Jake only claims, “to be a writer,” but he is “only a newspaper man. An expatriated newspaper man” (119). However, Jake proves that he understands irony when he establishes the ironic mood of the aforementioned conversation by narrating, “The girl came in with the coffee and buttered toast. Or, rather, it was bread toasted and buttered.” Nonetheless, Jake repeatedly demonstrates his overall lack of pity—pity for Robert Cohn, for Brett, for himself—and he thereby strips his narrating voice down to instant recording. If the *aficionado*’s vision provides a perspective to make sense of the tragedy of the bullfight, then such a perspective loses its focus when its gaze is turned outside of the arena or inward. Tempering his *aficion* with a cinematic aesthetic, Hemingway pitifully and ironically juxtaposes Jake’s blindness to seeing his own post-war life as an indefinite spectacle of horrors in which he is suspended beyond the end of the fiesta and the novel.

The conclusion to *The Sun Also Rises* defers resolution through the montage aesthetic of incongruence to enact a sense of kinematic irony. The novel ends with an image in movement that similarly captures the repetitive presence of violence within a

presumably de-mobilized state at peace. The novel's final scene is geographically positioned to emphasize Jake's passive observation of his assimilation to social and historical forces. Jake goes to Brett at Hotel Montana, where "all trains finish" (244). They exit the hotel located "at the end of the line," get into a taxi and are driven down Gran Via. In the back, the couple "sat close against each other" and in between Brett's claim, "We could have had such a damned good time together," and Jake's response, "Yes... Isn't it pretty to think so?" is the final image of the novel: "Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car suddenly pressing Brett against me" (251). This final image of *The Sun Also Rises* reflects how Hemingway maintains kinematic movement as opposed to narrative resolution. The juxtaposed action of the mounted policeman directing traffic and Brett pressing against Jake from the momentum of the turning taxi reduces Jake to a passive observer. His response to Brett confirms his recognition of impotence in the face of authority, kinematically captured as a raised baton. This symbol of authority reflects the endurance of mobilized time that first sent Jake into war and continues to direct the chaotic traffic of his life after. Jake's private grief, physically embodied by his war wound and expressed by this narrative irony, precludes the possibility of personal consolation or the novel's resolution. Instead, Hemingway's kinematic eye suspends Jake, like he suspends Nick in "Big Two-Hearted River," in active irresolution that is the spectacle, peace.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ In the same manner that Hemingway's cinematic vision supplements Jake's perception, the logic of montage brings clarity to the irresolute end of Nick's short story arc in "Big Two-Hearted River: Part II." In it, a physically and mentally damaged but recovering Nick defers the promise of the future realizing that "there were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp" (156). As David Leigh observes of the final short story chapters, Nick remains psychologically damaged, but he has begun efforts to adapt to the world around him (134). Nonetheless, without a clear sense of closure, readers of *In Our Time* are left with

“But that has nothing to do with the story”:

Doppelgängers and Juxtaposition in the Narration of *A Farewell to Arms*

In *A Farewell to Arms*, the protagonist and narrator, Frederic Henry, maintains a tenuous connection between his self within the narrative present and his narrating self from his retrospective vantage point. In other words, Frederic paradoxically narrates his past self during the war while attempting to disavow the future from which he writes. Read in the context of his earlier Great War fiction, the narrative voice of *A Farewell to Arms* registers a development of Hemingway’s kinematic eye focused exclusively on the temporality of the war. Hemingway’s multi-perspectival rendering of the Great War implicitly expresses the novel’s message that there is no possibility for an individual to forge “a separate peace,” echoed from Nick’s failed promise to Rinaldi in *In Our Time*. The seemingly non-extant spatial boundary between total war and potential peace in *A Farewell to Arms* challenges the state-propagated notion of wartime’s exceptionality. Although critics have considered the spatial implications of Frederic’s act of walking away, there has not been a consideration of how Frederic temporally abandons his narrative—how he walks away from wartime so to speak.⁶⁹ The strength of Frederic’s gesture comes out of Hemingway’s kinematic eye that reveals the incommensurability of wartime and peacetime. The kinematically framed scenes of death in *A Farewell to Arms*

loose ends, or juxtapositions. Slabey argues that “Big Two-Hearted River” evinces that in “peacetime America and wartime Europe, pain and brutality are omnipresent” (84). The external, physical violence of the battlefield and bullring as well as the internal, psychic violence of Nick’s war experiences and living with them on his camping trip are brought together through montage to produce the suspended temporality of *In Our Time*. Ultimately, Nick’s private melancholy ironically juxtaposes *In Our Time*’s epigraph, a prayer for a culture disrupted by war and obsessed with their place in time: “Give peace in our time, O Lord.”

⁶⁹ Reynolds assumes that Frederick’s narrated ending was already established. Such narrative planning on Hemingway’s part enables “Frederick’s escape into Switzerland, neutral and isolated during the war, [to become] an image for the entire national experience of the post-war period” (274).

counter the seemingly endlessness of mobilized time. For this reason, I focus in particular on moments in which Frederic sequences the temporal juxtaposition between the narrating and narrative present. I read these scenes collectively, as an organically conceived whole that produces a commemorative montage of the war dead

From the opening chapter, Frederic's narrative voice strains to transcend the limits of narrative's chronological logic as he equivocates between recollected details that bear no relation of causality like a fixed camera panning across the landscape. He writes the rains came and with it cholera, "but it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army" (emphasis mine 4). The use of "and" disrupts cause and effect by correlating the seven thousand dead soldiers' ends to the temporal end of the first chapter, but without assuming that death is the effect of the rains. Critic Zoe Trodd reads Frederic's narrative style as a one-shot aesthetic in the vein of Gertrude Stein's literary form of a "continuous present" (13). Trodd claims that in this opening chapter, Hemingway's sentence structure conveys "a sense of eyewitness" by accumulating separate images (14). While Trodd reads the first chapter as the eyewitness photographic aesthetic of Hemingway's "de-authored" voice, Frederic's inability to account for what lies before and after the "and"—what lies between cause and effect—reflects a writerly aesthetic that is more de-narrated than "de-authored."⁷⁰

⁷⁰ For recent critical discussions of the distinction between the voices of Hemingway and Frederic, see Phelan's "Distance, Voice, and Temporal Perspective in Frederic Henry's Narration," where he claims that Frederic is an unselfconscious "recorder" and that Hemingway is "double-voicing" Frederic's narration, and shaping it into a novel (57), and see Stoltzfus's "A Sliding Discourse" where he conversely claims that there is a distinction between Hemingway's plotting and Frederic's narration as he sorts through his "devastating...experience" in "two time schemes: one corresponding to the events as they occurred, the other corresponding to hindsight" (110). Both essays can be found in *New Essays on A Farewell to Arms*. Ed. Scott Donaldson. New York: Cambridge UP, 1990.

Like looking through the eye of a camera—or reading a Camera Eye section from Dos Passos’s *U.S.A.* Trilogy—the reader of these opening lines of the novel is confronted with both the shock of death in mobilized time as well as what another Hemingway scholar Eugene Kanjo calls the “physics of sight, the persistence of vision phenomenon,” which makes viewing separate frames on a film strip seem as if they comprise a continuous and whole image (6). Doane claims film’s ability to index the afterimage reflects the cultural current of the early 20th century, specifically the fascination with cinema’s ability to index or record the contingency of one moment to the next. For Doane, the integration of narrative in film negates cinema’s power to present the present in its visual representation. Instead, an imposed narrative framed the present in terms of linearity, plot, and ultimately mortality. Doane claims that this narrative frame prevented the kind of access to the present procured by non-narrative cinema because narrativized cinema was associated with “the bourgeois notion [that] the individual can be yoked to a meaning guaranteed by his or her mortality” (107) and, therefore, such narrativization gave death meaning (164). Hemingway’s de-narrated voice reveals narrative time—a linear temporality demarcated by beginnings and endings and bound to the logic of mortality—as an obsolete means of making meaning out of death in wartime. By reverting to the cinematic in his prose, Hemingway avoids the associations with meaningful mortality made by narrative cinema, the most commercial mode of film production of his time. While Hemingway has often been quoted to say “...all stories, if continued far enough, end in death, and he is no true-story teller who would keep that from you,” the de-narrated voice of *A Farewell to Arms* tells a war story by beginning

and ending with repeated images of death, the only assured constant during war (*Death in the Afternoon* 100).

Hemingway's production of highly visual, polarized images within Frederic's narrative parallels the aesthetics of cinematic montage. Eisenstein highlights the importance of timing to convey the sense of movement on film screens in his claim, "We know that the phenomenon of movement in film resides in the fact that two motionless images of a moving body, following one another, blend into the appearance of motion by showing them sequentially at a required speed" (49). Although the novel's movement is naturalized by the passing seasons, it more subtly operates according to the kind of montage rhythm of which Eisenstein writes. Frederic's narrated montage cells of the war doomed and dead give a sense of organic totality to the novel without impinging meaning. Instead, the novel expresses the suspended temporality of wartime from which Frederic writes. Through Hemingway's cinematic aesthetic, Frederic narrates death outside of a linear timeline between war and peace, between the narrative present and his narrating present. By absorbing the cinematic into his narrative, Hemingway reverses Doane's assertion that narrativization hinders cinema. By way of a kinematic prose, *A Farewell to Arms* presents death, or "what ought to be inaccessible to representation," in all of its senselessness (164).

Hemingway extends his cinematic aesthetic beyond the sentence level with the establishing shot of soldiers marching. Preceding his understatement about the cholera deaths, Frederic visualizes soldiers marching with ammunition "bulged forward under the capes... as though they were six months gone with child" (4). The soldiers, stripped of

individuality, anonymously march as though the very gear they are humping impregnated them. The soldiers “six months gone with child” personify the interstices of birth and death, and they reflect the temporal suspension of wartime in which the logic of mortality, and consequently narrative time, break down as the number of the war dead grow and grow. Unlike the *aficionado*’s gaze that can see the parts for the whole within the bullring, the war dead on the front remain in irresolute juxtaposition to the total mobilized effort of the war. Hemingway repeats and juxtaposes this introductory image of soldier as symbol of life in suspension in later scenes. Throughout the novel, death, or at least a close proximity to death, is represented in a filmic aesthetic that challenges the binary between past and present as well as war and peace to thereby disavow any coherent, linear narrative of mobilized time.

Frederic recurrently fails in moments of death to connect the narrative present with his narrating retrospect, thereby revealing the sequence and speed behind his plot’s appearance of motion. When Frederic is blown up while eating cheese on the Italian front, he narrates his physical trauma as a temporal suspension, “I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out and all the time bodily in the wind. I went out swiftly, all of myself, and I knew that I was dead and that it had all been a mistake to think you just died” (54). In his near death experience, Frederic does not revise or edit out his misrecognition. By emphasizing that he “knew [he] was dead and that it had been a mistake,” Frederic disrupts the temporal binary between a remembered past, or erroneously thinking he was dead, and present, or correctly understanding that his thought was a mistake, by pairing these two contradictory thoughts. Jake in *The Sun Also*

Rises exhibits a similar revisionist narration in his recounting of the mundane in post-war Spain. He spends ample time explaining the process of buying bullfight tickets from an archivist, who he tells readers “has nothing to do with the story” (102). This juxtaposition between Frederic’s traumatic event and his narrating retrospect suggests wartime as the source of the temporal slippages between narrating and the narrative in Hemingway’s body of war literature. In this light, the earlier image of the soldier looking six months gone with child establishes an ironic link between the soldier’s current vitality and inevitable doom, a link forged throughout the novel that suspends and juxtaposes life and death during war.

The establishing shot of soldiers marching in the first chapter also resonates with the concluding scene of Catherine in labor in the final chapter of the novel to evince the inevitable and endless reach of mobilized time. These two images at the beginning and end of the novel link with one another like parallel edited shots in montage film, both suspended in a continuous present. Without retrospective clarity and through stream of consciousness, Frederic confuses his narrating position with the narrative present in the following:

Thank God for gas, anyway...So now they got her in the end...It would have been the same if we had been married fifty times. And what if she should die?...What reason is there for her to die? There’s just a child that has to be born, the by-product of good nights in Milan. It makes trouble and is born and then you look after it and get fond of it maybe. But what if she should die? She won’t. She’s all right. But what if she should die? She can’t die. What if she should die? Hey, what about that? What if she should die? (320-1)

Like the “ands” of the first chapter, Frederic cannot reconcile cause with effect, or war with death. Frederic’s uncertainty gives way to a loss of temporal grounding. The

repetition of the modal verb, should, captures the contingency of Catherine's death as both a conditional possibility and narrative necessity in need of resolution. His responses to the rhetorical question, what if she should die, move from "she won't," "she can't," to finally another rhetorical question, "Hey, what about that?" Frederic's inability to assimilate the meaning of Catherine's death to his narrative reflects his refusal to maintain a stable temporal perspective on her death. His praise for gas ironically pairs the image of Catherine in labor feeling the effects of anesthesia with troops in trenches floundering in clouds of mustard gas. Through a montage rhythm, *A Farewell to Arms*, like Hemingway's other Great War fiction, more closely adheres to a cinematic notion of time rather than a narrative one. By doubling and displacing Catherine's death with the soldiers on the front, Hemingway imposes the cinematic figure of the doppelgänger to embody Frederic's melancholy and temporal instability within a suspended wartime.

Perhaps the most powerful example of Frederic's temporal instability surfaces earlier in the narrative when he and Catherine argue over the word, "always." In answer to Catherine who asks him if he feels trapped, Frederic tells Catherine, "You always feel trapped biologically" (139). Catherine "went away a long way without stirring or removing her hand" and responds, "'Always' isn't a pretty word" (139). When Frederic offers to "cut off [his] tongue," "she came back from wherever she had been" and the couple "were both together again and the self-consciousness was gone" (139). She tells him, "We really are the same one and mustn't misunderstand on purpose" (139). Her response indicates a desire to resolve the dispute of always feeling trapped by collapsing her self with Frederic's self. Yet the contradiction between the physical presence of her

hand and her temporary absence from the narrative cryptically described as “wherever she had been” evokes Frederic’s uncertainty. And this uncertainty suggests a distance between the retrospectively constructed Catherine in the narrative present and Frederic narrating.

Over the course of the novel this temporal distance collapses and Frederic and Catherine become doppelgängers of each other. Catherine fantasizes about a future, post-pregnancy self, “a fine new and different girl” with hair cut short so “[they]’d both be alike” (299, 304-5). She assumes Frederic “will fall in love with [this future Catherine] ... all over again” (305). But Frederic thinks that he already loves Catherine enough and asks if her demand to love her all over again is a way to ruin him, to which she responds yes. Critic Debra Moddelmog claims that the bond between Catherine and Frederic, their “desire and wish to be each other,” signals a collapse between binaries of gender and sexuality (19). In a similar feminist rereading, Margot Norris argues that Catherine is “a double mirror (men creating women as conforming to themselves to male fantasies of women),” who even “announces that she is a construction of male desire, a product of doing, saying, and being whatever Frederic wants, or whatever she imagines Frederic wants—‘I’ll be a fine new and different girl for you’” (699). Moddelmog and Norris overlook how Frederic always feels trapped to his narrative, not just the narrative of gender roles and obligations as a father, but the narrative of mobilized time as well. It is Catherine who can imagine an inherent end to her old self before the child and a contingent future self after its birth. Because of Frederic’s retrospective knowledge of Catherine’s death, he cannot see a future beyond the birth of their child or the war.

If, as Modellmog and Norris claim, Frederic and Catherine are textualized versions of themselves, or, as I claim, doppelgängers, then Catherine reveals the uncanny visions from which Frederic turns a blind eye. Catherine's fantasized, post-pregnancy self's uncanny resemblance to Frederic and her verbalized affirmation of wanting to ruin him speaks more specifically to how Frederic's memories acquire different meanings in retrospect. This process charges Catherine's statement and contingent double with a haunting presence. The moments when Frederic speaks to Catherine in the narrative present read as if the retrospective narrator is speaking to the ghost of Catherine. This uncanny suggestion of the living Frederic speaking to the doomed Catherine is a temporal slippage, like the soldiers six months gone with child, which marks our narrator's difficulty of inscribing wartime without a direct connection to a knowable future. Reading Frederic and Catherine through a critical cinematic lens as doppelgängers reveals how Hemingway forecloses futurity with the essential backdrop of the war, which critics exclusively concerned with gender and sexuality overlook.

It is only after Frederic thinks through his identification of the stillborn as the symbol of his lost future with Catherine that he can realize she and the child should die if he is to exist outside of the war. The immanently doomed child emerges as the fantastical site upon which Hemingway, among many other writers of the Great War discussed in *trench time*, inscribed the war's end. The child marks the instability of Frederic's distinction between past and future that characterizes his montage narrative aesthetic. Hemingway's dichotomous treatment of the child that could be and the stillborn that must be conveys Frederic's ambivalent attitude toward the future as an absent presence in his

narration. In a cursory sense, the child symbolizes a future with Catherine. However, the stillborn's inherent death forecloses Frederic's earlier emotions of "always feel[ing] trapped biologically" to a future totalized by the child, an emotional disavowal that is present in his prose. In the process of discovering the stillborn state of his son, Frederic emphasizes, with kinematic clarity and action, what really happened: "The doctor came out followed by a nurse. He held something in his two hands that looked like a freshly skinned rabbit... He held him up for me to see. He held him by the heels and slapped him" (324). Frederic's forced pity emoted through the highly visual metaphor of an already hunted and skinned prey reflects what Frederic was supposed to feel or been taught to feel.

Readers visualize what Frederic saw by reading his simple declarative sentences but do not know truly what he felt until the following contradictory corollaries narrated in reaction to his son's suffocation by umbilical cord: "I wished to hell I'd been choked like that. No I didn't" (327). In the interstices between these two sentences—between how he felt in the narrative present wishing to take his son's place, and his revision from a distant narratorial perspective disavowing the suicidal substitution—lays a temporal displacement. This displacement mirrors the way Frederic temporally distorts present and future when he narrates getting blown up eating cheese and how Jake narrates tangents that have nothing to do with his story. The temporal displacement in the final chapter of *A Farewell to Arms* figures a fantastical future of the child revised by Frederic's retrospective presence. In Frederic's narrative, the child no longer figures the future and its state as a stillborn disavows Doane's notion that mortality gives way to meaning.

Through a camera eye perspective, Frederic records what really happened in action and comes to know what he really felt: that the child's inherent death was not one of an individual but of a fantasy that undergirded his future with Catherine. This cinematic aesthetic reveals Frederic's imperfect attempt to synchronize his retrospect with the temporality within which the novel is set. As a constant theme across the body of his war novels, Hemingway expresses that without a separate peace, there is no future beyond wartime—no possibility of marriage for Nick, no “damned good time” between Jake and Brett, and no family life for Frederic.

Catherine's death in labor—the death of a pregnant nurse in neutral Switzerland—represents the source of Frederic's suspension between past and present and suggests the inevitable reach of mobilized time. He tells readers, she had “one hemorrhage after another. They couldn't stop it. I went into the room and stayed with Catherine until she died. She was unconscious all the time, and it did not take her very long to die” (331). He then sends the nurses out of the hospital room but realizes, as he explains, “After I had got them out and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-bye to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain” (332). The unrelenting hemorrhages, like the syntactically arranged conjunctions of the first chapter that chart the war's perpetuation, present Frederic's narrative with the crisis of making meaning out of the meaninglessness of death. Frederic responds to this crisis by refusing to plot his narrative's end with consolation, even as it adheres to a heteronormative romance. In his discussion of temporal form and wartime in American modernism, John Limon argues

that Catherine's corpse as statue is a "short-circuit[ed]" metaphor that challenges the novel's closure since statues "have no temporal dimension—even walking along a hall of marble bust lends no temporal interest in them, since the experience does not change them" (96). Frederic's statue metaphor is intentionally unsatisfying in its simplicity to commemorate her life, while his limbo-like state of walking back to the hotel in the rain suggests a more enduring commemorative inscription of the war's end. For war literary critic and classicist, James Tatum, monuments are erected out of a sense of "urgency and mortality" but prove inadequate sources of memorialization as time passes (1, 32); poetry, or literary art in general, more appropriately memorializes war by treating it as "an eternal meantime" (95). Tatum's understanding of war commemoration as a meantime is consonant with Paul Fussell's notion of "modern memory." In the wake of the Great War, writers retrospectively framed the expression of their experiences with irony by juxtaposing their past expectations with the harsh reality of the narrative present; hence, the quintessential feature of modern memory is "hope abridged" (Fussell 41). The temporal unboundedness of Frederic's melancholic walk suspends the narrative's continuous present beyond the final sentence of the novel, just as the body of and American sustains a heartbeat in the irresolution of Dos Passos's *1919*.

Frederic's retrospective ending does not provide closure to his narrative. Instead, he is not reconciled to the narrative's end and carries on the immediacy of his story outside of the novel. It is no surprise, then, that critic James Phelan characterizes Frederick as a "recorder" rather than a "self-conscious narrator" because his "reactions ... arise out of a stream of his recollections, rather than being motivated by his conscious

artistic purpose” (69-70). While Frederic may not be conscious of his artistic purpose, Hemingway most certainly was; after all, he wrote forty-seven versions of *A Farewell to Arms*’s ending. North persuasively posits that Hemingway had a conscious intent behind his cinematic aesthetic: “Hemingway seemed to see his works with an implied camera eye, not because the camera sees more clearly or honestly than the human eye, but because it publishes what it sees...Hemingway...tended to see everything as if it were already seen, or as if it were to be seen in published form for a spectatorial audience” (110). While North, like critic Trodd, reads Hemingway’s visual tendency as photographic, or in North’s case photojournalistic, they overlook what is moving about Hemingway’s prose. The kinematic quality of *A Farewell to Arms* captures the eternal meantime of the Great War’s disjointed temporality and suspends it in irresolution, disconnected from a beginning or end, a past or a future. Frederic’s choice to walk away is not just an escape from getting it in the end like the soldier six months gone or a means to forget; it is a commemorative gesture demonstrating how modern memory abridged hope as well as when and where Frederic, Nick, Jake, Hemingway, Dos Passos, and the rest of their lost generation were bred and born.

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Chapter Three

Civilian Time:

The Precarity of Women's War Work and Marginalization of Demobilized Veterans

It is true of course women cannot suffer from it the way the men do, men after all are soldiers, and women are not, and love France as much as we do and we love France as much as the men do, but after all we are not soldiers and so we cannot feel a defeat the way they do, and besides in a defeat women have more to do than men have they have more to occupy them that is natural enough in a defeat, and so they have less time to suffer.

--*Gertrude Stein, Wars I Have Seen, 1945*

mother hoped that

I would die etcetera
bravely of course my father used
to become hoarse talking about it was
a privilege and if only he
could meanwhile my

self etcetera lay quietly
in the deep mud et

cetera

--*e.e. cummings, "My Sweet Old Etcetera," 1926*

The temporal experience of the Great War differed along lines of gender—a gendered difference during and after war that this chapter seeks to demystify by turning through the pages of literature that sequenced what I call civilian time. Stein's dense syntax untangles the complex point that in wartime women did not necessarily suffer less than men; rather, many women had "less time to suffer" because they were busy fulfilling domestic expectations or doing what the men, many of whom were physically or mentally wounded, could not (162). Women were marked by time because that time was not their own. Meanwhile, men held a very different relationship to wartime; coming out of mobilized or trench time and returning to civilian time put them out of synch with the

rest of the population they left behind while serving. Cummings satirizes the overlooked state of soldiers, both the war dead and survivors, as suspended in an eternal meantime and written off by the civilian population—including their fathers who sent them to war—in the adjective denoting a redundant list, “et cetera.” Women during war are left with “less time” because they are bound to it, and men after war inhabit a parenthetical temporality; together they figure the gendered experience of civilian time.

Stein clarifies that women’s non-combatant status in war marks them as always, already civilian, a subject whose time is “occup[ied].” As V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment) ambulance driver and nurse as well as W.A.A.C. (Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps) worker, women were temporally attuned to the physical workings of the war effort. As Evadne Price (under the pseudonym Helen Zenna Smith) dramatizes in *Not So Quiet: Stepdaughters of War*, there was very little room to opt out of such labor because women were threatened with social erasure if they strayed outside of wartime duties. Price dispels the wartime logic that shaped the cultural and legal persecution fostering conformity to the war effort. While Price’s title *Not So Quiet* asserts the novel’s place amongst the male-dominated canon of Great War literature, its subtitle, “*Step Daughters of War*,” expresses a nod to her deconstruction of the propagandized image of the dutiful daughter “doing her bit” for England. The novel fictionalizes the diary of a real-life V.A.D. ambulance driver to create the fictional protagonist Smithy. *Not So Quiet* twists and blends the written genres of fiction and autobiography to represent how the state’s rhetoric claimed women’s sense of the present by propagating war work as a familial duty superseding past experiences or future plans.

The veterans demobilized after the war returned to their civilian lives as survivors numbering among “the rest,” the direct definition of cumming’s use of the adverb “etcetera.” As human leftovers of the First World War, many of these newly returned civilians remained temporally rooted in a past wartime, unable to fully inhabit the present of peace. Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* shows how in spite of the wave of post-war legislation involving education, housing, and health services, individual veterans’ wellbeing was as unstable as broader social and class conditions. Woolf’s character Septimus Warren Smith is representative of the countless demobilized veterans who embody the lived threat of social illegibility as subjects who could not decipher let alone adhere to expectations of masculinity. Some of these veterans like Septimus were pushed to madness and even suicide. Unhinged from the post-war present, Septimus figures the social consequences of disavowing the lived experience of a veteran’s past. By positioning readers in the female perspective of the novel’s eponymous Clarissa Dalloway, Woolf frames Septimus’s suicide as a form of self-expression, a communication of shared marginalization on each side of the gender line that divides civilian time.

Although civilians were not strategically targeted to the extent that they were in WWII, the Great War was nonetheless a dangerous time for civilians as Price’s and Woolf’s novels demonstrate.⁷¹ I draw upon Judith Butler’s notion of wartime precarity in order to account for the gendered ways in which civilians experienced the Great War.

⁷¹ According to Michael Clodfelter, noncombatant deaths of WWI total to 6.5 million while WWII civilian casualties have been estimated to be between 30 to 40 million (781-2, 954). Perhaps WWI civilians’ precarity has been overlooked by the horrific events of WWII that contributed to the high civilian casualty numbers, events like the Holocaust and atomic bombing.

Butler has spent the last decade theorizing how precarity characterizes particular lives of the post-9/11 world. When put in the context of the Great War and its aftermath, precarity elucidates the effect of political measures upon the lived experience of civilians whom the war wrought illegible and unworthy of living or mourning. Broadly construed, “precarity” denotes the “conditions that threaten life in ways that appear to be outside of one’s control” (“Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Politics” i). While governments, especially governments of nation states, should safeguard their citizens against precarity, certain subjects and populations, in particular “those who do not live their genders in intelligible ways[,] are at heightened risk for harassment and violence” (ii).⁷² *Not So Quiet* and *Mrs. Dalloway* stage the threat of harassment and violence that civilian time posed to marginalized women and men of the post-war world; Price sequences Smithy’s work schedule to emphasize the lack of agency driving women’s war work, while Woolf positions Septimus alone on his window sill moments before his suicidal plunge. Smithy’s timed labor and Septimus’s timely suicide respectively reflect the marking of women’s time during the war and unmarking of men from a progressive time after the war. These precarious subjects are rendered “illegible” according to sexual and gender norms, and not recognized as worth living or mourning (iii, xii).⁷³ Smithy’s and Septimus’s relationships to time—the former temporally entrenched in the war and latter temporally unhinged after war—reflect the insecure subject positions of civilians.

⁷² Butler’s critique of the nation-state is important to extend to the context of the Great War since, as Michael Howard argues in *Causes of War* that 1914 “is a historical moment of incandescent passion, the Nation in its entirety was fused with the State” (26-8).

⁷³ Butler specifies precarious subjects as “women, queers, transgendered people, the poor, and the stateless” (xiii).

Price's and Woolf's own roles removed from wartime violence enabled a critical distance that shaped their depictions of non-combatants and demobilized veterans. Their pacifist narratives hold the power to reveal and break what Butler theorizes as "frames of war," or the particular ways that nation states de- and re-contextualize wartime as a means of controlling a populace's affect and gaining their support for the war effort. To Butler, acts of framing—"selectively carving up experience"—are "essential to the conduct of war" (26). "Framing the decision to go to war" is one way of uniting a populace to begin a war under the false assumption that it is a linear and finite experience. In effect, such framing "shift[s the] temporal dimension" of what is within the frame and "control[s] and heighten[s] affect in relation to the differential grievability of lives" (10, 26). Rather than dismiss the veracity of their literary depictions of wartime precarity because they did not have frontline experience, Price's and Woolf's relationship to the front produced in their writing a high degree of self-consciousness.⁷⁴ Margaret Higonnet claims such a position allowed women writers of the war to "begin the process of breaking the frame of socially or politically constructed knowledge" ("No So Quiet in No-Woman's-Land" 211). Smithy's schedule and Septimus's suicide shatter the frames of wartime and peacetime, thereby rejecting the assumption of civilian safety.

Together Smithy and Septimus figure the threat of violence that applies to non-combatants and carries on well after the signing of the Armistice. These gendered subjectivities—a marked woman serving the war effort as well as an illegible man demobilized for peace—bend the temporal lines of war and peace and thereby blur the

⁷⁴ Price was a stage actress turned journalist, while Woolf and her husband Leonard Woolf moved to London where they wrote fiction and owned Hogarth Press.

spatial conceptions of battlefield and home front. Although critics of war literature have complicated the lines between no man's land and the domestic sphere, the particularized experiences of wartime along the lines of gender remain. Margaret Higonnet has argued, "While the popular pair of terms 'battlefront' and 'home front' were highly gendered, appearing to distinguish male combatants from female civilians, in fact (as in any war) the battle front might be defined as where the armies were active" ("At the Front" 122). She elaborates that another aspect that challenged the spatial line was the potential of violence, making labor like ambulance driving a particularly dangerous job in wartime (Higonnet 122). This chapter expands Higonnet's claims regarding the spatial reach of war by considering its temporal continuity with peace as reflected in the precarious lives of demobilized veterans living with mental and physical war wounds as well as non-combatants in mourning. As I will discuss, the women in wartime on the front, as dramatized in *Not So Quiet*, and back home in London, as alluded to in *Mrs. Dalloway*, blur this spatial line between the battlefield and the home front as they directly experience the threat of wartime violence. Their subject positions determine their experience of time within these war zones in ways that are markedly different than the temporal experience of the demobilized Septimus of *Mrs. Dalloway* and other male soldiers discussed in trench time or mobilized time.

Respectively set during and after war, Price's and Woolf's novels sequence the very critique of peace as a temporal frame constructed by the state that civilian poets put to verse. One civilian poet, Eleanor Farjeon, like Price and Woolf, stands outside of the frame of war to de-glorify the reverence for peace that obscured the reality of the past and

fabricated a fantasy of the present without the promise of a future. Farjeon used her perspective as an author of children's stories to write the poem, "Peace," which makes clear to adults that the time after the war is only a "pause" when "men shall know the cost at last," a "period of unrest, / The ceasing of the horrors of the times; / [Its] good is but the negative of ill, / Such ill as bends the spirit with despair, / Such ill as makes the nations' soul stand still / And freeze to stone beneath its Gorgon stare" (36-7). After war, peace is a time to "pause" and reflect before the "horrors" inevitably continue.

Price's novel critiques how measures supporting wartime conformity obscured the public's vision of peace, while Woolf's novel portrays the reality of post-war peace as a "pause[d]" "period of unrest" on both an individual and societal level. Only a little more than a decade before the 1930 publication of *Not So Quiet* and only seven years before *Mrs. Dalloway* came out, there was a governmental and social ban on peace talk during the war. The informal censorship of peace had the power of a "tribal taboo" thanks to nationalistic committees that enforced it (Playne, *Britain Holds On* 78). In 1933, female historian Caroline Playne wrote, "At the time it was difficult to understand who saw to it that any suggestion of peace by negotiation should be rigorously put down" (78). During the years of the Great War, 1914-1918, pacifists risked legal persecution. While periodicals like *Labour Leader* demonstrate that pacifist opinion was not completely censored, John Horne claims that wartime surveillance enabled authorities to selectively repress particular groups such as pacifist militants and labor activists (*State, Society and Mobilization* 196-7). More than repression, the state was interested in boosting morale in the final year of the war, as evinced by the founding of the National War Aims

Committee (Horne 199). The committee opened the space for British parliament to push the possibility of peace further away as Lloyd George sought to rally citizens to be “patient, strong and above all united” (qtd. in Horne 200). The gendered experience during war in *Not So Quiet* and after war in *Mrs. Dalloway* problematizes the state’s framing of wartime as a unified experience.

Women in Wartime

Although many feminist historians and literary critics have argued that in wartime women gained rights outside of their pre-war domestic confines, women’s social and economic gains came at an overlooked cost. While history records a rise in employment rates and wages for women, literature dramatizes the experience of those who live outside the linear logic of progression. If, on one side of the coin, the Great War was the precondition for women’s liberation in the twentieth century as leading feminist theorists of the Great War like Sandra Gilbert claim, then Price explores the other side of that coin by representing the temporal experience of female civilians whose existence does not transcend a prescribed subjectivity within wartime.⁷⁵ During the Great War, women’s utility was marked by a male authority largely skeptical of their abilities outside the domestic sphere. In spite of the high numbers of British nurses and auxiliary volunteers, General Haig decided to keep approximately 80,000 V.A.D.s in England rather than send them to serve in France because he believed they would not be able to cope with “the

⁷⁵ See Sandra Gilbert’s “Soldier’s Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War.” *Signs: The Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8, no. 3 (Spring 1983): 422-50. There she argues that WWI was the precondition for women’s liberation.

enormous and incessant strain” of violence on the front from battles like the Somme (qtd. in Higonnet, “At the Front” 132). And yet eventually, “staff shortages displaced gender prejudices” (Higonnet 132).

Challenging the notion of women’s liberation reflected in historical statistics, Price particularizes the experiences of ambulance drivers, nurses, and W.A.A.C. workers. Smithy, the protagonist of *Not So Quiet*, begins as a V.A.D. ambulance driver and ends as a W.A.A.C. cook. Despite the fact that “the lines between medical and auxiliary work frequently became blurred” (Higonnet, “At the Front” 140), each position in the war effort claims Smithy’s time in a different way; the accelerated pace of ambulance work leaves her without time to meet her own physical needs, while the regularized schedule of a cook strips her of emotional and mental autonomy. Smithy’s physical, emotional, and mental precarity expands Stein’s claim that women have less time to suffer in a defeat by showing that they also have less time to recognize their suffering in war. Smithy’s complete integration into the war machine by the close of the novel reflects the efficacy of the wartime pressure placed on marked female civilians to handle the “incessant strain” like a man.

No So Quiet plots how propaganda, ideologically sourced in the family, claimed women’s control of the present in the process of “doing their bit.” As a result, women’s temporal connections to the past and future were severed; they were estranged from past familial connections before the war and disillusioned from forming future romantic relationships in peacetime. In order to bring women’s wartime experience to the public, Price repurposed the actual diary of a V.A.D., Winifred Young, into what appeared to her

1930s readership as a non-fictional memoir by Helen Zenna Smith, her pseudonym. Price even signed a limited number of first editions of *Not So Quiet* under this name to further fabricate the verisimilitude of the autobiographical medium in which the novel was packaged. Price's pseudo memoir bends the genre of autobiography and its function of testimony in order to question the very notion of truth-telling. Price rejects the propaganda fueling the war effort that relied on and altered familial and other gendered relationships for its rhetorical affect. Motherhood took rhetorical form in propaganda posters featuring a mother watching her son leave the house for the front and proclaiming, "Women of Britain say GO!" Consequently, women felt it was their patriotic duty to serve their nation in concrete capacities on committees for canteens, Soldier's Welcomes, medical work, and other matters of women's wartime employment. Cicely Hamilton's poem, "Non-Combatant," commemorates the lives of those who could not serve, those who "suffered in the strife" of wartime, those who "endure[d] it" to "give [their] pride / Where others give a life" (46). Like the speaker of "Non-Combatant," Price's protagonist is positioned in opposition to the glory of masculine sacrifice and loses her sense of pride to the war. *Not So Quiet* dramatizes how war work turned the daughters of England into disillusioned and estranged "stepdaughters of war."

Price's narrativization of what she calls such "abnormal times" complicates the historical assumption that women benefitted socially and economically from the Great War. For the women of *Not So Quiet*, any rise in status corresponded to their compliance to socially prescribed roles that marked their time. While historians of 1970s framed women's wartime experiences in almost exclusively positive terms, more contemporary

historians have tempered such claims. Nonetheless, they still maintain that the Great War was a time period that indicated a rise in women's social and economic stature. Arthur Marwick reasons that as early as 1915, the lack of men to fill positions in the growing number of government committees "brought a sudden irreversible advance in the economic and social power of a category of women employees which extended from sprigs of the aristocracy to daughters of the proletariat" (*Deluge* 92). Although Marwick concedes that "the growth of large-scale industry and bureaucracy would undoubtedly have brought this development eventually," he reasons that the Great War accelerated the process. More recently, Angela Woollacott has complicated Marwick's claims that women benefitted across class from wartime circumstances. Woollacott's study of the relationships between middle-and lower-class sisters and brothers outlines the differentiated access to autonomy along lines of class in wartime Britain. Many middle-class women actually lost autonomy since the norm of relying on their brothers for social connections persisted through the war (Woollacott 137). Meanwhile lower-class women, who had always been required to earn an independent income, had greater access to the public sphere (143) due to the opportunity to earn triple their pre-war wages (129). These trends reflect how the temporal claims upon subjects' time in war is as much gendered as it is classed. Price's novel traverses these class differences as Smithy performs both middle-class war work as a V.A.D. and working-class war work as a W.A.A.C., labor that questions Woollacott's correlation between a rise in wages and social autonomy.

Men Outside of Wartime

The state's measures to reintegrate demobilized veterans left many like Woolf's Septimus marginalized and unable to account for himself within the post-war economy attuned to civilian time. *Mrs. Dalloway* directly deals with this post-war condition by dramatizing the lived experience of Septimus, whose job enables him to receive psychiatric treatment for his mental scars accrued in the war. Just as the British military authority dismissed a veteran's past record of service and his mental health in the process of demobilization, a London public eager to move on from the war disavows Septimus's wartime experiences and psychological state. Without a sense of his past, Septimus has no place in the present of peacetime.

When men like Septimus returned home from the Great War, their altered mental conditions and the peacetime economy left them uncoordinated with the rest of the populace. Men were not demobilized according to their mental health or duration of service. Rather, "the basic objective of averting mass unemployment" was the state's first priority in peacetime (Marwick, *Deluge* 266). Based on "the ability of industry to absorb him," "individuals, not whole units, [were] demobilized." This slow process of reintegrating men back into the economy began a month after the signing of the Armistice. Once a soldier was deemed employable, he was returned to the dispersal station of his home district where "the various formalities took about twenty-four hours, in the course of which he acquired a railway warrant, a ration book, an out-of-work donation policy, a civilian clothes allowance and 28 days home leave, together with pay and ration allowances for that period" (Marwick 268). Such allowances were an

improvement upon the original plan of relying on the National Relief Fund, a charity established at the outset of the war. Although Marwick claims that “at its root there was a responsible desire to avoid mass misery and unemployment,” he admits that “in its effects it demonstrated power rather than responsibility, the prerogative of unenlightened bureaucracy (268).⁷⁶ Individual ex-servicemen were given a paltry 24s a week for unemployment for a maximum of twenty weeks. As Marwick concludes, “The whole scheme was grotesquely misconceived.”

So, too, education, housing, and mental health services of the post-war era failed to establish stability. As unemployment sharply increased in the early part of the 1920s, the government halted civil services related to reconstruction; according to Marwick, it “reacted in the worst possible way” (*Deluge* 283).⁷⁷ In effect, a series of laws aimed at post-war social services were repealed, leaving the demobilized population searching in vain for understanding, a sense of home, and psychological stability in peacetime.⁷⁸

Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* suggests that perhaps more than any other flawed social institution, mental healthcare was perhaps the most detrimental to the precarious lives of demobilized veterans. By acquiescing to the societal pressure to mourn the loss of his

⁷⁶ Marwick elaborates, “There was no attempt to deal positively with the problem of the provision of employment, that was left entirely to individual employers” (284).

⁷⁷ “Unemployment, which averaged 3.1 per cent in the latter half of the 1920s rose to 13.5 per cent in 1921 and 13.8 in 1922” (Marwick, *Deluge* 283).

⁷⁸ The Fisher Act, also known as the Education Act of 1918, which promised to raise the school leaving age to fifteen and expand post-secondary instruction in addition to offering health services, was “slowly strangled” (Marwick 284). Moreover, the Addison Act, or the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act of 1919 allocated funds to build 500,000 state-owned houses for post-war families that served in and survived the war. Building less than half that number, state authorities realized that “providing homes fit for heroes had become too expensive” (Marwick 284). Marwick explains, “The Addison policy was effectively terminated in July 1921, when a limit of about 170,000 was set on the number of houses to be allotted a subsidy” (*Deluge* 284). “Although the Addison Housing Act was stifled,” Marwick acknowledges, “Half a million houses were built under its important successor, the Wheatly Act of 1924, which greatly extended the subsidy policy” (*Deluge* 295).

friend Evans with sensible emotion, Septimus represses a wartime trauma that resurfaces as what psychiatrists of the time would call deferred shell shock. The Ministry of Pensions and other institutions established to support those with physical and psychological wounds often ignored this condition, or only treated it with the highest degree of skepticism (Reid 97). These failing public systems of support left veterans newly returned to civilian time like Septimus temporally rooted in wartime traumas.

Consequently, the post-war period was typified by a pervading sense of social confusion and redefinition that left many placeless in peacetime. Marwick explains this condition of peace as an “emotional” element—“the sense of ‘topsy-turvy-dom’, the sense of common citizenship” (*Deluge* 300). Marwick argues that economic and emotional conditions had a dissolving effect on the class structure of Britain in spite of the way that “Britain was still, as it is today, very much a class-conscious society” (300). *Mrs. Dalloway* sequences this period of “topsy-turvy-dom” and reflects the economic and emotional aspects that, contrary to Marwick’s claims, complicated class differences rather than dissolved them. Like Smithy, Septimus’s middle-class position affords him the vantage point of viewing at once the spectrum of economic conditions affected by the war. And, as I will argue, he also reveals the institutional efforts on the part of psychiatric discourse to maintain those differences. Woolf sequences the precarity of two strangers: Septimus, a lower-middle-class male veteran, and Clarissa, an upper-middle-class female civilian. Their shared threat of social illegibility is sourced in the preservation of gendered subjectivity amidst the “topsy-turvy-dom” of class instability to which Marwick alludes.

Woolf defiantly challenges the traditional form of the novel as well as the prescribed gender roles given to citizens in the wake of the war. *Mrs. Dalloway*, composed as a “double narrative” focusing on Clarissa as well as Septimus, shifts perspectives through “collective free-indirect discourse,” “creating a collective discursive continuum” (Goldman 54), or what I call a shared precarity between non-combatant and veteran post-war civilians navigating the topsy-turvy-dom of the post-war period.⁷⁹

Mrs. Dalloway does not fit Jay Winter’s divisive argument that “the rupture of 1914-18 was much less complete than previous scholars have reasoned” (*Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* 3). He explains that the critical tendency to draw a line between the traditional and the modern “invite[s] distortion by losing a sense of [the war’s] messiness, its non-linearity, its vigorous and stubbornly visible incompatibilities” (5). Although I applaud Winter’s efforts to maintain the temporal messiness of the Great War, his attempt to place wartime in history—as his subtitle (“The Great War in European History”) suggests—actually obscures the non-linearity and incompatibility of wartime and peacetime that literature expresses, particularly the literature of modernists like Woolf. Woolf wasn’t alone in this enterprise; Vera Brittain’s poem, “The Lament of the Demobilized” denounces the four years lost to wartime for all those who “came home and found” that they “must start again once more” in a world that progressed without them (14). While Winter’s goal is admirable, his study ultimately sacrifices the modernist project for the sake of theorizing what Winter calls in a later book, “collective memory,”

⁷⁹ Jane Goldman asserts that Woolf’s “collective free-indirect discourse” should not be confused with Joyce’s “stream-of-consciousness” in *Ulysses*, published three years before *Mrs. Dalloway* (54). See “Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*: Representing ‘The Unseen Part of Us, Which Spreads Wide’” for a discussion of how Woolf’s narrative method is “emphasize[d]...over clock time” (174).

or what “points to a time and place and above all, to evidence, to traces enabling us to understand what groups of people try to do when they act in public to conjure up the past” (*Remembering War* 5). Winter’s collective study leaves certain figures on the margins, outside of the “groups of people” he theorizes. I build upon Winter’s work by reclaiming the subjectivities left out of collective memory by turning to the particular ways civilian time is gendered in my analysis of Septimus and Clarissa’s “shared precarity.”

“That Eternal ‘Doing our Bit:’”

Precarious Labor in Evadne Price’s *Not So Quiet: Stepdaughters of War*

Drawing from her pseudonym, Helen Smith, Price narrates *Not So Quiet* through Nelly Smith or Smithy, a cynical ambulance driver on the Western Front. While Smithy is appalled by the reality of warfare and the conditions of her service, her fellow ambulance driver, B.F., is crestfallen that France was not “a kind of perpetual picnic minus the restrictions on home life” that she thought it would be (24-5). B.F., who “is like a Harrison Fisher girl on a magazine cover, and is frankly disappointed with the War,” looks at her own reflection and thinks that “it seems such a waste of a well-cut uniform to be in a place where the men are too wounded or too harassed to regard women other than cogs in the great machinery, and the women are too worn out to care whether they do or not” (24-5). B.F. or Bertina Farmer and also known as the Bloody Fool, provides a foil to Smithy. Her likeness to a Harrison Fisher girl, the kind of “It-Girl” transposed from magazines like *Motion Picture Classic* to propaganda posters bolstering volunteers for medical and auxiliary services to aid the war effort, renders B.F. as the

prototypical image of patriotic femininity. By overturning B.F.'s expectation that wartime experience would be a "perpetual picnic minus the restrictions on home life," Price narrativizes the kind of "grief and trauma experienced by some nurses who bore witness to the physical and psychological damage wrought by mechanized warfare" that Alison Fell argues was disavowed by later twentieth century historians such as Arthur Marwick and "popular cultural outputs, such as the Imperial War Museum's 1977 *Women at War* exhibit" (11).⁸⁰ Fell claims such historiography "emphasized the ways in which the war provided a route for women to greater public engagement, freeing middle-class volunteer nurses from the backwater of domestic life."

As Price's novel unfolds, it becomes clear that the female experience of wartime was anything but an escape from such authority. Beyond these personal desires, B.F. also figures what Higonet calls the "phenomenon of women actually volunteering to work in a medical, auxiliary or military capacity on the front," which arose out of "nationalist legends and militarist propaganda addressed to the young" sourced in such cultural discourses as children's literature ("At the Front" 124-6). Such an ideological critique makes sense coming from Price who in addition to writing novels and plays also composed children's stories. In the same vein as Owen's "Dulce Et Decorum Est," *Not*

⁸⁰ The following captures Marwick's optimistic argument that Fell and I seek to complicate: "More than half a century before the Great War, Florence Nightengale had established the right of the respectable young lady to the role of ministering angel, and it was to nursing that young ladies had most readily turned in the early stages of the war. By 1917 there were 45,000 of them thus occupied. For all that the nursing of the wounded heroes was accepted as a reasonable natural task for girls of the middle and upper classes, the figure does none the less represent the fact that these girls were for the first time doing hard work, and were in many cases doing it under conditions of unprecedented freedom...By the end of 1916 a fair variety of women's para-military organizations had sprung up, consolidated by the Government at the beginning of the following year into the Women's Auxillary Army Corps (WAACS); there followed the WRENS and the WRAFS, all providing for adventurous women an opportunity for overseas travel and service hitherto denied to them" (Marwick 93). As I will show, there was a price to pay for this increased opportunity.

So Quiet is a counter narrative to pre-war ideologies that encouraged conformity under the guise of dutiful sacrifice. Smithy's temporal experience of civilian time at the front is not a perpetual picnic free of restrictions, but rather it is a marked time zone full of labor conditions that are "precarious" in Judith Butler's sense of the word: "conditions that threaten life in ways that appear to be outside of one's control" ("Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Politics" i). Eventually, these conditions shape Smithy into a gear of the war machine "too worn out to care" to continue narrating her life.

"Ambulance drivers have no fixed hours:"

Labor and Physical Precarity

The lack of a healthy diet, hygiene, or sleep marks the loss of time for Smithy and her crew and forms an endless, cyclical temporal abyss of civilian time. Smithy's wartime experience is contingent upon the chaos produced on the battlefield. She explains that although "ambulance drivers have no fixed hours," their time is nonetheless marked: "They can be called out any one of the twenty-four" (52). Far from the perpetual picnic that B.F. dreams of, their time is not theirs to claim. Instead, during the day "each driver... writes her name on a list on the notice-board, and when the names preceding hers have been crossed out, her turn for duty comes again." Rather than consign their labor to a fixed time slot, Smithy and her fellow ambulance drivers are required to queue themselves according to a never-ending schedule, which only intensifies at night. She details how "at night [they] all turn out *en masse* for convoy work": "We have no fixed rest times after driving all night, and consider ourselves lucky to get two consecutive

hours' sleep during the afternoon. We are supposed to have an afternoon off weekly; ...I have never had mine once. For, apart from our set duties, there are Commandant's punishment duties" (52 ellipses hers). With their time claimed and marked off by daytime duties and nighttime convoy work—in addition to extra work required by their tyrannical Commandant—the women of *Not So Quiet* have no control over the present and their future is symbolized by a broken promise of an afternoon off. Such labor conditions experienced by Smithy produced deleterious effects upon hygiene, diet, and sleep that attuned the war worker's circadian and other bodily rhythms to the tick and tock of wartime.

The hygienic and dietary conditions of Smithy and her crew of five others—Tosh, The Bug, Skinny, The B.F., and Etta Potato—reflect the effects of Taylorizing and accelerating labor during the Great War. Smithy explains that with their work schedule, they “are too hard worked to spare the necessary time to keep clean, and that is the trouble” (17-8). Although Marwick is optimistic about female wartime labor conditions, he admits that as early as 1915, “the strain of all the speeding-up and overtime work was already increasing the accident and sickness rates” for trades related to the war effort (Marwick 115). Ironically, Smithy and her cohort are charged with the duty of saving men from dying, but the lack of time for hygiene could account for the increase in sickness and, as Smithy proves, death. Without a grasp on the present due to accelerated labor, Smithy looks to the past, “four weeks” ago, when they “had a bath all over,” and “nine days since [they] had a big wash—we haven't the time” (17-8). Smithy's interjected reiteration of their lack of time is underscored by her admission that “we dare

not hotbath in case we have to go out immediately afterwards into the snow. The last girl who did it is now in hospital with double pneumonia and not expected to live” (17-8). This girl who is “not expected to live” embodies the real threat of their wartime conditions, figuring the ultimate danger of their lack of time.

In a perverse reversal of B.F.’s fantasy of a “perpetual picnic,” Smithy tells of how they “have existed mostly on [their] own Bovril, biscuits, and slab chocolate since arriving in France, and when all is said and done it is a colourless, discouraging diet for young women of twenty-three—which [their] six ages average—who are doing men’s work” (10). The colorless diet of Bovril, a mass-produced yeast extract, was a common staple among military, medical, and auxiliary services during the war, particularly the middle-class participants who could afford to buy and ship parcels of it to their loved ones at the front. Celia Kingsbury interprets this scene to be an indication of the V.A.D.’s wealth as well as the way in which their families buy their compliance to the war effort. She claims that written letters and “the packages from home compel the women’s silence by making them a part of the social drama played out back home; by serving as a kind of bribe; they become part of the system of surveillance” (249). As I will show, letters home enact a disciplinary function by way of obedience to the written word. These middle-class care packages—the ultimate façade promising a “perpetual picnic”—also provide the women the basic nutrition to carry on their war work.

Just as their diet is colorless, their ages are averaged; like the very food they consume, Smithy and her fellow drivers reflect the standardization needed to achieve the efficiency of “men’s work.” Laura Lee Downs claims that as women were integrated into

the transportation, agriculture, and munitions industries, there was a “significant transformation in the organization of labour away from artisanal modes of production, based on the skilled male worker, to a mass-production organisation that would carry the day into the most modern sectors after the war had ended” (80). Beyond modernizing labor, Downs explains that “in the case of France and Britain at least, the wartime association of women with rapid mass-production techniques would ensure their future in the industry well beyond the Armistice” (80). Nevertheless, as Claire Tylee points out, “All voluntary and military jobs” like Smithy’s and the other 40,000 women in auxiliary service “disappeared altogether” once the war ended (11), evincing the temporal logic undergirding the temporary performance of “men’s work.” While the statistics of increased employment for women proves Downs’s claims regarding the increase of opportunity for women, Price’s depiction of Smithy’s diet and their averaged age reflects the cost of Taylorizing civilian time.

In addition to lacking the time to bathe or eat due to her work schedule, Smithy fails to match the speed required of her labor. Out on convoy work at three o’clock in the morning, Smithy accelerates her ambulance “downhill at a terrific pace to make up lost time” (37). She explains, “But my luck was again out. Commandant saw me drive in the yard. Where had I been? What did I mean by slacking in this disgraceful manner? Spotted-fever case? Oh. (Slightly concerted, but by no means squashed.) No excuse. I should have been back a quarter of an hour ago. Get reloaded at once. Enough time has been wasted, without wasting more in idle conversation” (37). Equating Smithy’s idle condition to her idling ambulance, the nameless Commandant reduces the laborer and her

machine as one. Although Commandant reveals a brief moment of sympathy for the soldier with trench fever—albeit tacitly and hidden within a parenthetical clause—her main priority returns to accounting for Smithy’s lost time and shifting the blame on to her. Such conditions were a common occurrence for medical and auxiliary services on the Western Front, according to historian Leo Van Bergen, because “the pressure of work left little time for improvements in procedures... practices... [and] the time for further education was non-existent” (297). Consequently, “standards of care dropped” while “transport was a problem everywhere,” especially for the British medical services bringing the wounded from the front.

Although Bergen posits that the main problem was the failure of pre-war planning, perhaps no system of efficiency could adequately respond to the reality of the Great War’s violence. In the beginning of the war, there were no motorized ambulances in the British Expeditionary Force. And on the first day of the Somme revealed the “faults in medical preparation” when medical and auxiliary services were overwhelmed with 40,000 casualties in contrast to the expected 10,000, reflecting just how pervasively transportation “was in shambles” (297). In spite of these pre-existing conditions, Commandant personalizes the lack of efficiency and scapegoats the driver, sending Smithy back out to begin the “whole rotten routine again” (Price 38). Her lack of accounting for past pre-War planning and her hyper-critical awareness of present wartime labor performance is the very source of Smithy and her fellow drivers’ shared precarity. As I will show, this tunnel vision of the present does not begin and end with Commandant; rather, in the post-war world of *Mrs. Dalloway* precarity is a constant of

civilian time, proving Dos Passos's claim that a people without a sense of the past, especially a past largely composed of wartime, is a "group idiot."

"Abnormal Times:"

Committee Work and the Marking of Civilian Time on the Home Front

While each second of Smithy's time is measured and marked on the battlefield, her mother's time on the home front is dedicated to committee work. After she leaves her service as an ambulance driver, Smithy stays at home where "Mother bustles in, handsome with her white hair and expensive morning dress," and "so rushed she won't have time for a morsel of lunch—two committee meetings, a sewing circle, then canteen work, and this afternoon a *monster* recruiting meeting" (180). Her external guise of nurturing matriarch is revealed to be a hollow ideology on which the war effort was founded. Without a commandant to mark off her labor, Mother must account for herself in wartime. To do so, she mimes the dietary condition that Smithy experiences on the front, but in a "handsome" appearance that reveals the time she does have for costume changes throughout the day.

Months before while Smithy was on leave, "Mother, head of more committees than anyone else on Wimbledon Common, fiercely competing with Mrs. Evans-Mawnington in recruiting... expects soon to out-committee Mrs. Evans-Mawnington on the strength of her two daughters" (32 ellipsis mine). Smithy's perception of her mother as shallow and competitive will come to contrast the later scene of deep empathy that Woolf pens involving Mrs. Dalloway and a grieving mother, Mrs. Foxcroft. The

difference between Smithy's mother and Mrs. Dalloway is the claim to motherhood, which the former clings to in order to validate her status at the home front and the latter lacks. As Grayzel explains "...states promulgated measures to support motherhood as both rhetorical and concrete forms" "of national service" (108). Put another way, motherhood was a precondition that enabled metaphorical wartime participation. Motherhood assumed the logic that "social and political institutions are designed in part to minimize conditions of precarity, especially within the nation state," as Butler explains ("Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Politics" ii). The rhetoric of motherhood, particularly the dutiful sacrifice she is making as a matriarch to serve the war effort, gives Mother the authority of committee head as a concrete position in civilian time.⁸¹

If Smithy wrote her name on a board in the morning for the sole purpose of crossing it off for two hours' sleep, Mother heads committees to cross her own name off of the list of idle civilians who do not use their time for the war effort. Content with her place in civilian society at war, "Mother triumphantly smirk[s] across the room at the disgruntled Mrs. Evans-Mawnington, who has no daughters" and tells Smithy, "'We must all do our bit, mustn't we? Abnormal times.'" (33). Smithy narrates this scene with irony; what is truly abnormal is how Mother marks civilian time—how one does their bit in wartime—as a competition of sacrificing one's family. Kingsbury argues that Price's

⁸¹ For a reading of the relationship between Mother's economic position and her sentimentality, see Kingsbury's "Propaganda, Militarism, and the Home Front in Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet...Stepdaughters of War*." She claims, "The wife of a retired jam manufacturer, Mrs. Smith has laboriously climbed the social ladder into upper-middle class life. Becoming part of the machinery of war—chairing committees, speaking at recruitment meetings—offers opportunities for further advancement by placing Mrs. Smith in the public eye, by getting her name in papers. Her sentimentality serves her well here and gives way only occasionally to questions of taste and acceptability. Seeing her children fully involved in the war effort is her ticket to full social acceptance" (238).

novel demonstrates just how “the war machine works through the family by subverting it, by promising recognition and pride in exchange for soldiers” and by recruiting women (242). Mother’s sense of “*abnormal* times” here gives way to the “*monster* recruiting meeting” that follows in subsequent months. By carefully crafting Mother’s dialogue, Price uses the word, “abnormal,” which comes from the Latin root, “monstrous,” to expose Mother’s egocentrism masked by the cultural discourse of motherhood in wartime. Mother’s attitude toward Mrs. Evans-Mawnington also reflected how war work was fragmented: “there was endless friction between committees working for all sorts of projects, such as canteens, Soldier’s Welcomes, Distress Committees, V.A.D.’s and Red Cross hospital work, central committees on women’s employment, setting up women’s workrooms, and so on” because “there was no co-ordination between the different bodies” (Playne, *Society At War* 103). Mother’s monstrous measuring of civilian time is exactly what pushes Smithy back into war service as a cook and creates the recipe for her daughter’s mental and spiritual decline.

After her time back home, Smithy goes back to the front with a new conception of doing her bit and marking her place in wartime. Rather than reenlist in the V.A.D. and return to her ambulance work, Smithy instead opts for service in the working class W.A.C.C. where she can both jilt her family’s expectations of “honorable” upper-middle class service and obtain money for her sister Trix’s abortion. Smithy’s need for money and Trix’s need for a secret abortion reflect the economic and bodily threats experienced by upper-middle class women in wartime. By refusing to be a V.A.D. Smithy “scandalizes her family” and is cut out of her wealthy Aunt Helen’s will (Kingsbury

245), while Trix's standing as upper-middle class rather than working-class prevents her from receiving the societal acceptance of having an illegitimate child, or what was then called a "war baby." As a member of the W.A.A.C., Smithy performs the most mentally mundane labor: peeling potatoes. In this line of work, "The months pass, each day a replica of the last, time on and time off, work and rest and recreation" (214). Finally, Smithy attains the promised work schedule with time off.

Nonetheless, her daily life is a repetitive cycle without the sense of progressing to the future. Ultimately, this highly regularized experience of civilian time reduces her humanity:

I have become accustomed to being a machine, to living by the clock, to having my amusements and my religion set before me in carefully-measured doses, to sleeping certain hours, to working certain hours, to exercising certain hours, to taking certain aperients on certain days whether they are necessary or not, and to donning the cheery indomitable personality of a member of the women's army each morning with my uniform, discarding it only when the bugle signals "Lights Out." (214)

If her labor as an ambulance driver dictated her circadian rhythm, her schedule as a W.A.A.C. potato peeler removes any organic sense of self-regulation. From amusement to sleep to physical activities to excretion of waste, Smithy is attuned to clock time. These synchronized and measured doses of physical and emotional release reduce her to an automaton that does nothing beyond her bit.

The abnormal times on the home front leave Smithy cynical and affectless, uncannily shaping her numb perception of wartime and confining the experience of life within the temporality of labor. While her earlier dietary conditions left her underfed, as a cook she achieves the efficient exchange of food for energy that fuels her for work: "I am

a slot machine that never goes out of order. Put so much rations into the slot and I will work so long, play so long, and sleep so long. The administration is perfect. Everything is regulated. Even my emotions” (214-5). Smithy experiences an extreme case of what Butler describes as the regulation of affect, commonly experienced by civilians as nation states attempt to frame war by emphasizing or diminishing emotional reactions to bolster support. Butler calls readers “to query the conditions of responsiveness by offering interpretive matrices for the understanding of war that question and oppose the dominant interpretations—interpretations that not only act upon affect, but take the form and become effective as affect itself” (*Frames of War* 52). Price’s juxtaposition between Mother’s competitive committee work and Smithy’s precarious potato peeling overturns the assumption of motherhood as one dominant source of affect in wartime. As the trench time poets and authors—and as I will show, Woolf—prove, the Great War challenged the assumed association between maternity, birth, renewal, and futurity. In addition to other critical representations of maternity in wartime, Price’s characterization of Mother’s monstrous competitiveness reveals the affective sources of wartime ideologies that dictate internal motivations to mark one’s place in abnormal times. *Not So Quiet’s* polemic competes with and seeks to overturn the very structures of affect that turned women and men like Smithy into feelingless automatons on the front.

“Shall [I] forget the maimed men who pass before me in endless parade[?]:”

Affect and Framing Wartime as Past

Price’s polemic comes into shape as she reframes the past in the wake of wartime. As an ambulance driver, Smithy faces physical violence due to her unfixed schedule contingent upon the inevitable casualties of no man’s land; as a cook she experiences mental violence as her time and affect are regulated to the imperative to do her bit. While Smithy’s present is marked, her sense of a historical past is deconstructed in Price’s effort to offer an alternative account of civilian time that is just as effective as the affect propagandized by the state.

Smithy’s tenuous connection to the written word parallels her relationship to the past. In a letter home while a V.A.D., she writes fallaciously, “*It is such fun out here, and of course I’m loving every minute of it; it’s so splendid to be really in it. . . .*” (Price 30, her italics and ellipsis). At this point, every minute of Smithy’s time is allocated to her unfixed schedule. As she considers writing down her conditions and loss of faith in the interpretive matrices that undergird the rhetorical and concrete forms of national service, she recognizes that she would be disavowed by her reader:

Tell them these things; and they will reply on pale mauve deckle-edged paper calling you a silly hysterical little girl—“You always were inclined to exaggerate, darling”—and enclose a patent carbolised body belt; “the very latest thing for active service, dear, in case you encounter a stray ‘bitey’” (that’s what you used to call a louse yourself, hundreds of years ago; refined, weren’t you)? An iron tonic, some more aspirin tablets. “Stick it, darling; go on doing your bit, because England is proud of her brave daughters, so very proud. . . .” (31 ellipsis hers).

Price’s use of semicolons and parenthetical asides is much like Woolf’s syntax, which achieves stream of consciousness and reflects a set of ideas deeply internalized by the

speaker. Mother's imagined word choice for lice, "bitey," or what Smithy calls louse, jars her and leads to the realization that the war has altered her sense of language and connection to the past, when she was "refined." Even her role as daughter, a role she served from the moment of birth, is perversely affected by the war, turning her into a dutiful daughter of the nation of England. The heavy use of ellipsis in this passage related to letter writing reflects Jane Marcus's interpretation of the "reading experience" of *Not So Quiet* as "a reproduction of the ambulance driver's route, swerving to avoid obstacles and holes," signified by "ellipses like the censor's black lines crossing out sentences;" for Marcus, the "body of the text is 'not whole'; it is a war casualty" (145-6). Deconstructing the patriarchal rhetoric of the war effort and the real relationships of those in war, Price reconfigures Smithy's relationship away from the daughter of England to the stepdaughter of war, an allusion to the subtitle of the novel. This shift captures how the war de-naturalized relationships between people, language, and time itself.

Voiced by the other stepdaughters of the war, Price expresses a feminist alternative to the male authority that perpetuates wartime. Edwards, a fellow ambulance driver who is engaged to an Aussie soldier that lost a leg in the trenches argues with B.F.'s patriotic jingoism, claiming, "After two thousand years of civilisation, this folly happens. It is time women took a hand. The men are failures...this war shows that. Women will be the ones to stop war, you'll see. If they can't do anything else, they can refuse to bring children into the world to be maimed and murdered when they grow big enough" (55). The "dirty" present, full of "vomit and blood" (56), does not adhere to a civilized or refined past. Echoing the pages of Dos Passos's wartime journal, Price's

Edwards cannot reconcile the duration of western civilization with the brevity of the war's destructive force. Edwards's conception of motherhood, which reverses Mother's dutiful sacrifice of her daughters to support war work, calls for a reclamation of reproductive futurity outside of the war's timespan. As Woolf's demobilized veteran, Septimus, articulates, even the Armistice does not ensure protection from a precarious future.⁸² Like Mother's dismissive letter that Smithy imagines, Edwards' voice is ultimately silenced and disavowed by the press, which preserves the past through affective propaganda.

By sequencing Smithy's experience of time and the propagandized accounts of wartime circulating in the press, Price refuses the temporal logic framing the war and the subsequent atmosphere of hysteria. Smithy and her fellow drivers' shared perception of wartime newspapers is one of numbed cynicism. "When [Smithy] read[s] the rubbish praising the indomitable pluck and high spirits of 'our wonderful war girls' [she] want[s] to throw things at the writers" (134). Smithy dismisses headlines like, "Our wonderful war girls—how bored we are with hearing it!" (134). She argues, "We are not wonderful; there is nothing wonderful in doing what you've got to, because you've let yourself in for it. It's like having a baby—you're trapped once you've started. How the mob hands on to the phrase... That eternal 'doing our bit,' too. The catch-phrase of the newspapers. It has gone out of fashion here" (134-5). Stripped of sentiment, Smithy refuses the structures of affect that frame the war and her place and time within it. Smithy's analogy between

⁸² When Septimus's wife, Rezia, broaches the subject of having a son in the post-war world he thinks, "One cannot bring children into a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no lasting emotions, but only whims and vanities, eddying them now this way, now that" (Woolf 135).

wartime duties and maternal obligations prefigures her sister's abortion and desire to leave the V.A.D.s. The power of the phrase "doing our bit" overshadows these past, lived experiences and choices. This representation of propaganda frames war in Butler's sense of the phrase by isolating images or phrases and "breaking [them] from context" so that what is framed is "subject to a new temporal logic by which it moves from place to place" (*Frames of War* 10). Each new definition supplied by the frame is part of its definition so that "this shifting temporal dimension of the frame constitutes the possibility and trajectory of affect" (10-11). As Playne points out, "The hysterical atmosphere which falsified the war work of their women folk both at home and abroad has never been better defined than by the authoress who has so vividly drawn the lot of the *Stepdaughters of War*" (*Britain Holds On* 224).

If Smithy refuses to do her bit, she will be left outside of culturally enacted modes of affect and reduced to an unlivable and ungrievable subject; however, because Price stages her critique through a character who does her bit to the bitter end, she dismantles this frame of wartime and explores a different possibility and trajectory of affect. Rather than turn to "odd out-of-date scraps in the papers," Smithy gets her news first-hand from the soldiers she carries in her ambulance, whom she calls "sitters" (139). She explains, "If the sitters have advanced on their small frontage we are winning and there will soon be peace; if they have retreated we are losing and God knows when it will end" (139). Because the press cannot be trusted to record the immediate past, its influence on the shaping of the distant past as history becomes all the more alarming. Smithy's limited knowledge of no man's land, temporally marginalized by outdated reporting, leaves

Smithy out of time without a clear understanding of the past or outlook on the future. Just as the newspaper's rhetorical power controls the eternal, historical account of the war, the sitters' reports—verbalized but not written down outside the pages of the novel—reflect how the framing of the immediate past dictates their present conditions and future plans.

Beyond the propagandized affect of the written word, Price upholds the affect enacted by the real relationships between people in wartime. Near a nervous breakdown, Smithy marvels at “the beauty of men who are whole and sane.” (164). She wonders, “Shall I ever know a lover who is young and strong and untouched by war, who has not gazed on what I have gazed upon? Shall I ever know a lover whose eyes reflect my image without the shadow of war rising between us? A lover in whose arms I shall forget the maimed men who pass before me in endless parade in the darkness before the dawn when I think and think and think because the procession will not let me sleep?” (164). Blocking her access to a new dawn is the procession of ghosts, the spectral remainder of dead men who become whole en masse as they embody the past, much like the war dead that Woolf's Septimus will imagine resurfacing in a post-war London park. In this dream, Smithy complicates the culturally assumed notion that women lacked pity for the war dead and wounded. Poems such as Siegfried Sassoon's “The Glory of Women” and Wilfred Owen's “Greater Love” articulated and instantiated the image of the uncaring and vapid woman of the post-war world.⁸³ Price's novel demonstrates that for many

⁸³ See Sassoon's “The Glory of Women,” which begins, “You love us when we're heroes, home on leave, / Or wounded in a mentionable place. / You worship decorations; you believe / That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace. / You make us shells... (lines 1-5), while Owen's “The Glory of Women ends: “And though your hand be pale, / Paler are all which trail / Your Cross through flame and hail: / Weep, you may weep, for you may not touch them” (lines 21-4).

women, it was not a lack of sympathy, but rather the overtaxed affect produced in the process of fulfilling their obligations to “do their bit.” Higonet claims that “an endemic cost of front-line service by medical women” like Smithy “was the experience of what today we might call post-traumatic stress disorder, which at the time might have been labeled ‘exhaustion’ or ‘neuritis’” (135). Without time to diagnose her condition because she must do her bit, Smithy continues with “the stressful conditions of assembly-line work, with hundreds of men arriving during a ‘push’ and little time to sleep for days,” in addition to the “ethical conflicts produced by the system of triage and by the dismay at sending patched men back into the trenches” that Higonet argues “erode[d]...morale” (Higonet 135). For Smithy, the stressful conditions of war work eroded more than just her morale; it eroded her connection to others and reality.

Framing her past through these abnormal relationships with the dead, Smithy discovers a means to momentarily escape wartime by restructuring the present as past through future remembrance. Imagining the possibility and trajectory of her life after the war, Smithy thinks:

When this war is over...how like the first line of a comic song that is...if ever it is over, and I am safely back in Blighty, the sound of an ordinary police whistle will always travel me back faster than Aladin’s magic carpet, to this bare bedroom with Tosh, The Bug, Skinny, The B.F. and Etta Potato. For a second I shall spring to alert wakefulness, then, realizing I am no longer a uniformed automaton, I shall run like a rabbit...in the opposite direction, as far from the loathly arrogant summons as I can possibly run...But if I travel swift as lightening flash, I shall not be able to leave behind the hatred that will possess me to my dying day of Commandant’s police whistle. (46, ellipsis mine).

The whistle, the auditory signal of Smithy’s interpolation into wartime connects space and time as she imagines running swift as lightening, or at the speed of light, away from

the past and her place in the V.A.D. room. More than a memory, the whistle triggers an affective reaction. While the procession of the dead that intrude upon Smithy's sleep enact a deep sensitivity that forecloses her access to the future, the sound of a whistle instigates an angry fear that propels Smithy away from the past. As Hemingway demonstrated through Frederic's narration and as Woolf shows through the character Septimus, figuring wartime as past from a future vantage point often fragments the two temporalities beyond coherence, disrupting the dominant conception of wartime as finite and linear.

“I am content to drift along in the present:”

Price's Haunting Irresolution to Wartime

Price concludes her anti-war novel by suspending her protagonist in the present, as if Smithy joins the very same procession of ghosts that frame her wartime experience. After Smithy returns to the front as a cook, she begins to see the son of Mrs. Evans-Mawnington, a soldier named Roy. When he loses a leg, his eyesight, and is made impotent by a wound from the front, he joins the maimed and dead soldiers that haunt her dreams and she loses her last connection to another person. At this point in the text, Smithy has also lost her sister, Trix, as well as her best friend in the V.A.D., Tosh, to the war effort. “I have no feelings that are not physical,” Smithy confesses (217). “I dislike being too hot or too cold. My body is healthy, my mind negative. I have no love or hate for anyone. Long ago I ceased to love Roy; long ago I ceased to hate my mother. Both processes were gradual. I am content to drift along in the present. The past has gone; I

have no future...I want no future. With this mental atrophy my physical fear has vanished, for fear cannot exist when one is indifferent to life" (217 ellipsis hers). Similar to Nick Addams of *In Our Time*, Smithy's PTSD is a complex result of the accumulation of wartime experiences. With the wounding of Roy, her ability to love and create a future beyond the war is foreclosed just as her resignation from hating her Mother and Commandant precludes her access to a vanished wartime and pre-war past. Margaret Higonnet claims that "the theme of desexing...which recurs in many accounts of WWI written by women, concerns not so much sexual potency as the destruction of one's most intimate capacity for relationships with others" (qtd. in Smith 76). As Smithy makes clear, the interconnectedness of one's spirit and body, rendered precarious in wartime, destroys any hope of forging or sustaining intimate relationships, sexual or otherwise. Caught drifting in the present, Smithy experiences a "mental atrophy" that has stripped her of the fear to die and the will to live. By viewing the experience of civilian time as Smithy does drifting along in the present, readers of *No So Quiet* reconsider the claims of historians who record the labor gains without consideration of the individual lives of those who compose their statistics. Smithy embodies how "any wartime gains at work too often came wrapped in the sorrows of loss, bereavement and destruction" (Downs 75).

No So Quiet concludes much like *All Quiet on the Western Front*; the narration transitions from first-person to third-person in order to describe the death of the respective novels' protagonists. While Remarque concludes with the physical death of Bäumer, Price narrates how Smithy's "soul died under a radiant silver moon in the spring of 1918 on the side of a blood-splattered trench," where the "mangled dead and the

dying” lie (239). However, “her body was untouched, her heart beat calmly, the blood coursed as ever through her veins. But looking deep into those emotionless eyes one wondered if they had suffered much before the soul had left them. Her face held an expression of resignation, as though she had ceased to hope that the end might come” (239). Remarque uses an impressionistic style to capture the physical violence of Bäumer’s death. As if she comes from the very same trench, Smithy’s spiritual death is narrated by naturalizing her internal decay through outward features of “emotionless eyes” and the “expression of resignation.”

Price also directly contrasts other popular accounts of the female experience of wartime such as Vera Brittain’s *Testament of Youth*, in which she writes, “Come back, magic days! I was sorrowful, anxious, frustrated, lonely—but how vividly alive!” (Brittain, 1933, 290-1). Contrasting Brittain’s magic days, Smithy’s dead soul is more like *The Forbidden Zone*’s Mary Borden and her fellow V.A.D. who was “no longer a woman,” but “dead already, just as I am—really dead, past resurrection. Her heart is dead. She killed it... A machine inhabited by the ghost of a woman—soulless, past redeeming, just as I am—Just as I will be” (Borden 63-4). Borden ambiguously refers to another nurse and to herself in a disembodied manner; such confusion, expressed in fragmented syntax, is exactly her point. While Borden treads the line between life and death, Smithy has crossed it. Comparing the varying levels of precarity—from Brittain’s magic days to Borden’s ghost of a woman to Smithy’s dead soul—readers of female accounts of WWI experiences are struck by what Butler calls “the differential distribution of grievability,” which when it “does not actually lead to the annihilation of those who

are already socially lost or socially dead, it ties them in knots without hope of ever becoming undone” (“Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Politics” xiii). Smithy could not remember the kind of days that Brittain describes since the past has faded and she lacks the kind of fear of becoming the automaton-like ghost past resurrection that Borden characterizes since Smithy has nor wants a future.

Smithy’s precarity, leaving her in knots of irresolution, extends far beyond her self and loss of self. Butler explains, “If violence is done against those who are unreal, then from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated... They cannot be mourned because they are already lost, or, rather, never ‘were,’ and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness... the derealization of the ‘Other’ means that it is neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral” (*Precarious Lives* 33-4). Unlike Bäumer or the procession of the physically dead that haunt her dreams, Smithy lives on as a real life ghost, the derealized “Other” that Butler theorizes as “interminably spectral.” In this dead timezone, Smithy will drift along in the present of wartime—much like Bäumer’s lifeless body to be turned over like the pages of a novel—impervious to the fated armistice days away. Just as her time was marked during the war, Smithy’s very soul and sense of afterlife is claimed within this static present. The final image of the novel captures the effect of living as a marked civilian as Smithy is sacrificed as a war casualty. The irresolution of the novel amplifies *Not So Quiet*’s pacifist message beyond the end of the war to reach her readership in the 1930s. As I will show, Woolf reflects what it is like to live in such an undead state beyond November of 1918 and in the post-war world, but she

does so through the unmarked subject position of a demobilized veteran estranged from clock time. In comparison, Smithy's calmly beating heart and air of resignation reflects Stein's claim that "in a defeat women have more to do than men have they have more to occupy them that is natural enough in a defeat, and so they have less time to suffer" (*Wars I Have Seen* 162). Although her country has not been defeated, her soul has been conquered by and assimilated into the war machine, which will occupy and foreclose time to mourn her losses.

"Death was an attempt to communicate:"

Shared Precarity of Civilian Women and Demobilized Men

in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

Signaled by the booming of Big Ben, clock time organizes and unites the multiplicity of perspectives in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Time, for Clarissa Dalloway, is out of her hands and irretrievable as the ringing audibly fades. Preparing for a house party on a June morning in 1923, Clarissa "was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air" (4-5). Clarissa frames time outside of language; it is sacred and suggestive of an intangible finality. Although the novel does not detail her experience of wartime, as a Londoner she would have experienced such "deadly raids" as the bombing of a school in broad daylight in June 13, 1917 with the culturally prescribed "calm acceptance of trained combatants"

(Grayzel 106). She is also parenthetically introduced as a passive victim of another global disaster, the 1918 Flu Pandemic that affected 500 million people. Leo Van Bergen has noted how “medical care was virtually impotent when faced with the flu,” which had symptoms paralleling trench fever induced by lice (301).

Despite the nearly five year gap from the war’s armistice to the June day in which the novel is set, Clarissa nonetheless notes that “the War was over, except for some one like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin...but it was over; thank Heaven—over” (5). Clarissa’s empathetic realization of the individualized experience of time, especially wartime, contradicts Big Ben—tolling the homogeneity of clock time—and her initial assumption that the war is finite and therefore over. Cultural historian Stephen Kern accounts for this temporal contradiction in his explanation of the cultural shift away from private temporalities and toward a universal schedule synched to clock time: “As the economy in every country centralized, people clustered in cities, and political bureaucracies and government power grew [especially in time of war], the wireless, telephone, and railroad timetables necessitated a universal time system to coordinate life in the modern world” (34). Legal scholar Mary Dudziak furthers Kern’s claims to argue that this shift to a single public time was done under the assumption that such efforts would ensure the “trajectory of war from beginning to end” (21). *Mrs. Dalloway* sequences the continuity of the state’s attempt to homogenize wartime through the gendered experience of living in the post-war world set back to civilian time.

By framing post-war grief as melancholic and unending, Woolf sequences the irresolute continuity of the war in peace. Clarissa's empathy—Woolf's vehicle to express the shared precarity of post-war civilian life—is reflected in her realization that for some like Mrs. Foxcroft—and as I will show, demobilized veterans like Septimus Smith—the war is not over. Mrs. Foxcroft stands not only as the prototypical mourner, but also the cultural ideal of a grieving citizen; as Joy Damousi notes, “it was women who assumed the burden of mourning work in many communities, not least because they made up the bulk of the survivors,” but because “there was a belief that mothers across all nations had a particular and special part to play in mourning their dead sons” (360). If wartime is framed as exceptional in the way Clarissa first considers it and as Dudziak argues most citizens have considered it, then the future must be thought of as “a place beyond war, a time when...regular life can be resumed” (22). Mrs. Foxcroft's post-war grief reflects the novel's first challenge to the assumption that the Great War was “thank Heaven—over” or that a pre-war life could be resumed. Mrs. Foxcroft introduces readers to the lived experience of civilian time while evincing and complicating Judith Butler's argument that “war is precisely an effort to minimize precariousness for some and to maximize it for others” (*Frames of War* 54). In wartime, states frame certain lives, such as those of its civilians and military, as “worthy” of living and grieving. However, Mrs. Foxcroft and, as I will show, Septimus Smith, figure the collateral damage created by states and suffered by its populace.⁸⁴ Their lives thereby particularize Butler's notion of differentiated

⁸⁴ Of course, there are other precarious subjects populating the London of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Doris Kilman, a British citizen whose brother served and died in WWI for England, is economically marginalized when she is fired due to her German roots. I focus on Mrs. Foxcroft here and Septimus later in the bulk of this section because of their indirect relationship with one another as actively grieving yet ungrivable subjects.

precarity. While Mrs. Foxcroft's "nice boy" is worthy of grieving and remembering, Septimus—marked as an illegible subject, marginalized by psychiatric discourse, and pushed to suicide—is not. His suicide at the end of that June day is at the center of Clarissa's party and Woolf's novel as a defiant reminder of civilians' shared precarity across gender lines and beyond wartime.

Septimus's suicide and Clarissa's empathy sparks an enlivened affect in the wake of a shocking and numbing world war. Clarissa thinks, "Somehow [his suicide] was her disaster—her disgrace" (282). His act, this shared "disaster" and sense of "disgrace" can be understood as a performance in Butler's sense of the word as "a process that implies being acted on in ways we do not always fully understand, and of acting, in politically consequential ways" ("Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Politics" xii).

Performativity, in other words, has everything to do with being recognized as a legible subject, while precarity applies to those who are not "worth sheltering and whose life, when lost, would [not] be worthy of mourning" (xii). Because she shares this precarious position as an always, already marked feminine subject, Clarissa "did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on" (283). As I will show, readers come to realize how the institution of psychiatry failed demobilized veterans like Septimus, a failure figured by his psychiatrist Sir William Bradley. Unlike this patriarch, Clarissa has a mind that Woolf would call "androgynous," one that does not necessarily pity or interpret the opposite sex; rather she is "resonant" with Septimus as she "transmits emotion without impediment" (Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* 116). In fact, "She felt somehow very like him—the young man who had killed

himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the sun. But she must go back” (*Mrs. Dalloway* 283-4). Clarissa frames Septimus’s suicide as a performance of “throw[ing] it away” or as an act of defiance against the expectations of daily life attuned to civilian time.

Nevertheless, just as she returned to her routine after observing Mrs. Foxcroft at the outset of the day, she “*must* go back” to her planned party and daily life at the close of the novel (emphasis mine). The imperative to “go back” forecloses any further consideration of Septimus’s act. Clarissa consciously enters back into the progressive flow of civilian time, but with the enlivened imperative to live, not merely survive. What remains at the end of *Mrs. Dalloway*’s plot is the irreducible contradiction of post-war life that the two characters embody together as Clarissa, like Septimus, “battles despair; he, like her, basks—moments before he leaps—in sanity, happiness, and hope” (Froula 102). Froula claims that “in Clarissa, life triumphs; in Septimus, death” in order to conclude that “in their redoubled reflection, death-in-life mirrors life-in-death” (102). This chapter considers how their “redoubled reflection” communicates the experience of civilian time across gender between characters and across time to readers.

“Everything has come to a standstill:”

Immobility and Illegibility in a Post-War, London Crowd

By changing perspectives in the London crowd Woolf suggests the urgency of finding a temporal balance between the past of wartime and the future of peace in the

present tense of *Mrs. Dalloway*'s plot. If the striking of Big Ben produces a pervading sense of suspense for Clarissa at the outset of that June day, each tick of the clock reminds Septimus of his lack of control over the passage of time. Septimus's immobility in a London crowd—signifying as the march of post-war progress—enacts his illegibility. Sitting in traffic, he wonders, "The world has raised its whip; where will it descend? Everything has come to a standstill" (20). For Clarissa time temporarily pauses until the ringing dissipates and she resumes her scheduled day; for Septimus time is at a standstill like idling motor cars generating a "throb [that] sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body" (20). While Clarissa marks the end of the hour by Big Ben and the end of the war by its dead, Septimus is left out of time. By "instilling constant movement, flow, and homogeneity into the text on the level of the sentence" and themes like "instruments of modern technology...literally in motion themselves" (Boone 179), Woolf's passive narrative voice articulates Septimus's unmarked and unmoving position within the mobile crowd. Septimus lacks a direct object for his dread—where will the whip descend? The ambient sounds and vibrations of the modern street reframe his bodily senses so that he is incorporated into the traffic as "an entire body." At a standstill within the traffic, "the sun became extraordinarily hot because the motor car had stopped outside Mulberry's shop window." To Septimus, the sun itself feels warmer because of where the car has placed him. Much like Jake Barnes at the conclusion of *The Sun Also Rises*, Septimus is a passive passenger of a mechanized post-war world that determines the movement of his trajectory and place in time.

The pressure to compartmentalize war from peace leaves Septimus immobile, blocking the traffic of a homogenized populace moving on. Septimus's mental anguish, in part, comes from his failure to make sense of his place in time. In this standstill of traffic, "the world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose?" (21). His lack of direction in civilian time makes him feel culpable, but of what is not clear. The violent imagery in Septimus's mind of a world threatening to burst into flames reflects the continuity of his wartime experiences into peace. At war, Septimus would have been used to constantly hiding for cover and seeing with limited vision beyond the walls of a trench. Paul Fussell explains, "Except at night and in half-light, there was of course no looking over the top except through periscopes, which could be purchased in the 'Trench Requisites' section of the main London department stores" (47). He goes on to explain that even the "the few snipers on duty during the day observed No Man's Land through loopholes cut in sheets of armor plate." Accustomed to this kind of perpetual cover, Septimus is left bewildered and fully exposed in civilian time. The jeering faces and pointing fingers momentarily ground him in reality—"weighted" and "rooted to the pavement"—but eventually this visibility gives way to the bottomless, existential question, "to what purpose?"

Survival takes priority above every other aspect of living in wartime. In the process, Septimus loses access to the present of civilian time, when and where he can feel and be in the world. While Jay Winter argues that such reasonable mourning was a

necessary culture norm and that modernists exaggerated the melancholic reaction to the war's end, Woolf's Septimus shows the danger of placing war on such a linear timeline and assuming that everyone fits this homogenized experience. Alternatively, Butler argues that "war sustains its practices through acting on the senses, crafting them to apprehend the world selectively, deadening affect in response to certain images and sounds, and enlivening affective responses to others" (*Frames of War* 51-2). This deadening and enlivening of affect is experienced in particularly gendered ways. While Septimus's wartime experiences—particularly the emotional repression of an intimate friend's death—leaves him without a purpose or place in time in the post-war London crowd, Clarissa's reaction to Mrs. Foxcroft's melancholic mourning gives way to the false reassurance that the war is over and that she must resume her scheduled day. It is only after hearing about Septimus's drastic act of suicide during her party that Clarissa is enlivened and recognizes her marked subjectivity in peace. Both characters come to realize that after the war, civilian life must become something more than merely surviving.

Woolf emphasizes the gendered difference of social illegibility by transitioning in the crowd to Rezia, Septimus's wife. By virtue of her femininity, Rezia is always, already marked. Woolf suggests their post-war gender roles as wife and husband in a London crowd are the sources of Septimus's obsessive look within and Rezia's anxiety of being looked at. Rezia realizes that "people must notice; people must see" (22). Because of what she views as Septimus's heightened visibility, she feels marked by association. In order to rationalize her complicity with this societal perception, she positions Septimus's

duty above his identity, thinking that “it was cowardly for a man to say he would kill himself” (33). “But,” she reasons, “Septimus had fought; he was brave; he was not Septimus now” (33). Rezia’s association between mental breakdown and cowardice aligns with the general outlook of psychiatrists of the 1920s who assumed any disability not produced by a wound was mere “cowardice” (Winter, “Shellshock” 310).⁸⁵ She quells her initial anxiety of being scrutinized in a crowded street by dismissing Septimus’s post-war self, leaving the reader to wonder, if he is no longer Septimus then who is he?

The better question may be, when is he? Rezia’s disavowal of Septimus in the present of civilian time reflects how “precarity is... directly linked with gender norms” (“Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Politics” ii). His inability to connect with the judgmental crowd and his dismissive wife as well as his lack of purpose beyond wartime proves Butler’s point that “those who do not live their genders in intelligible ways are at heightened risk for harassment and violence” (iii). Septimus’s marked emotional vulnerability renders him an illegible subject to the faceless crowd and his wife, who, under the assumption that wartime is finite and that British men are not “cowards,” detrimentally presume he can make the transition back to civilian time.

While the process of writing served a therapeutic function for traumatized veterans like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, it only serves as an additional marker of Septimus’s placelessness in civilian time. On the backs of envelopes, he writes truths and imperatives he learned from the war: “Men must not cut down trees. There is a God... Change the world. No one kills from hatred. Make it known” (35). Septimus’s

⁸⁵ Winter goes on to claim that many psychiatrists were skeptical of psychogenic disability as a “cover for fraud” in order to withdraw a pension (“Shellshock” 310).

commandment that “men *must* not cut down trees” is phrased as a counter to Rezia’s earlier anxiety that “people *must* notice” (italics mine). Septimus’s use of “must” as a modal verb and Rezia’s use of it as cause-and-effect reasoning articulate exactly what each character lacks; Septimus does not possess the logic to separate war and peace or life and death, while Rezia is incapable of expressing a command, an inability that indirectly sets in motion Septimus’s path to suicide. While Rezia thinks that in his poetic writings, “somethings were very beautiful; others sheer nonsense” (212), other people, like the girl who cleans their rooms and reads his envelopes, laugh off his messages, which “made Septimus cry out about human cruelty—how they tear each other to pieces. The fallen, he said, they tear to pieces” (213). Just as Smithy lacks a connection to the written word or the past that it articulates, Septimus’s inability to express through language reflects his disconnect from progressive time.

His messages do not align with the subjectivity of a post-war civilian because Septimus inhabits another time, a time of classicism. A sparrow communicates to him an idealized ideology by “sing[ing] freshly and piercingly in Greek words how there is no crime and, joined by another sparrow, they sang in voice prolonged and piercing in Greek words, from trees, from trees in the meadow of life beyond a river where the dead walk, how there is no death” (36). Septimus’s inability to discern life from death is exactly what keeps him from moving beyond his wartime experiences. While he thinks of “how there is no death,” “strangers” shopping in hat shops saw a carriage driving who appeared to be the queen and they “looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag; of Empire” (25). Most historians mark the end of WWI as the “starting point for their

surveys of decolonization” due to weakened imperial control and the demand for demobilization (Kanya-Forstner 246-250). Septimus, scrawling words on the back of an undelivered envelope, cannot abstract such details to make the kinds of cause-and-effect semiotic connections that other anonymous civilians unconsciously make with one another in peacetime after the dead have been buried, the flag saluted, and the Empire dissolving.

Septimus cannot progress into civilian time as a legible subject because time itself has ceased to progress; rather, his past accumulates like traffic and blocks his access to the present. When Rezia tells him, “It is time,” or time to leave the park, “The word ‘time’ split its husk; poured out its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time; an immortal ode to Time. He sang” (105). Hearing Rezia make the simple idiomatic statement, “It is time,” sparks Septimus’s linguistic musings about time, which had been mentally repressed and compartmentalized. His “immortal ode to Time” calls out to his war dead friend, Evans, who in turn responds in song. Evans represents the war dead who “waited till the War was over” but “now” come to surface before Septimus’s eyes in London despite the fact that “the dead were in Thessaly.”

This spatio-temporal contradiction reflects the cultural motif of the war’s undead returned—a dominant post-war image represented by Price through Smithy’s procession

of the dead haunting her dreams.⁸⁶ The unearthed war dead reflect the historical fact that “wartime graves were overwhelmingly temporary” (Prost 571). Due to pressures and the inevitable class-privilege that would ensue if citizens could reclaim the dead from their battlefields, the Imperial War Graves Commission decreed that “all of the dead of the war should in principle be buried together at the site of their sacrifice” (Prost 574).

Nonetheless, buried and unburied bodies were interred in the 1920s and 30s across the Western Front; and even today the war dead of the Great War have been found (Prost 578).⁸⁷ Temporary graves along with the interred and unburied figure the ghosts of the past that haunt Septimus in the post-war, public park. Rezia’s question, “What is the time?” interrupts the return of the war dead and Septimus’s silent response is answered by the sound of the clock as “the quarter struck,” when Evans intrudes upon the present leading the procession of the dead. Septimus cannot interpret the simple statement, “it is time,” or the question, “what is the time?” as Rezia intends. Instead, Septimus, an illegible subject out of time, reverts to the passive state of waiting as he did in the trenches, contemplating truths and imperatives to write on scraps of paper.

Woolf provides the reader with a sense of how the Smiths are socially perceived through the eyes of Peter Walsh. In his semiotic evaluation of the Smith’s class, Peter projects a social future that disavows the demobilized veteran’s past experiences. Peter’s park appearance foreshadows Septimus’s social erasure in the wake of his suicide. After noting their manner of dress, Peter—a stranger to the couple killing time before

⁸⁶ This image can also be seen in French director Abel Gance’s sequence of the return of the dead in the 1919 film *J’accuse*.

⁸⁷ According to Antoine Prost, “In May 2013, people touring the battlefield of Verdun found a human bone protruding from a shell hole, in the destroyed village of Fleury. Subsequently 26 bodies were discovered in this intensively visited site” (578).

Clarissa's party—thinks that “even the poorest dressed better than five years ago surely” (106). Peter's class-based expectations about self-presentation assumes reintegration is purely economic. Consequently, he turns a blind eye to the internalized, mental trauma that suspends Septimus. Peter thinks that Septimus “was, on the whole, a border case, neither one thing nor the other, might end with a house at Purley and a motor car, or continue renting apartments in back streets all his life; one of those half-educated, self-educated men whose education is all learnt from books borrowed from public libraries, read in the evening after the day's work, on the advice of well-known authors consulted by letter” (127). Peter's perceptive acknowledgement of Septimus's bookishness is undercut by his lack of empathy, particularly his insensitivity to Septimus's wartime experiences, foreshadowing the institutional disavowal Septimus will suffer at the hands of his psychiatrists. In Peter's purely visual perspective, Septimus is unmarked and unremarkable. Seeing beyond this superficial sense, readers recognize that Septimus's illegibility is in part due to the perceived improvement of the general economic climate in the mid 1920s in the victorious land of England. Peter's optimism places him in a different temporal position than Septimus as he considers the anonymous man's potential future in a way that is unavailable to Septimus himself. John Horne theorizes that compared to the dead, the “living operated in a different dimension—the future” (“The Living” 593). Not all of the living could easily transition into a future beyond wartime. Septimus figures as an anomaly, a melancholic mourner precluded from such a future. If Woolf cautions against envisioning the future without looking back or within through Peter, then she warns against losing oneself and one's future to an idealized past through

Septimus. It is only through empathy, Clarissa's ability to perceive her and Septimus's shared precarity, that these fractured temporalities can be reconciled and Septimus can be recognized as a legible subject—if only for a moment.

“For now that it was all over, truce signed...He could not feel:”

Returning to Civilian Time

The temporal disassociation between past and future reduces the present of the novel to a precarious timezone for Septimus, who suffers deferred shell shock. Just as Hemingway's protagonists are left in a state of Benjaminian shock after the war's end, Woolf's Septimus is disillusioned with traditional values that his classicist odes seek to recuperate. Septimus “was one of the first to volunteer” in order “to save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare's plays and [his teacher] Miss Isabel Pole in a free dress walking in a square” (129). However, “so prying and insidious were the fingers of the European War” that it “smashed a plaster cast of Ceres” (129). The cultural ideologies of renewal, fertility, and marriage, all of which the Roman goddess Ceres represents and literature expressed, are shattered in wartime, leaving Septimus suspended from the post-war future that Peter and Rezia fully inhabit.

And like Owen's verse and Remarque's Paul Bäumer, Septimus reroutes his expression of intimacy within the queer space and time of the trenches. His romantic interest in Miss Isabel Pole who taught him the literary association of Shakespeare and England is replaced in the trenches where “he developed manliness; he was promoted; he drew attention, indeed the affection of his officer, Evans by name” (129). Unlike his

unmarked subjectivity within the present of *Mrs. Dalloway*'s narrative action, Septimus's identity was marked in wartime by his officer, Evans, as that of a friend:

They had to be together, share with each other, fight with each other, quarrel with each other. But when Evans...was killed, just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognizing that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably. The War had taught him. It was sublime. He had gone through the whole show, friendship, European War, death, had won promotion, was still under thirty and was bound to survive. (129)

Septimus and Evans were together in almost every sense of the word; they shared as well as fought for and with one another. Septimus's survival is what separates them. Evans's death is the very source of Septimus's melancholy and inability to progress in civilian time. Damousi offers an astute explanation of the guiding ideology behind Septimus's numb reaction and subsequent breakdown due to deferred shell shock: "Courage in adversity was part of the repertoire of Victorian masculinity, but an uncompromising belief in rigid stoicism could only be enforced if it was not really tested" (Damousi 369). Once this impossible ideal of masculinity was tested in no man's land, it inevitably failed, leaving veterans like Septimus shattered.

As a means of combating the war's numbing effects, Septimus turns back to traditional values as a means to find a personal peace, a turn to an idealized past that only further distances him from a life in the post-war world. "When peace came he was in Milan," where he met Rezia and the two quickly "became engaged one evening when the panic was on him—that he could not feel" (131). Unlike Hemingway's Nick Adams, Septimus clings to the institution of marriage with its promise of mutual commitment that the war precluded in his relationship with Evans. Septimus's choice to marry Rezia, who

seems to be the first girl he comes into contact with, reflects his failed attempt to distance himself from the war and reframe his experience. Their hasty marriage was typical of the post-war era in which “more people were both getting into and out of marriages” (Winter, *The Great War and the British People* 264). While Septimus actively tries to reconfigure the war and his loss of Evans by marrying Rezia, he is ultimately a victim of what Butler calls “frames of war” (*Frames of War* 26). Septimus attempts to reframe his own experience by shifting the temporal dimension of wartime away from his place in peacetime to regain access to his shocked and numbed ability to feel for the dead and living. However, the temporal frame of peace as an end to the war leaves Septimus affect-less. “For now that it was all over, truce signed, and the dead buried,” Woolf writes, “he had, especially in the evening, these sudden thunder-claps of fear. He could not feel” (131). The signed truce frames the end of wartime, providing some citizens like Clarissa with the reassurance that it was over and life could be resumed, while it leaves others like Septimus penning melancholic classicist odes to Time on the backs of envelopes without knowing the time of day. It is only through death—Septimus’s tragic death—that Clarissa comes to recognize that in spite of the Armistice she shares a certain powerlessness in civilian time. In contrast to Peter’s harsh and superficial judgement of Septimus—and later his life and death—Clarissa’s ability to empathize as a marginalized subject of the post-war world reflects the hopeful potential in Septimus’s suicide.

“The clocks of Harley Street...counseled submission, upheld authority:”

Psychiatry and Normalizing Civilian Time

In order to put Septimus back in time as a legible subject, Rezia turns to psychiatry, a leading authoritative discourse treating mental health in the wake of the Great War. Tragically and ironically, it is because of this institution’s inability to account for the subjective experience of shocked veterans that Septimus is pushed to suicide. Woolf demonstrates how through categorization, psychiatry inscribed normative behavior and emotions within narrow margins and attuned human nature to clock time. Before Septimus is treated by the leading London psychiatrist, Sir William Bradley, Rezia first has a general practitioner, Dr. Holmes, examine Septimus at home. “You brute! You brute!” abruptly cries Septimus, “seeing human nature, that is Dr. Holmes, enter the room” (141). Just like the anonymous faces in the busy London street jeering at and judging Septimus, Dr. Holmes turns a critical eye upon Septimus who in turn sees through his authoritative air. The difference in this situation is that Dr. Holmes brings the brutality of human nature found in the public street into the Smiths’ private home. Dr. Holmes articulates this intrusion of the public into the private by dismissing Septimus’s emotive expression in the form of rhetorical questioning: “Now what’s all this about?” and “Talking nonsense to frighten your wife?” (141). The speciousness in his tone is made clear by Woolf’s contrast between the Smiths’ silence and Dr. Holmes’ rapid change from being “the most amiable” to “ironic,” and finally “not quite so kind” (140-1). His recognition of their class status substantiates his authority upon what he thinks is their limited choice in mental health care. Reid has noted that both military and civilian

health care privileged the upper class (17). Dr. Holmes's solution for Septimus to remain silent reflects the pervasive cultural taboo against speaking about mental collapse from combat trauma and his command to submit reveals the compounded trauma suffered by those afflicted by wartime experiences.

Just as Price stages Smithy's precarity across class through her various jobs in war work, Woolf traces Septimus's marginalization across levels of psychiatric treatment. In spite of Dr. Holmes's—and Peter's—class-based assumptions about Septimus, his access to the upperclass healthcare supplied on Harley Street erases his brief moment of social legibility. Sir William Bradley enters the room with the reputation of being a psychologist “not merely of lightening skill, and almost infallible accuracy in diagnosis but of sympathy; tact; understanding of the human soul” (144). Unfortunately, his “understanding of the human soul” is tightly bound up in his ideology of proper “proportion.” Although “Sir William said he never spoke of ‘madness’; he called it not having a sense of proportion” (146). The notion of proportion normalizes post-war civilian Englishness through inscribing subjectivity within very narrow margins and leaving patients like Septimus illegible until they adhere to the doctor's advice. Woolf ironically narrates, “Proportion has a sister...Conversion is her name and she feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring her own features stamped on the face of the populace” (151). Like a colonial missionary, Sir William “converts” the London populace to his sense of proportion, requiring his patients to submit to his commands.

Through medical discourse, Sir William figures the authority that disavows the past in the name of progress, leaving out the traumatized survivors of the war like Septimus. Butler argues that “precarity is a politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and come differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death” (“Performativity, Precarity” ii). Although Septimus’s ability to receive a second opinion from Sir William reflects a certain socio-economic latitude, Sir William’s stifling treatment exemplifies how deeply psychiatry failed as a network of support. When Sir William convinces his patients that he “was the master of his own actions, which the patient was not,” they “questioned...life itself. Why live? they demanded” (153). This very question that Septimus later contemplates on his windowsill moments before he takes his life reverses the institutional logic of Dr. Holmes’s earlier rhetorical question—“Now what’s all this..nonsense...?”

Woolf’s transition to Rezia, who associates Sir William with clock time, suggests that Londoners beyond the doctor’s victims have lost mastery over their own actions. Although other relatives of Sir William’s patients glorify the doctor, Rezia sees beyond his prestigious title and position and recognizes the nefarious effect of his treatment and the larger workings that attuned the London populace to civilian time. Walking down Harley Street, Rezia’s thoughts turn from Sir William to the ringing of public clocks:

Shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing, the clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day, counseled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion, until the mound of time was so far diminished that a commercial clock, suspended above a shop in Oxford Street, announced, genially and fraternally, as if it were a pleasure to Messrs. Rigby and Lowndes to give information gratis, that it was half-past one. (155)

Time itself, and the strict adherence to one's scheduled obligations, is the very source on which Sir William's authority is founded. The ringing of the commercial clock unites psychiatric discourse with the market and national allegiance in a "chorus" pointing out "the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion." This chorus echoes Clarissa's perception of Big Ben ringing and thereby subdividing the populace of London into their respective daily duties. The ironic personification of the clock's pleasure to "genially and fraternally" "announce" the time highlights how post-war civilian time was an artificial construction that pushed those in power away from humanity and those under their power into the margins.

Meanwhile at home, Septimus refuses to set his private, internalized sense of time to the public temporality of peace. Recognizing his illegibility under the control of Sir William Bradshaw and Dr. Holmes, he exclaims to Rezia, "'Must' it could say!" (223). Bradshaw's prescribed order for Septimus that he "must" separate from Rezia causes Septimus to fear his own future, which, since the war, has been safeguarded by Rezia. Sending shell shocked patients away to a countryside location was a common practice for upper-class patients. During and after the war, the Country Hosts Scheme allowed mostly officer patients to recover outside of an urban setting, like London, as "the antidote to a brutal industrial war" (Reid 75).

Although such treatment attempted to reclaim the shattered remains of the "rural idyll," Septimus's thoughts turn from the countryside he "must" go to and to the papers articulating a purer idyllic place and time. Rather than burn his papers as he requests her

to, Rezia ties the written-on backs of envelopes together with a piece of silk. As Rezia does so, Septimus watches her and thinks that she is a “triumph” and “miracle”:

Staggering he saw her mount the appalling staircase, laden with Holmes and Bradshaw, men who never weighted less than eleven stone six, who sent their wives to Court, men who made ten thousand a year and talked of proportion; who different in their verdicts...yet judges they were; who mixed the vision and the sideboard; saw nothing clear, yet ruled, yet afflicted. “Must” they said. Over them she triumphed. (224-5)

If the war shattered the mold of Ceres, then Rezia’s act of kindness, binding his writings together, revives the ideals of renewal, fertility, and union that he feared ended in the trenches and failed to return under the authority of the likes of Holmes and Bradshaw. Septimus’s positioning of Rezia as “mounting the staircase” or ascending a triumphant uphill battle against his foes, is perhaps the most optimistic image he fabricates in his mind. In reality and real time, this image is perversely reversed when Dr. Holmes knocks on their front door, pushes Rezia aside, and climbs the Smiths’ staircase to Septimus waiting in his room to leap to his death.

In a gesture of defiance against merely surviving and Sir William’s sense of proportion, Septimus turns to the last means of exerting control over his future and place in time: suicide. “There remained only the window, the large Bloomsbury-lodging house window, the tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out. It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia’s (for she was with him). (He sat on the sill.)” (226). Even the act of suicide, which he describes as “tiresome,” “troublesome,” and “melodramatic business,” feels as if it is another motion he must go through to convey the tragedy of his life to his aggressors, Dr. Holmes and Sir William. Wyatt Bonikowski frames Septimus’s suicide as a means of communication: “If

the possibility of being seen and overheard in public is the only way Septimus can communicate, if only indirectly, it is not surprising that his suicide takes the form of a ‘melodramatic’ leap from a window into a public street, creating a scene of horror that will eventually reach Clarissa” (162). Literally on a threshold, Septimus communicates his own marginal position outside of Sir William’s clinical logic and out of synch with the London crowd.

Sitting on the window sill in a momentarily suspended state, Septimus figures Butler’s point that certain bodies are politically vulnerable and unaccounted for in the progressive flow of history. By being “attached to others” vulnerable subjects like Septimus are “at risk of losing those attachments” as well as “exposed to others at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure” (*Precarious Lives* 20). Exposed and confused by his spatio-temporal position, he believes that Rezia, who is actually downstairs failing to block Dr. Holmes, is right next to him on the sill in that moment. Although his imagination does not adhere to reality, he does recognize his vulnerability, and, by extension, Rezia’s. Nonetheless, the extra parenthetical clause reminds us of the reality that “he sat on the sill.” His solidarity reflects how the post-war British public left those mentally afflicted “severely alone” (Smith and Pear 108).

The real tragedy, his and Rezia’s idea of tragedy, is expressed by Septimus’s timing: “But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings—what did *they* want? Coming down the staircase opposite an oldman stopped and stared at him. Holmes was at the door. ‘I’ll give it you!’ he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer’s area railings”

(226). Although the warmth of the sun feels better in this moment on the sill than it did earlier out in the traffic, he is nonetheless reminded of his impossible place among the living. Without an understanding of what human beings want, Septimus feels disconnected and out of time. The juxtaposition of the unfamiliar oldman and the all-too familiar face of Holmes leaves Septimus in the middle confounded about his place in the future as a survivor on the literal edge of death. His suicidal leap refuses both the futurity of living on that the old man symbolizes as well as the acceptance of Evan's death that Holmes requires. His final position where he lands on the railings, which usually separate the subterranean service rooms located in a building's basement, leave him in between, neither on the surface nor underground. This interstitial position harkens back to Peter's first observation of Septimus's nearly illegible subjectivity as well as his haunting presence throughout the remainder of the novel's plot.

Like his poetry, his final words are cryptic in their specificity and address. What is he giving—his life, his submission to proportion and conversion—and to whom—the oldman, Holmes, Sir William, Evans? Lisa Avery posits, “The ‘it’ Septimus gives seems to be his life, which he does not want to lose. His defiance seems to be dual: he gives up his life, but he doesn't give it up on the battlefield, he gives it up in Bloomsbury” (52). By staging his death here as a performative act, Woolf, denizen of the Bloomsbury Group, hints at a shared precarity between herself and Septimus as casualties of the war.⁸⁸ Ultimately Clarissa intercedes and frames Septimus's act as a resistance. As Froula

⁸⁸ Froula points out that Woolf wrote in her journal, “[Septimus]’s character. founded on R[upert Brooke]?...or founded on me?...might be left vague—as a mad person is...so can be partly R.; partly me” (qtd. in 118).

claims, the psychiatrists “act as agents for a society that scapegoats [Septimus] for bringing home the murderous aggression it would disavow, that projects its aggression upon him and expels him, its symbolic embodiment, so that he seems to bear it away” (115). Nonetheless, Froula argues that Septimus “silently turns victimage into prophecy.” Clarissa, who Woolf originally planned to commit suicide, will hear and reclaim his victimage as prophecy at her party. Septimus’s “it” is given to and received by Clarissa who in turn reclaims his life and mourns him as more than a scapegoat.

Before this happens, those in power negate his life and deem his body unworthy of grieving, demonstrating how even in death Septimus is rendered illegibility and, and thereby outside of time. Dr. Holmes reassures himself as much as Mrs. Filmer, the Smith’s downstairs neighbor, that the suicide was “a sudden impulse, no one was in the least to blame... And why the devil he did it, Dr. Holmes could not conceive” (227). Dr. Holmes’ lack of empathy and repression of the same kind of sense of culpability lacking a clear reason parallels the disconnect framing Septimus as an ungrievable body. Dr. Holmes’s clinical logic reduces Septimus’s act to “a sudden impulse” outside of the daily schedule structured by the tolling of Big Ben. In order to help Rezia return to a sense of normalcy he gives her “something sweet,” a sedative to calm her nerves (227). As the medication takes effect, she thinks “the clock was striking—one, two, three: how sensible the sound was; compared with all this thumping and whispering; like Septimus himself. She was falling asleep. But the clock went on striking four, five, six and Mrs. Filmer waving the apron (they wouldn’t bring the body in here, would they?) seemed part of that garden; or flag” (227). Emotionally dulled by the sedative, Rezia’s associations between

Mrs. Filmer's apron, the garden, the flag, and Septimus's body reach back to the earlier Londoners in the hat shop connecting queen, country, and the Empire. Rezia's parenthetical concern—"they wouldn't bring the body in here, would they"—evinces the cold acceptance that Septimus projected for the death of Evans, further propagating the emotional repression necessary for a victorious England to continue to wave its flag in the post-war period in spite of deferred wartime casualties.

As if to confirm Septimus's posthumous erasure, Peter once again appears as a public observer of Septimus, and voices the nationalist ideology of progress that reduces Septimus to an ungrievable body. Watching the ambulance take Septimus's body away, Peter thinks, "It is one of the triumphs of civilization, as the light high bell of the ambulance sounded. Swiftly, cleanly the ambulance sped to the hospital, having picked up instantly, humanely, some poor devil; someone hit on the head, struck down by disease, knocked over perhaps a minute ago at one of these crossings, as might happen to oneself. That is civilisation. It struck him coming back from the East—the efficiency, the organisation, the communal spirit of London" (229). Although Peter does not connect the man in the park to the man in the ambulance, he still places Septimus in between, at "one of these crossings." In doing so, he places some of the guilt upon a man who he thinks got in the way of the city's traffic, as humane, efficient, organized, and communal as it may be. The irony is that Peter is in part correct; it is civilization that sent Septimus to war, required him to repress his grief, refused him adequate mental care to recover, drove him to suicide, and claimed his body from its private residence. In this juxtaposition between the actual event and Peter's superficial misrecognition of it, Woolf suggests that

framing the spirit of London as triumphant in the post-war period left its populace unfeeling and blind to those still affected by the war.

“Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate:”

Clarissa Dalloway’s Shared Precarity

It is only through the marked feminine subjectivity of Clarissa that Septimus’s life is rendered legible and grievable—finally placing him in time, albeit in a deferred sense. At her party, Septimus’s death becomes a point of conversation for Sir William, who uses it as evidence in his social crusade to make “some provision in the Bill” for the “deferred effect of shell shock” (279). In some small sense, Septimus’s communication of his precarity added to the voices of many veterans with physical and psychological wounds who protested for political reform and “turn[ed] what had traditionally been seen as charity into a right” (Horne, “The Living” 601). There remains something about Septimus’s communicative act that is less readable and irreducible to the historical context of the 1920s. Septimus’s shell shock in civilian time is deferred in the sense that it is temporally postponed from the moment of Evans’s death in wartime. Septimus’s shell shock is deferred to Clarissa in the second sense of the word, to humbly submit to another. While Septimus’s suicide evinces the need for political reform in Sir William’s eyes, the act is personalized by the empathetic Clarissa: “He had killed himself—but how? Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a

thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it.”

Clarissa’s vision identifies and replays the very precarity that, according to Butler, brings marginalized bodies together. This uncanny access to Septimus’s suicide as neither witness nor relative—or even fellow veteran—reveals the imbricated gender roles of a subject in civilian time. Clarissa thinks his suicide has “preserved” his life in a way that would otherwise be forgotten by those in positions of power like Sir William. This paradox of preserving his life through suicide evinces Reid’s claim that “far from being ‘forgotten,’ many [shell shocked men] continued to be a real and very visible problem for their families and for politicians and civil servants who had to organize veteran welfare in the 1920s” (4). The preservation paradoxically enacted by his death pulls his unlivable and ungrievable life out from the margins of misrecognition.

Clarissa’s ability to read Septimus’s act outside of the context of a forgettable “tragedy” recuperates and reframes his suicide as she thinks, “Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate” (280). Although she had never read his idyllic odes written on the backs of envelopes, Clarissa thinks that Septimus “had had that passion” of “poets and thinkers” (281). She realizes that such passion would be snuffed out by Sir William Bradshaw, “a great doctor yet to her obscurely evil, without sex or lust, extremely polite to women, but capable of some indescribable outrage—forcing your soul, that was it—if this young man had gone to him, and Sir William had impressed him, like that, with his power, might he not then have said (indeed she felt it now), Life is made intolerable; they make life intolerable, men like that?” (281). Clarissa sees through Sir William’s sense of proportion and enforcement of conversion that he propagates

within the bounds of propriety. Her gendered position affords Clarissa a way into the perspective of Septimus whose life was made intolerable to the point of suicide, thanks to those in powerful positions, “men like” Sir William.

The uncertain effect of Septimus’s suicidal communication lingers at the close of *Mrs. Dalloway*. As a novel that sequences the temporal experience of civilian time, it forces its post-war readership to confront the consequences of a precarious populace searching for a means to lay claim to what they require. The novel’s poetic qualities also seal its haunting conclusion as her lines of prose commemorate life-in-death and death-in-life. In “Poetry, Fiction and the Future” Woolf recognized that most poetry pays “the penalty...for having dispensed with the incantation and the mystery, the rhyme and metre” (436). In order to infuse prose with such poetic power, Woolf calls for a narrative style that “will take on some of the attributes of poetry” in order to “take the mould of that queer conglomeration of incongruous things—the modern mind” (436). Rather than provide a solution or clear political message, Woolf’s novel leaves modern readers in post-war civilian time wondering the same set of questions that Butler claims we must continue to ask: “How does the unspeakable population speak and make its claims? What kind of disruption is this within the field of power? And how can such populations lay claim to what they require?” (“Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Politics” xiii). Woolf—and as I will show in the final chapter, Michael Cunningham in *The Hours*—demonstrate that literature’s sequencing and commemorative functions reflect one cultural discourse through which the unspeakable population makes its claims to what they require.

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Chapter Four

Retrospective Time: The Provisional, Textual, and Excentric Remains of the Great War

So as I say I know what it is to be any age now that there is a war and so remembering back is not only remembering but it might be being.
--*Gertrude Stein, Wars I Have Seen, 1945*

In the decades preceding the centenary of the Great War, poets and novelists looked back to commemorate and sequence what I call retrospective time. Doing so enabled writers to make meaning of the war's ghostly presence in our contemporary lives, when the last veteran survivors—such as England's "Last Fighting Tommy," Harry Patch—passed away. The postmodern, contemporary novels and poems of this chapter are inextricably bound within the Great War's time zones of trench time, mobilized time, and civilian time. In order to clarify the effect of commemorating and sequencing retrospective time, I draw from postmodern theorist Linda Hutcheon's *Poetics of Postmodernism*, particularly her notion of "historiographic metafiction."⁸⁹ As Hutcheon claims, postmodernism has taught us that "while all knowledge of the past may be provisional, historicized, and discursive," we still seek "meaning of that past" (152). By analyzing the historiographic metafiction of Alan Hollinghurst's *The Stranger's Child*, Pat Barker's *Regeneration* Trilogy and *Another World*, and Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, as well as what might be called the historiographic metapoem, Carol Ann Duffy's "Last Post," I argue that retrospective time enacts a temporal logic that opens up the past

⁸⁹ This chapter explores the utility of Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction as a means of tracing literary retrospection. See Martin Middeke's *Biofictions*, which develops Hutcheon's theory by applying it to contemporary autobiography that rewrites British lives of the Romantic period.

for present interpretation in the way that only post modern literature can—by paradoxically dredging up the past onto the surface of consciousness while maintaining a highly critical distance from it. In the process, the past not only enters memory; it comes into being in Stein’s sense of remembering war. As a provisional, discursive means of making sense of an historicized past, the literature of retrospective time marks the cultural mediation of wartime’s sequence and commemoration that earlier works inscribed in their respective time zones.

While earlier wartime authors and poets questioned the line between literature and history, the postmodern retrospective authors of this chapter self-consciously tread this line only to further fracture the difference between fabricated fiction and recorded history. Hutcheon defines these historiographic metafiction as “self-reflexive” mainstream fictional works that “lay claim to historical events and personages” (5). They disperse truths by revising past conventions and circumstances (5). For Hutcheon, postmodernism “questions, but does not destroy” cultural discourses, the systems of making sense such as the sequencing function of novels and the commemorative potential of poetry (141). Rather, it self-consciously frames such discourses as “human constructs, not natural or given entities” (141-2).

When the British Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, concluded “Last Post” with the lines, “If poetry could truly tell it backwards, / then it would” (l. 29-30), she was not refusing poetry’s power to make meaning as a commemorative discourse. Rather, Duffy’s retrospective rewinding of the war dead in “Last Post,” which encompasses the literary, the historical, and the fabricated—“Harry, Tommy, Wilfred, Edward, Bert” (l.

16)—calls attention to her medium of expression as a necessary cultural construct. In an interview she explains that “the poem is a tribute and a blessing, even an apology on behalf of poetry and all poets;” “in a way,” Duffy determines, “it’s an attempt at healing and being at one with the world” (“Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy’s New War Poem”). Like the novels examined in this chapter, Duffy’s poem retrospectively sequences and commemorates the overlapping time zones of the Great War as a means of recovering our present from both the trauma and the mythos of the past.

Retrospective time opens up the memory of the Great War for generations of future readers. The novels of this chapter achieve what Hutcheon calls “double-talk,” “a historical consciousness mixed with an ironic sense of critical distance” (201). I mark the echo of double-talk, the interplay between fiction and history, in order to trace the temporal distance between past and present. As historiographic metafiction, these novels complicate the aesthetics of representation in order to arrive the essential question: “*whose* reality is being represented?” (Hutcheon 182, emphasis hers). By questioning the relationship between power and the construction of time through the imbricated cultural discourses of literature and history, retrospective time puts into crisis our temporal assumptions about wartime, particularly its “homogeneity, linearity, and continuity,” the very same notions of causality that historiographic metafiction problematizes (Hutcheon 87). In effect, Hollinghurst, Barker, and Cunningham recast the temporalities of the Great War—trench time, mobilized time, and civilian time—in retrospect not so much to reproduce the past, but to rethink the past from our present temporality in order to forge a

different connection with the future. These authors' body of work attests to literature's discursive power of preserving wartime from being forgotten.

Through provisionality, intertextuality, ironic parody, and emphasizing ex-centric subjects left out of history, the literature of retrospective time paradoxically upholds and questions the literary history of the Great War. The writers of this chapter self-consciously interrogates how literature serves systems of power while simultaneously praising how it creates critical distance for its contemporary readership. Hollinghurst's *The Stranger's Child*, Barker's *Regeneration* Trilogy and *Another World*, and Cunningham's *The Hours* respectively continue the queer intimacy of trench time, the shock of mobilized time, and the precarity of civilian time. They each place their readers as "both spectators of and actors in the historical process" in order to emphasize the "traces" of the past (122). Emphasizing the unknowability of the past, Hutcheon draws a contrast "between events (which have no meaning in themselves) and facts (which are given meaning)" (122).

Duffy puts this postmodern provisionality to verse: "*if* poetry could truly tell it backwards, true, begin / That moment shrapnel scythed you to the stinking mud..." (lines 3-4, emphasis mine). She acknowledges the temporal gap between the Great War and a retrospective speaker—a then fifty-three-year old woman poet born thirty-seven years after the Armistice. Duffy turns from a self-conscious attention to poetic function to a provisional emphasis on the "moment," when the speaker brings readers into the "stinking mud" of wartime. By taking readers back to events in wartime, the retrospective

literature of this chapter questions the source of assumed facts and myths about the Great War and reshapes the memory of its time zones for the sake of future remembrance.

These retrospective novels foreground the textual nature of wartime's provisional past. Historiographic metafiction "incorporates, but rarely assimilates" historical data, focusing on today's "textualized accessibility" to the past (Hutcheon 114). By quoting the middle of Wilfred Owen's "Dulce Et Decorum Est" in the opening lines of "Last Post"—"In all my dreams, before my helpless sight, He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning" (qtd. in Duffy l. 1-2)—Duffy recontextualizes the past in order to enact the postmodern process of collapsing it into the present (Hutcheon 118). Just as Duffy avoids interpreting Owen's verse by leaving it unassimilated and outside her own poetic voice, Hollinghurst, Barker, and Cunningham each emphasize particular wartime texts in order to trace the events from which Great War literature produced its mythic "facts." By foregrounding the writing process during and after the war, retrospective novels "translat[e] knowing into telling" to ultimately enable the "conditions of possibility and sense-making" (121). Interpretation—not knowledge—is the discursive objective of such retrospective literature. These contemporary novels have the added temporal obligation of retelling how the war was sequenced and commemorated by those who experienced it as soldiers, civilians, and non-combatants.

Irony, one effect of this retrospective intertextuality, and parody, the vehicle for its expression, enables the critical distance needed to turn remembrance of the war into "being," in Stein's sense of remembering wartime. Pastiche and enlacing are key ways of producing parody in postmodern texts. Mary Hughes clarifies that pastiche suggests

“little of the implied depth” of enlacing, which involves developing “links begun in the original, links between characters or between characters and readers” (360). Brief references that pastiche the past mythos of the Great War and literary characters and textual remainders that enlase wartime with the present work in concert in postmodern parodies to create an “ironic rupture...[and] connection with the past” (Hutcheon 125). Hutcheon argues that parody “both...enshrine[s] the past and...question[s] it” (126). Subsequently, Hutcheon critically frames parody as an attempt to recover the past without reducing it to simple cause and effect or to a “single origin” (129).

In the same vein, the literature attuned to retrospective time parodies texts of wartime as Duffy does to Owen’s “Dulce Et Decorum Est.” She both affirms the poet’s place in trench time and questions his privileged position in cultural memory by listing others—Harry, Tommy, Edward, Bert—who shared this temporal experience and shaped it. Through reference—*The Stranger’s Child* refers to Brooke, *Regeneration* quotes and dramatizes Owen and Sassoon, and *The Hours* alludes to and narrativizes Woolf—within fictional worlds populated by their own fabricated characters, the literature of retrospective time reminds us that “*reference* is not *correspondence*, after all” (Hutcheon 144). Instead, the parodic reference through direct quotation and formal play questions the very process of interpreting the past while preserving the presence of the referent from a critical, temporal distance. This “poetic license” allows retrospective authors to “map a wider territory and present greater potential” (Latham 356)—and, as I will show, traverse a greater breadth and depth of time. By parodying the past, retrospective time

turns remembrance into a process of interpretation and brings the past into being in the present.

Beyond textual parody, the literature of retrospective time attempts to recuperate the past by foregrounding ex-centric subjects, those who have been historically marginalized or, perhaps worse, reduced to a cliché: the queer trench soldier, the shell shocked veteran, and the civilian in mourning. As postmodern texts about the early 1920s, these retrospective works evoke “the first stage” in “radical change” by foregrounding “the contradictions inherent in any transitional moment” (Hutcheon 73). The historic and fictional characters that commingle personify this moment in retrospective time—the queer figures that haunt the century-long plot of *The Stranger’s Child*; the doomed, shell shocked veterans enshrined within *Regeneration’s* three-part story arc synched to wartime; and the precarious generations living through the twentieth century in *The Hours*—enable Hollinghurst, Barker, and Cunningham to tap into their subjects’ historical mythos in order to manipulate it in a self-conscious and contradictory postmodern plot, pairing the literary and historical but never privileging one over the other. By “demarginaliz[ing] the literary through confrontation with the historical” (Hutcheon 108), these retrospective authors blend fact and fiction as a means of arriving at truer senses of the past, revolutionary perspectives that reframe the Great War’s temporality from a postmodern, heterogeneous present.

Hollinghurst’s *The Stranger’s Child* confronts twenty-first century readers with the potentials and pitfalls of historicizing the queer temporality of trench time in order to champion the provisionality of the past. As a means of recurring back to the verse of

Brooke and Owen, I follow what is called “Cecil’s moment” in Hollinghurst’s novel, the queer textual traces of a fictional character much like the historically doomed poets of the trenches. Cecil dies in the Great War and leaves behind a body of poetry that preserves the temporal traces of a queer intimacy that is never fully known yet nonetheless remains in the future. By framing Muñoz’s relational politics by queer historiography theorized by Eve Sedgwick, Carol Ann Dinshaw, and Carla Freccero, it is clear how Hollinghurst retrospectively plots the commemorative queer moments put to verse by the war poets. These moments are sequenced within the pages of *The Stranger’s Child* as “events” in Hutcheon’s sense of the word, but they quickly amass cultural meaning as “facts,” and are thereby distorted as the novel progresses into the twentieth century. In true postmodern form, Hollinghurst never fully reveals truth in retrospect; rather, his novel relishes the possibility of a provisional past.

Barker’s wartime trilogy—*Regeneration*, *Eye in the Door*, and *The Ghost Road*—and her later novel set in present day England, *Another World*, trace the intertextual remainder of mobilized time’s traumatic shock. Barker constructs a postmodern literary parody of mobilized time that at once reopens the past to readerly interpretation and self-consciously admits the generic limitations of the novel. By juxtaposing discursive remainders of mobilization—written transcripts of war memories, shell shock in the form of Dr. Jekyll-and-Mr. Hyde-like fugue states, and a mud splattered wartime journal—Barker brings the past into being without integrating it with the present. Instead she couples the fictional—particularly the Trilogy’s protagonist, Billy Prior, who parodies the paradox of modernity personified in Stevenson’s novella and the medium of life

writing—with the historical—names and dates of battles; literary figures like Owen, Sassoon, and Graves; historical personages like Dr. W.H.R. Rivers, Pemberton Billing, and Sir Douglas Haig. Through these intertextual connections and dislocations, Barker constructs a counter-narrative against what Hutcheon calls the “history of forgetting” while also avoiding totalizing the source of the war’s memory (Hutcheon 129). Instead of performing the historian’s linear function of integrating the past with present, Barker takes the role of the storyteller, or, as Walter Benjamin explains, one who narrates “events” without “explanation” (“The Storyteller” 89). Her wartime works project Hutcheon’s theorization of historiographic metafiction, which privileges “events” over culturally circumscribed “facts” (122). And like Hollinghurst’s *The Stranger’s Child*, Barker’s work relies on the cannon of Great War fiction in order to abandon it for a more provisional, discursive remainder of what could have been written in wartime and how it would be read today.

Cunningham’s *The Hours* sequences the trauma of civilian time across the twentieth century. The novel’s narrative structure overlaps the separate time periods after global crises. Each narrative follows a different precarious subject, or, borrowing Hutcheon’s term, “ex-centric”: Virginia Woolf in the decade after WWI, Laura Brown in the post-WWII era, and Richard Brown dying of AIDS in the 1990s. By tracing the temporal continuities between the narratives of these individual ex-centrics, I argue that Cunningham composes the traumatic history of civilians affected by wartime. These continuities change the context and meaning of each individual narrative and more broadly construct a history evincing the temporal delay of trauma associated with the

symptoms of PTSD. By individualizing and unifying these narratives, Cunningham's narrative strategy creates a new access to the past, particularly past wartimes, for readers who have no direct experiential ties to that past. In this way, *The Hours* demonstrates Stein's claim that remembering the present might be being in the present—or as one of Cunningham's characters puts it, "It's happening in that present. This is happening in this present" (66).

"Cecil's Moment":

Provisional Remains of Trench Time

in Alan Hollinghurst's *The Stranger's Child*

The scant amount of work on Alan Hollinghurst's recent novel, *The Stranger's Child*, has begun to reveal the author's important contribution to queer historiography. Reviewers were quick to key in on how Hollinghurst's plot pastiches the twentieth-century British novel (Holleran 34), and how he "re-gay[s]...20th century history" by tracing the literary afterlife of a Brooke-like war poet doomed to die during the Great War, Cecil Valance (Leith 35). There are striking links between the fictional Cecil and the historical Rupert Brooke. During the war Brooke wrote to Katherine Cox to be his widow, had a love affair with a male friend Denham Russel-Smith, was published by his literary executor Edward Marsh who had his poetry publicly read by Churchill, and potentially fathered a child named Arlice Raputo. Cecil writes to Daphne Sawle asking her to be his widow, has a love affair with her brother and his friend George Sawle, is published by his literary executor Sebby Stokes who has his work read by Churchill, and

potentially fathered a child with Daphne, Corinna. The parallels between the fictional Cecil and historical Brooke—parallels Hutcheon might call “double talk”—do not represent the memory of the past so much as they trace the provisional remains of our access to that past.

Criticism of *The Stranger's Child* has focused on the way in which Hollinghurst characterizes a British culture in flux across the twentieth century. Sam Leith claims the novel's “movement is from skin to paper: from youth and physicality and sex to old age and dust and decay” (34). Andrew Holleran reads this movement as “a very English lament for a culture destroyed by World War I, and its descent into a much dingier present” (34). I agree with Leith that “the central character in *The Stranger's Child* is neither Cecil nor Daphne, but time itself” (35), and Holleran is right to claim that what makes the novel cohesive is “the theme of loss, the mutability of things” (36). However, Hollinghurst's treatment of the Great War's effect upon broad cultural conceptions of time and loss first manifest through the personal traces of Cecil's relationships and memories with those who survive. The invocation of Cecil's poetry enables the movement of desire “from skin to paper” and, in a queer temporal turn, *back* to skin. By committing Cecil's moments of physical intimacy to paper in the verse and plot of *The Stranger's Child*, Hollinghurst enables these moments to live on as a trace in the skin of readers. Like the poets and novelists of trench time, Hollinghurst bases his representation of retrospective time in the presence and loss of personal intimacy. I am interested in marking how Hollinghurst's twenty-first century readers experience the remainder and trace of that loss based in the trenches.

To trace the movement of such desire across a queer temporality, I delineate iterations of what one character in the novel calls “Cecil’s moment,” a passing instant defined within and against the Great War. Evincing how the trope of doomed youth displaces trench time from its place on a linear timeline, Cecil’s queer moments reflect the potential crossings between wartime and so-called peace. Just as Hollinghurst plots Cecil’s time beyond the duration of the war, Muñoz locates queerness on the horizon because “the present is not enough” (27). He elaborates, “the present must be know in relation to the alternative temporal and spatial maps provided by a perception of past and future affective worlds” (27). Following Muñoz’s endorsement of temporal relationality, I locate traces of lost intimacy throughout *The Stranger’s Child* that build the queer archive of Cecil’s affective world spanning the twentieth century of the novel’s plot.

As one of the few scholars to publish a peer-reviewed essay on *The Stranger’s Child*, Bart Eeckhout has argued that Hollinghurst produces metonymic connections between characters, plot points, and themes within queer spaces of the novel by relying on architecture. Although Eeckhout hints at the connections between a queer space and time (4), I seek to spell out the unique way in which Cecil’s poetry—unlike architecture, memorials, and even the figure of the child—preserves and propagates a queer desire across generations outside of the flow of a heteronormative sense of time. This attention to the poetry within the novel clarifies the queer movement of desire across time and privileges literature—poetry and novels—as the vehicle to do so. The poetry within the novel, recursions of “Cecil’s moment” across the twentieth century, brings queer desire back to the skin as the trace of what was lost.

Hollinghurst justifies literature's role of performing what queer theorist and historicist Carla Freccero calls "intergenerational quasi-relationality," a term she applies to the power of writing that has the "goal" of "a certain communicative abstraction in the interests of achieving a different world" (187). Freccero's hope of queer historicism to "achiev[e] a different world" accords with Muñoz's relations of the present with the past by historicizing queerness and with the future by building a queer utopia. According to Muñoz, "queerness is rarely complemented by evidence, or at least by traditional understandings of the term" (65). Muñoz's alternative to straight historiography—his means of "queering evidence"—is the "concept of ephemera," or "a trace, the remains, the things that are left, hanging in the air like a rumor." Hollinghurst's novel is composed of the ephemera of Cecil's moment, a provisional temporality that infuses his poetry with the potential to shape a different world while cautioning against the forces of publishing houses and the state—especially those established in wartime—that obscure and manipulate literature's affective touch across generations and time.

"A fresh association blows...and...memory fades:"

Finding a Queer Space and Time

Eeckhout has done much to theorize how Hollinghurst inscribes queer spaces in the *Stranger's Child*. And yet, there has not been a thorough consideration of how the novel enables its readers to inhabit spaces within a queer temporality. Such an uncharted temporal tracing of the novel reveals a plot that queers trench time across the twentieth century, recalling Sedgwick's emphasis on queerness's communicative and disruptive

denotations as “*across*...transitive, relational, and strange” (xii). Cecil’s poetry remains a spectral presence across generations, relating the present to the past and future and drawing out the continuity of trench time across the twentieth century. In retrospect, the verse commemorates the trace of a lost intimacy—as Brooke and Owen’s poetry does with wartime—while the novel’s plot sequences it—as Remarque and Trumbo’s novels do. Hollinghurst reflects the vital presence of the provisional trace, or ephemera, as a means of tracing the queer temporality of trench time on both sides of no man’s land and both temporal ends of war and peace.

The key to this temporal movement across time is Cecil’s poetry, which serves as a vehicle to move readers toward a provisionally utopian horizon. Neither Corley Court, Cecil’s grand manor, nor Two Acres, the small but respectable country house of George and Daphne Sawle, have poetry’s ability to move readers in and out of queer desire. Between sections one and two, which are separated by the effaced temporality of the Great War, we move from Two Acres where Cecil reads Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* aloud to George and Daphne to Corley where George mourns Cecil’s death in an uncannily similar setting to the selection of Tennyson’s 1849 elegy for his friend Arthur Hallam. Cecil’s poetry, in concert with Hollinghurst’s plotting, self-consciously traces literature’s role of temporalizing the experience of the trenches.

In the first stanza of Cecil’s “favorite section” of *In Memoriam*, the speaker identifies his melancholy and survivor’s guilt with the natural brook and his lost love with the polar star in an intricate pathetic fallacy:

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,

At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star

The ineffability of the speaker's grief, tied to the incomprehensible babble of the brook, and the centering power of the polar star, or North Star, anchors the speaker's sense of direction to a lost love, but nowhere else. The direct quotation of this portion of *In Memoriam* that describes an "unloved...brook" can be interpreted as a postmodern play with language, alluding to what Cecil will become in the wake of his death when he will be repeatedly compared to Rupert Brooke but as "a less neurotic—and less talented—epigone of Rupert Brooke" (338). This very description appears in the novel as a fictionalized footnote from Paul Fussell's "book on the Great War." In the failed attempt to map this poetically melancholic space of Tennyson's poetry onto a Corley without Cecil, the narrator of *The Stranger's Child* positions the memory of Cecil as an unloved brook/Brooke in comparison to the ignored Thames. "Somewhere a few miles off flowed the Thames, already wideish and winding, though from here [at Corley] you would never have guessed it" (108). Eddying like Sedgwick's notion of a "queer moment," the flow of the Thames suggests a recurrent and cyclical circulation of time based on associations made by those in the present remembering the past. Such temporal logic runs counter to the linear progression through the seasons often associated with the pastoral. George's remembrance of their love is also something others at Corley would never have guessed, kept hidden like a secret rumor between the two. By situating Corley outside the wide reach of the Thames and other associations with nature, it becomes a modernized space so separate from the pastoral that it refuses to reflect Tennyson's pathetic fallacy. In contrast, George's own Two Acres, the bucolic setting of the first section, provides a

remembered queer space in which George associates his past desire for the lost Cecil.

The poem makes this temporal connection between the two spatial-temporal instances possible. It preserves Cecil's and George's first encounter with one another, when George "saw [Cecil], staring at [him] so brazingly, and longingly, across the lawn" (56). "Their little myth of origins, its artificiality a part of its charm" is preserved by the poetry and George's implied remembrance of it standing at Corely. The poetry reads as the ephemera of their secret love for one another, that which maintains a temporal continuity between past and present.⁹⁰

In Edmund Blunden's *Undertones of War*, the British novelist details the process of plotting his trench time experiences, which he explains "left a disordered recollection of the sequence of events so that I find myself in unexpected sympathy with Tennyson's oracle: 'Who can say / Why to-day / To-morrow will be yesterday?'" (149). Although Tennyson points out that certain aspects of the human condition cannot be explained away by putting them in words or in verse, the poetry remains a conduit between Blunden and his readership as well as George and Cecil, preserving the latter pair's trace of their lost bond. Back in 1913, Cecil goes on to read from section CI of *In Memoriam*:

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child—

As year by year the labourer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
And year by year our memory fades

⁹⁰ Eeckhout argues that continuity is missing from the novel's settings. He claims that the settings of each part of the novel, particularly the "architectural spaces," reflect no sense of "continuity of possession," thereby overturning assumptions about history and revealing the "cultural fantasy on the part of those who temporarily inhabit them and impose their own logic of (self-)possession upon them" (Eeckhout 4).

From all circle of the hills— (qtd. in Hollinghurst 52)

Tennyson writes of a moment's potential to cross both space and time in ways that evade one's physical grasp and control. While personal memories wane with the passing of time, the speaker of Tennyson's poem seems to take some solace in the physical traces of those memories that exude a sense of permanence through the image of a "circle of hills." The "fresh associations"—blowing year after year that are "familiar to the stranger's child" even as "memory fades"—sweep across the lives of those affected by Cecil's poetry. The stranger's child, a precursor of sorts to the trope of doomed youth that Cecil will come to embody, is born out of the grief for a lost love and a desperate attempt to preserve that love beyond its earthly ephemerality. Figured in unknown origins as born of a stranger or doomed to die at war, the child remains a queer embodiment refusing to preserve the past within a heteronormative framework of inheritance. Instead it embodies the trace of Cecil's moment, what is left behind as evidence of his relations to the past and future forged by affective contact through literature.

In the wake of Cecil's death, two characters signify as a stranger's child: George and his niece Corinna. At Corley as "the High Ground was being mown, the first time of the year," "the children hastened, at a ragged march, towards their uncle" (108). The eldest of the children, Corinna, literally becomes a stranger's child because of speculations of her uncertain origins either as the "legitimate" daughter of Cecil's brother, Dudley Valence whom Daphne marries, or as a result of Daphne's one-night tryst with Cecil while he was on leave during the war. These children do not maintain the memory or legacy of Cecil. Corinna's "uncertain biological connections" exemplify "the

novel's alternative, 'queer' organization of kinship histories...in multiple ways" as Eeckhout astutely observes (4). However, Corinna's historical lineage proves to be an ineffective means of tracing Cecil's remains. The uncertain lineage of the stranger's child reveals the blind spots of heteronormative theorizing and straight historicizing, particularly its inability to explain away desire by inscribing it upon a family tree.

Traditional history cannot account for Cecil's provisional past. Hollinghurst self-consciously parodies the academic appropriation of Cecil's life through Paul Bryant, Cecil's biographer in the 1980s, who imbues the novel's title with irony. When Paul asks George about Corinna's legitimacy after her death, George answers, "'There was a child,'" but then he "looked genuinely confused for a minute, then he said, 'Well, the girl, wasn't it...He sipped his coffee, still looking doubtful. 'You see I'm not sure she knows about it.' I said did he mean Corinna? he said yes" (353). The stranger's child did not even know she was illegitimate and George dismisses the mystery as irrelevant in his understated and perplexed way. Yet Paul, a writer who wants to establish himself and publish a successful biography of the poet, "was furious that she was dead: the discovery of a living child would have been the making of the book!" (354). Paul's strict adherence to an historical past shapes his limited approach to Cecil's life. Accepting such ideologically charged terms like "child" at face value, Paul fails to see the irony that Corinna, Cecil's illegitimate daughter, could potentially legitimize his lineage. Instead, Paul wallows in the fact that Corinna is dead, and therefore an unavailable source for his biography of Cecil. The biographer's fixation on the literal stranger's child reflects his shallow motivation to unearth the dirt on Cecil and the larger, deeply rooted assumptions

about inheritance. By privileging historical evidence of blood relations over the queered evidence of the ephemera in Cecil's poetry, Paul remains blind to the affective world around Cecil and at the heart of the novel's plot.

Before Cecil's poetry makes a "fresh association" in Paul's life, the shared moment of 1913 over Tennyson's elegy touches George standing back at Corley in the 1920s as Corinna runs toward him. "George stood his ground, in his dark suit and large brown shoes, and then squatted down with a wary cackle to inspect them on their own level" (108). This queer organization of kinship, a shared moment between the stranger's children, is inflected in George's performative squat and his cackle expressing an inchoate awareness of his place within this queer lineage. The stranger's child evokes what Carol Dinshaw calls a "queer desire for history," in which there is "touching across time, collapsing time through affective contact between marginalized people [and communities] now and then" (178). George is the first to feel this fresh association blow as the gardener lops the glades of the High Ground at Corley. This personal memory of Cecil will fade even as the queer moment remains in the poetry read by new generations of readers who will make new associations just as Cecil did to Tennyson's verse and George did to Cecil's performative reading. By a similar means of "affective contact," Brooke and Owen reach beyond their deaths in wartime. Although literary critics often emphasize personal history, Hollinghurst shows that poetry is where and how a touching across time happens for such ex-centrics.

This queer trace cannot be captured by or preserved within the space of Corley, or embodied in the estate's memorial crowning Cecil's tomb. The timeless and spaceless

potential of poetry to preserve the queer trace of George and Cecil's bond contrasts George's thoughts about the stifling atmosphere surrounding Cecil's memorial. He notes how "a dispiriting odour, of false piety and dutiful suppression, seemed to rise from the table and hang like cabbage-smells in the jelly-mould domes of the ceiling" (115). The jelly-mold domes containing the boundaries of the memorial space are sourced in a pre-war idyllic time when such architecture was in vogue. In the post-war 1920s in this now stagnant space of Corley, "Cecil was a cold white statue in the chapel downstairs" (94). "The sculptor had fastened his attention on the cuff badges, the captain's square stars, the thin square flower of the Military Cross" with an effigy framed by the very same square stars reading: "Cecil Teucer Valance MC ✕ Captain 6th Batt Royal Berkshire Regt ✕ Born April 13 1891 ✕ Fell At Maricourt July 1 1916 ✕ Cras Ingens Iterabimus Aequor" (119). George criticizes the monument when he thinks, "All these depictions were in a sense failures, just as this resplendent effigy was" (120). The artistic attention is paid to Cecil's rank within the army, but not to his body—especially his "celebrated *membrum vebri*, unguessed forever beneath the marble tunic" (120). The inadequacy of the statue as a medium to convey desire and the subsequent turn to the dead language of Latin to preserve Cecil's queer spectrality reflects a certain inassimilability of Cecil's memory to the chronological timeline of the war, even if it is literally set in stone.

The queer desire for Cecil's body, unacknowledged as is the Thames from the high ground outside Corley, remains for George in the reiterated Latin phrase, *membrum vebri*. Cecil first used this phrase in reference to his genitals when he and a naked Cecil were nearly discovered by Daphne in the garden at Two Acres (64). The intimate

language, like the poetry, enacts a “queer spectrality,” a term coined by Freccero, who, like Dinshaw, has a queer desire for history, “a desire issuing from another time and placing a demand on the present” (184). Hollinghurst sets Cecil’s moment as a spectral potential on the horizon, haunting the present by way of the past reaching toward the future. The novel represents poetry’s power to commemorate a past moment as a trace, and it reflects this retrospective novel’s function to sequence such traces across time.

“Oily shadows”:

Living with the Ghosts of Queer Desire

The recurrences of Cecil’s moment, forging relational bonds with past and future, are sequenced in time through Hollinghurst’s plot and queer the pastoral space with the oily shadows of marginalized desire. In the third section of the novel, which takes place in the 1960s—a decade before Paul attempts to write the biography of Cecil Valance—Paul talks to George Sawle at a dinner party and thinks that George is insensitive to the memory of Cecil who seemed to “loo[m] in the background for [George], less as a poet than as some awkward piece of lumber in the family attic” (248). Paul’s observation speaks more to George’s distaste of the statue than to the memory of Cecil. When Peter, Paul’s friend and sexual interest for the night, asks Paul if he is “ready for Cecil” and takes him down to see the memorial at Corley, which has been turned into a preparatory school where Peter teaches, Paul wonders if “Cecil” is “codeword” for sex (262).

In a way, “Cecil” does become a codeword for the two, who view the dead poet’s statue and then make love in a liminal space outside of Corley, “dividing In-Bounds from

the Out-of-Bounds Woods” (277). Although Peter realizes that after their sexual encounter, “Paul had been turned on by Cecil’s tomb, and by the fact that Corely having been his home,” Peter identifies with and finds comfort in one of Cecil’s “better pre-war poems,” affectively touched by the war poet’s queer spectrality:

Between the White Horse downs and Radcot Bridge
Nothing but corn and copse and shadowed grazing,
Grey village spires and sleeping thatch, and stems
Of moon-faced mayweed under poplars gazing
Upon their moon-cast shadows in the Thames (278)

Like the liminal wooded space that is neither in-bounds nor out-of-bounds where Paul “yields” to Peter (277), Cecil’s pre-war poem is all about what lies in “between.”

Between the downs, or limestone and chalk ridges, and the Radcot, the oldest and one of the most frequently crossed bridges over the Thames, lies a spectral space and time that is rich and fertile.

The timeless moment in the shadow of the moon resonates beyond the poem when Peter looks out of his bedroom window at Corley after Paul leaves to see “the moon gleam...sharply on the pointed vane of the chapel roof,” where he notices “two figures, of uncertain size and height... [that] seemed to flow like oily shadows themselves, in dressing-gowns left open like cloaks. They crept from chimney-stack to chimney-stack, towards the higher slope of the chapel roof, with its crowning spirelet still far above their heads” (279-80). Unlike Paul, who superficially associates the memory of Cecil with Corley, Peter realizes that it is not the space that preserves a queer moment. Rather, it is the poetry, with its ink forming the “oily shadows” of the ghosts of queer desires that we live with and that Freccero so astutely theorizes (78). The poetry’s affective presence in

the lives of George and later Peter is sequenced within the pages of *The Stranger's Child*, demonstrating how poetry's commemorative properties of maintaining fresh associations. Ultimately, the poetry enables a queer crossing of specters from Tennyson and Hallam to Cecil and George to Paul and Peter to the two ghostly figures on the roof of Corley. This queer crossing is representative of exactly the kind of resonance that Brooke's and Owen's poetry has upon the war literature of the inter-war period.

If poetry is the only viable vehicle to preserve this queer desire from the past for the future in *The Stranger's Child*, what is to be made of the loss Cecil's war poetry, which goes up in flames in the final sections of the novel set in 2008? Paul, unlike Peter who internalized Cecil's poetry, remembers a stanza of "Soldier Dreaming" because he was required to memorize it in school:

Some stroll through farms and vales unmarked by war,
Not knowing in their dreams
They are at war for just such tranquil fields,
Such fleet-foot streams. (235)

The poem's subtle criticism of the reality of modern war and the moment of respite outside of wartime reads a lot like Brooke's sonnets of *1914*. Like the slumber of Brooke's "The Dead" or the dreamscape of "The Soldier," there is a moment of tranquility that ultimately pays service to the state and the speaker's patriotic duty. However, the end of the stanza, particularly the phrase "fleet-foot streams" is an intricate word play with trench foot.⁹¹ Fleet, when read as a descriptor of streams, connotes as

⁹¹ In a 1917 issue of *The Lancet*, a premier medical journal, the case and prevention of trench foot was explained. As Das paraphrases, "trench foot was caused by having stood for hours, even days on end, without being able to remove we socks of boots. The feet would gradually go numb, turn red or blue, and in extreme cases, gangrene would set in. In the course of the war, 74,711 British troops were admitted to

fast-moving. When hyphenated with foot, fleet can also be associated with the bucolic British idiom of a marsh or ditch. In their dreams the soldiers meander through an English countryside; in reality, they stand in a stagnant trench. Trench time recurs like an oily shadow upon the pastoral landscape, altering the space through the spectral presence of a queer temporality.

Beyond the memorized lines of Cecil's published poetry and its subversive implications, *The Stranger's Child* also opens the potential of poetry by fictionalizing what remains of a lost queer archive. Even before the war, Cecil wrote a poem to George that he heavily edited and threw in the trash. In the wastebasket, George's valet Jonah finds and pockets the scrap of paper with "very dense crossing out, as if not only Cecil's words but very his very ideas had had to be obliterated" (40). Written with a private reader in mind and self-censored, the poem would speciously be held up by a book publisher in 2008 as a "queer manifesto...[set] in tetrameter couplets...written in 1913" (418). The same publisher sends one of its dealers, Rob, to find Cecil's lost war poetry, the very poems that Cecil's literary executor, Sebby Stokes, describes to George in a "moment...[of] reawoken feeling" in the 1920s as "about his men, trench life. They were very...*candid*" (128). These open-secrets put to verse about Cecil's experience of trench time were never sent to Sebby. Instead, Cecil intended to mail them to Harry Hewitt, the close friend of George's brother Hubert, with whom Cecil had a close and possibly sexual relationship. In 2008 while Rob searches for Cecil's old papers, he wonders about "the idea that Valance had a thing with Hewitt too...No sign of it, which was itself

hospitals in France with trench foot or frost bite. This was the second largest number of admissions for any particular condition" (Das 38, fn 10).

somehow suggestive” (430). Although Cecil’s letter to Harry explaining his candid trench poems remains, the manuscripts of the poems are lost. Cecil wrote to Harry in 1916, “They are for your eyes only—you will see they are not publishable in my life-time—or England’s! Stokes has seen some (not all)” (431).

Although England would be ready for his queer trench poems in 2008, *The Stranger’s Child* refuses the reader such satisfaction. Instead, Hollinghurst preserves the intimacy of the poetic expression by consigning it to the temporality of “the eve of the Somme” and the space of the trenches, when and where Rob thinks the poetry remains, never sent to Harry. Readers of the novel never receive closure on this detail of Cecil’s lost archive, which maintains a further air of its suggestiveness. Harry’s estate—housing Cecil’s manuscripts—goes up in flames in the final pages of the novel, leaving “the smell of smoke” on Rob’s hands as he leaves for a date with his partner Gareth. With such a bleak resolution that everything eventually turns to ash and dust, Eeckhout reads the novel as only “afford[ing] passing moments of aesthetic enchantment and provisional insights along the way” (10). Eeckhout may be underestimating the power of the provisional.

The emphasis on the present and the “unknowability of the future” is exactly what Hollinghurst intended to thematize over the course of the temporal sprawl of the novel (Baron). Just as Freccero and Dinshaw theorize, Hollinghurst fictionalizes a queer historicism that enables us to rethink linearity, and to, as Dinshaw explains, “Think further about multiple temporalities in the present” (178). By according a provisional status to Cecil’s queer archive that is lost in trench time, Hollinghurst insists on what

Dinshaw discerns as “the present’s irreducible multiplicity” (190), a multiplicity inhabited by the ghosts of queer desire that Freccero posits. By opening up temporal possibilities of what remains out of what is lost, Hollinghurst dramatizes the affective power of a queer desire beyond the choices of a literary estate, publisher, and even the state. Brooke’s and Owen’s verse commemorating queer moments within trench time similarly expands the temporal understanding of wartime beyond linear notions that simply demarcate war from peace. As historiographic metafiction, Hollinghurst’s novel refuses a single, simplified historical origin to Cecil’s moment.

Hollinghurst narrativizes the cultural reception and appropriation of Cecil’s poetic work after he dies, demonstrating that even more insidious than publishers looking to make a profit and more ignorant than a literary estate unaware of the poet’s personal life is the effacing power of the state. As his intimate lover, George demonstrates an understanding of inassimilable aspects of Cecil’s poetry to which the public is oblivious when he thinks about how “there were parts of [the poem titled after George and Daphne’s home “Two Acres”] unpublished, unpublishable, that Cecil had read to [George]—now lost for ever, probably” (124). The unknowability of the future reflected in the unreadable aspects of the poem expresses the trace of what is left unresolved, unsaid, and unpublished. Cecil’s poem’s subjective meaning is lost when it is given a larger cultural valence. He was not considered a war poet until Churchill quoted his work in a speech fictionalized within the novel (126). Cecil’s “prophetic strain,” “a pre-knowledge, a sense, perhaps, of the great inevitable that most of us are deaf and blind to” (126), is totalized in the service of wartime and consequently his death was framed as

“inevitable” (131). According to Margot Norris in *Writing War in the Twentieth Century*, art in war “seize[s] *what is left over* for its own terrain, a leftover in the form of the *human remainder*, the affective residue, the suffering that military histories imply but don’t voice, the inner experience that can’t be mapped, charted, counted, or otherwise quantified” (21). *The Stranger’s Child* is at once critical and complicitous with the totalizing power structures that deem particular texts worthy of commemorating the past. The trace of Cecil’s human remainder—his prophetic strain and inevitable death—is left over, affecting future generations of *The Stranger’s Child*. The kernel of this human remainder is revealed to readers as George’s intimate memories, unspoken to anyone else.

In spite of the threat that the state poses as manipulator of the human remainder in the aftermath of war and the potential of the literary estate to erroneously shape that trace, there is cause to celebrate this multiplicity. The multiple, provisional, and unknowable queer trace of Cecil’s experience of trench time elevates the literary as the unique cultural vehicle to preserve desire across generations, over space and time. And by celebrating the provisional trace of lost intimacy, Brooke’s and Owen’s literary archive—their poetry, manuscripts, and letters—are open to new interpretive possibilities. The provisional trace of lost intimacy functions akin to Muñoz’s notion of the “ephemeral proof,” which constructs queer archives outside of “systems of reading and understanding proper documentation and love” (70). Cecil’s verse evinces the potential of Muñoz’s ephemera, or as he theorizes what “lives...after its dematerializations as a transformed materiality, circulating in queer realms of loving and becoming.” Cecil’s poetry remains a spectral

presence across generations, relating the present to the past and future and drawing out the continuity of trench time across the twentieth century. Hollinghurst retrospectively reflects the vital presence of the provisional trace, or ephemera, as a means of tracing the queer temporality of trench time on both sides of no man's land and both temporal ends of war and peace—from Brooke to Owen to Remarque to Trumbo.

“The wordless, hallucinatory filmic quality of...memories”:

Textual Remains of Mobilized Time

in Pat Barker's *Another World* and the *Regeneration* Trilogy

Pat Barker's 1998 novel *Another World* provides a crucial frame to approach her retrospective narrativization of mobilized time in the previously published *Regeneration* Trilogy. Geordie Lucas, a 101-year-old survivor of the Somme much like the real-life Harry Patch, characterizes his memories as possessing a “wordless, hallucinatory filmic quality” (*Another World* 241). His words—originally spoken to Helen, a fictional Great War historian who wrote the study *Soldier, from the Wars Returning*—are confidentially recorded on tape and re-presented in written format as transcripts. As a postmodern intertext, his “wordless” memories are ironically expressed to readers in print. Barker once said in an interview, “I think much of my own sense of time derives from being brought up by the generation before my parents, by people old enough to return to the past in the way elderly people do” (Monteith, “Pat Barker” 26). As if continuing the endless reel of John Dos Passos's hallucinatory, filmic montage prose in the *U.S.A.* Trilogy, Barker's postmodern intertextuality in her retrospective Great War novels

express the shock and suspension of the temporal experience of mobilized time. She echoes the canon of war literature in the pages of her war novels, including many of the works examined in this dissertation as well as Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*, arguably the most in-depth novel sequencing the British experience of mobilized time.

I consider how Barker places mobilized time in retrospect. In order to accept the shock produced by this crisis of memory, Barker's postmodern novel plots the backward and forward temporal movement of wartime beyond the confines of 1914-1918 to show the continuities between the past—the dissolving British Empire of the nineteenth century and the Great War—as well as the future—her readers' contemporary society. To approach Barker's sense of time, I rely on a Walter Benjamin's diverse essays on memory and narration. For Benjamin, a contemporary of Barker's grandparents, WWI created a "memory crisis" (Jay 221). Martin Jay claims that Benjamin's "thoughts on the modalities of memory were stimulated by the violent trauma of the First World War, the cataclysmic event whose rupturing of the continuity with the world that preceded it brought to a head the 'memory crisis' that began in the nineteenth century" (221).

Through intertextuality *Another World* bridges the gap between the past and present over which this memory crisis hangs. In this way, Barker produces "different temporal worlds [that] overlap like the circles in Venn diagrams producing strange spaces of convergence, echo, and repetition," as Heather Nunn and Anita Biressi have argued (256). In the contemporary reader's present, Geordie's grandson Nick Halford, a psychology lecturer, retrospectively reads the transcripts of Geordie's memory of mobilizing for WWI: "...well, you see the idea was you all joined up together—a big

crowd of us lads from the factory all went along together, and yeah, I think the idea was it was a big adventure” (*Another World* 260). In *Regeneration*, Barker first establishes the falsehood on which the beginning of mobilized time was founded when she writes from the perspective of Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, Siegfried Sassoon’s real-life psychiatrist at Craiglockhart, “Mobilization. The Great Adventure. They’d been *mobilized* into holes in the ground so constricted they could hardly move” (*Regeneration* 107, emphasis Barker’s). “No wonder they broke down,” Rivers concludes (*Regeneration* 108). In *Regeneration*, Barker’s typographic emphasis on the passive act of “be[ing] *mobilized*” reveals the process of Rivers’s breakthrough as he theorizes the source of wartime shock. In *Another World*, Barker follows the trace of this shock. The reality of the war ironically reverses Geordie’s propagandized expectation of the Great Adventure, an idealized future-oriented journey, by literally grounding him in the present of the trenches until he too breaks down. “They all come crashing back into a trench, and I’m looking from one blacked-out face to another... And the officer counted them, one missing. And after the shells coming over died down a bit you can hear this scream, and it goes on and on” (*Another World* 262). Similar to the siren echoing—“ayayoooTO”—in Dos Passos’s *1919* (136), Geordie’s memory of the scream that goes on and on in the trenches cannot fit into words, spoken or printed. Instead, the endless scream resurfaces in Geordie’s hallucinatory, filmic memory and stated in present tense as a cry from a repressed temporality uncovered in retrospect.

One of Barker’s central questions in *Another World* is what happens to the present’s conception of the Great War when those with lived experiences and memories

of it die? If “memory creates the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation” as Walter Benjamin claims (98), then Barker problematizes the association between tradition and the Great War, but demonstrates the mediated process of passing a happening on. Nick realizes after reading these transcripts that “all [Geordie] had to go on was his own memory. And it let him down” (265). If Geordie cannot trust his own memory, how can readers in the present trust a culturally constructed memory of the past? Geordie tells Helen, “I know that what I remember seeing is false. It can’t have been like that, and so the one thing I need to remember clearly, I can’t. Nothing vague about it, you understand, it’s as clear as this hand...only its wrong” (265, ellipsis Barkers). His hand, he ultimately remembers, was the one that stabbed his brother, Harry, putting him out of his agony while wounded on the front. “Harry,” according to Nunn and Biressi, “becomes a doppelgänger, a fully formed but ghostly figure that haunts his brother’s memories of the war and personifies his inexpressible grief and trauma” (255). This ghostly doppelgänger recurs back to the filmic doubles of mobilized time, recalling Catherine who foils Frederic in *A Farewell to Arms* and the body of an American who foils the speaker of *1919*. Geordie’s guilt over fratricide, a word associated with friendly fire when put in the context of war, left him in a state of deferred shock, suspending closure to his experience of wartime.⁹² By paradoxically depicting Geordie’s past with filmic clarity yet as a hallucinatory misrecognition, Barker, in postmodern fashion, opens

⁹² Although she does not discuss it, this theme of fratricide also compliments Judith Seaboyer’s reading of *Another World* as “parody of the literary history of the Gothic” which “illuminate[s] the ways in which contemporary anxieties and acts of violence mirror past traumatic events that have been scandalously silenced” (63).

up rather than closes down the interpretation of a shocked past in order to create a new chain of memory between generations.

As readers of *Another World*, we interpret Geordie's past by peeling back layers of mediation—his faulty memory, his selectivity in what he tells Helen, the transcribed mediation of his speech to written words, and Nick's reaction to reading them. Of all of Geordie's recorded thoughts to Helen, his confession, "I am in hell" (270), affects Nick the most. He remembers this phrase at Geordie's funeral, placing this statement in its retro-temporal context: "Present tense, the tense in which his memories of the war went on happening." Nick, a psychologist, realizes this is symptomatic of PTSD, "a term Geordie probably never knew. Though he knew the symptoms well enough, he knew what it did to the perception of time. The present—remote, unreal; the past, in memory, nightmare, hallucination, re-enactment, becoming the present. I *am* in hell" (270). Just as I have attempted to do in my analysis of Nick, Jake, and Frederic in Hemingway's wartime narratives, I argue Barker privileges the experience of time over the label PTSD. For Barker, these lived experiences of elderly veterans still suffering from PTSD are "how wars last...the final insult of war" (Stevenson, "With the Listener in Mind" 179). In *Another World*, Geordie's post-war present extends well beyond the economic boom and depression in which Hemingway's novels are set. Geordie's sense of the present erodes away and recedes as the past repeatedly recycles, suspending him in the present hell of his memory of the past. Barker suggests to contemporary readers that with the death of the last surviving veterans of the Great War there remains an ambivalent end to wartime.

Another World sequences the final days of living with the temporal experience of the Great War and obliges readers to preserve the dead's past in our contemporary present.

With postmodern skepticism, Barker questions and utilizes her very medium's ability to preserve that past for the present. By filtering Geordie's death through Nick's perspective, Barker problematizes narrative's function of sequencing a life, just as Duffy questions the commemorative power of poetry on the occasion of Harry Patch's death in "Last Post." Nick places Geordie's memory in time in order to forge a personal connection to the past, but in the process he recognizes an irreducible social frame around this past. At Geordie's funeral service, he realizes that the discourse around PTSD was too simple in its dismissal of "lived experience as a symptom of this, that, or the other pathology: to label it, disinfect it, store it away neatly in slim buff files and prevent it making contact with the experience of normal people" (270). Barker agreed with an interviewer that "retrospective labeling is about confining people and conditions to a manageable discourse" (Monteith, "Pat Barker" 25). The two postmodern operative words, "confining" and "manageable," describe but do not explain away Barker's ambivalent critique of psychiatry and other cultural discourses that attempt to combat the shock of wartime neuroses. Barker, participating in an alternative cultural discourse, is a storyteller in the Benjaminian sense of the word: one who crafts narratives that express "events" without "explanation" ("The Storyteller" 89). Or, to reiterate Hutcheon's terms, Barker enables readers to rediscover the past in its essential form, as "events (which have no meaning in themselves)" before they became "facts (which are given meaning)"

(122).⁹³ Rather than confine or manage trauma as a psychiatrist would through retrospective labeling, Barker expands and unfetters the past through retrospective sequencing. For this novelist, the personal experience of the passage of time and the social act of situating oneself in history compose the complex dialectic of retrospective memory. In the *Regeneration* novels Barker emphasizes the former aspect of this dialect, while here in *Another World* Barker emphasizes the latter.

Nick's empathetic perception of Geordie's experience of wartime provides an important key to understand the theme of memory in *Another World* as well as its development from and recurrence back to Barker's exploration of an adjacent theme in her earlier fiction, regeneration. Nick wonders:

Suppose time can slow down. Suppose it's not an ever rolling stream, but something altogether more viscous and unpredictable like blood. Suppose it coagulates around terrible events, clots over them, stops the flow. Suppose Geordie experienced time differently, because, for him, time was different? It's nonsense of course. And it's just as well, because if true, it would be a far more terrible truth than anything the passage of time can deliver. Recovery, rehabilitation, regeneration, redemption, resurrection, remembrance itself, all meaningless, because they all depend on that constantly flowing stream... Ultimately for [Geordie], all those big words had meant nothing. Neither speech nor silence had saved him. *I am in hell.* (270-1, her italics).

Barker questions but does not definitively answer how trauma affects one's sense of time.

As Nick's musings revise time as coagulating blood rather than rolling water, he reimagines time as an uncanny, bodily and thereby subjective experience. Nick concludes

⁹³ In Merritt Moseley's 2014 reader's guide, *The Fiction of Pat Barker*, he concludes that future Barker criticism must engage with the question, "Do her books accord with the definition of the genre provided by Linda Hutcheon's influential work on historiographic metafiction?" (133). However, mine is not the only study to read Barker's novel through Hutcheon's postmodern frame of historiographic metafiction. For a reading of Barker's metafictional historicizing of wartime masculinity, empire, and psychiatry, see Dennis Brown's "The *Regeneration* Trilogy: Total War, Masculinities, Anthropology, and the Talking Cure" in *Critical Approaches to Pat Barker*. Ed. Sharon Monteith. South Carolina: South Carolina UP, 2005. 188.

that this line of thought is “nonsense” only because “if true it would be a far more terrible truth than” any promise of futurity that linear time safeguards. While linearity cannot account for Geordie’s shock, it is necessary to conceptualize “big words” like “regeneration” in the abstract sense. And it is necessary for Barker to plot her novel. This temporal conflict stages what Benjamin calls the “whole inner action of a novel”: the “struggle against the power of time” (“The Storyteller” 99). The sequencing function of the novel enables it as a discourse to have the effect of expressing “experiences of time: hope and memory” (Benjamin 99). Nunn and Biressi argue that by representing the “textuality of history as story” in her retrospective war fiction, Barker’s storytelling is akin to “therapeutic practice” (258). Although there seems to be little room for hope or therapy in the interpretation of Geordie’s memory—“*I am in hell*”—the textual accessibility of his past within Barker’s narrative present establishes the potential to find hope in past memory. The memories in and of themselves may place Barker’s characters in hell, but by sequencing them in her postmodern plot the past is presented anew to readers, expanded and unfettered. “Only in the novel,” Benjamin concludes, “does there occur a creative memory which transfixes the object and transforms it” (99). Barker’s “creative memory,” narrativized in *Another World*, stages her struggle against linearity. By enabling readers to do what Nick cannot—acknowledge the “terrible truth” of Geordie’s temporal experience of mobilization—Barker transforms the memory of the Great War in retrospect.

“A hint of parody”:

Prior as Embodied Parody in *The Eye in the Door*

Although Barker is publicized as a “novelist of ideas,” she claims that this label “means that ideas drive the book” (Monteith, “Pat Barker” 31). “For me,” Barker responds, “they don’t. Novels of ideas are easiest to talk about in many ways but my books are character-driven and I hope that the characters embody a complex of ideas and have their own ideas as well” (31-2). Kaley Joyes has effectively explored how Barker embodies the theme of memory in her characterization of the historical Wilfred Owen in the first novel of the trilogy. She argues that Barker brings a contemporary readership into the past by way of textual interpretation rather than privilege Owen as an historical eyewitness (2-3). I consider the fictional character Billy Prior who drives the plots of the second and third novels of the *Regeneration* Trilogy. While Owen questions the process of historical interpretation, Prior questions the process of literary interpretation. In *The Eye in the Door* Barker situates her contemporary creation, Prior, in tension with textual access to the past. Through direct quotations of and implied allusions to the textual past, Prior is figured as an embodied parody of mobilized time and provides a retrospective way in to the terrible truth of wartime.

Barker frames readers’ interpretation of the textual sources of the past through Prior’s eyes, emphasizing what Hutcheon and Benjamin would call the “events” that precipitated the shock of mobilized time. While *Regeneration* begins with Sassoon’s written protest against the war, “A Soldier’s Declaration,” by contrast *The Eye in the Door* begins with Haig’s April 13th Order of the Day: “There is no other course open to

us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man: there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight on to the end” (6). “Whatever effect this Order had on the morale of the army,” Barker writes, “it had produced panic among civilians” (6). One civilian, Pemberton Billing, an historical figure, left the Royal Naval Air Service and enforced this panic through his publication, *The Imperialist*. Barker directly quotes Billing’s “The First 47,000,” which was published in *The Imperialist* January 26, 1918 and was based on the account of Harold Spencer, a former soldier who claimed the existence of a black book listing the names of sexual and treasonous degenerates who threatened the British Empire within it. Declaiming “meretricious agents of the Kaiser...stationed at such points as...Hyde Park Corner,” Billing’s diatribe reaches a crescendo when he claims, “There are three million men in France whose lives are in jeopardy, and whose bravery is of no avail because of the lack of moral courage in the 47,000 of their countrymen, and numbering among their ranks, as they do, men and women in whose hands the destiny of the Empire rests” (154). Adding to the atmosphere of paranoia established by military generals like Haig, Billing further instantiates a compliance to mobilized time by evoking the sheer mass of men fighting—“the three million men in France”—against the smaller yet sizable faction of the 47,000. Between Haig’s Order and Billing’s “The First 47,000,” Prior stands in a liminal space, “neither fish nor fowl nor good red herring. *Socially*. Sexually too, of course” (20). This liminality does not mean Prior is unreadable. Rather, this fictional character in Barker’s biofictive world acquires layers of interpretation as he radiates a “hint of parody” in his social and sexual identity. Prior parodies what Dennis

Brown calls “a crisis in ideas about masculinity,” which Barker “engages head-on” through the representation of wartime “hysteria and homosexuality” (192). As Prior navigates his way “fight[ing] on to the end” as Haig requires and fulfilling his social duty as an agent in the Munitions Ministry, his sexual exploits would be interpreted by Billing as “spreading debauchery,” a member among the 47,000 (152). The tension between duty and desire ultimately lead to Prior’s breakdown in the second novel of the Trilogy.

Although released from Craiglockhart War Hospital by the end of *Regeneration*, in *The Eye in the Door* Prior experiences a fugue state, a mental condition that personifies the mental shock of mobilized time. Prior loses time, but perceives “no interval” (123). “He looked at his watch, and his brain struggled to make sense of the position of the hands...three hours had passed...and of that he could account for perhaps twenty to twenty-five minutes. The rest was blank” (123). While the material presence of the watch grounds his experience in reality and provides him some sense of temporal control, Prior’s blank memory reflects an intangible crisis. On a personal level, this fugue state is Prior’s reaction to a deeply repressed past, but on a cultural level, it embodies Barker’s retrospective interpretation of mobilized time, which she delineates as an ahistorical timeline full of blank periods of unacknowledged experience. During unmarked periods of time, Prior would walk; “his favorite walks were in Hyde Park” (127). This location, mentioned in Billing’s libelous article also makes the literary allusion to Hyde of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Critic Sheryl Stevenson has argued that the intertextuality between *The Eye in the Door* and *The Strange Case of*

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde “brings out undeveloped and ... repressed ... aspects of the original text” (220).

The semiotic movement does not just go backward to a source text; it also moves forward to reveal the repressed history between the Great War and today. Benjamin’s reading of Freud’s notion of repression helps clarify Barker’s retrospective sequencing of the temporal gaps and traumatic shocks produced by the war. For Freud, “protection against the stimuli is an almost more important function than the reception of stimuli” (qtd. Benjamin, “On Some Motifs of Baudelaire,” 161). Benjamin deduces, “The threat from these energies is one of shocks. The more readily consciousness registers these shocks, the less likely there are to have a traumatic effect” (161). Barker brings the repressed public memory of the past into retrospective consciousness for her contemporary readership through Prior who enters the process of recognizing the shock of his repressed past. Barker reverses the process of shock, registering the past as trauma by stripping away the impulse to protect and repress.

Parodying Stevenson’s split protagonist in the characterization of Prior, Barker expresses the traumatized shock of mobilized time to make readers live and cope with a traumatized past. The real-life Rivers treats Prior for this fugue state, well aware of the association between Prior’s condition and Stevenson’s novella. In 1923, Rivers wrote *Conflict and Dream*, in which he claimed that dreams have a “constructive agency” (49). “It is well known that novelists, of whom Stevenson is perhaps the most striking instance, have utilised dreams in the construction of their plots, and dreams have also taken a definite part in the production of poetry.” Prior’s fugue state, a waking dream, enables

Barker to sequence her retrospective plot to at once characterize Prior's dual identity as well as the dual memory of the Great War, its recorded mythos and repressed past.

Barker refuses to integrate mythos and past into the present. In postmodern temporal play, she maintains the binaries of past / present as well as unconscious / conscious for readerly interpretation. "Perhaps," Rivers ponders, "contrary to what was usually supposed, duality was the stable state; the attempt at integration, dangerous" (235). For Nick of *Another World*, integrating the past with the present was so dangerous that he had to dismiss such a "terrible truth," a truth that prevented Geordie from integrating his shocking past into the present of his final days. However, Benjamin argues that "the acceptance of shocks is facilitated by training in coping with stimuli, and, if need be, dreams as well as recollection may be enlisted...that the shock is thus cushioned, parried by consciousness, would lend the incident that occasions it the character of having lived in the strict sense" (162). By bringing a repressed past into "the registry of conscious memory," Benjamin claims that "it would sterilize this incident for poetic expression" (Benjamin 162). Through Prior, Barker navigates a repressed past of wartime, eventually sterilizing its trauma and bringing it into the contemporary present through literary expression. By mingling the historical, literary, and fictional, Barker relies on readers to retrospectively read her postmodern parody of the past as an exploration of potential connections between the heterogeneous past and today's conscious memory.

Barker figures Prior as parody in her retrospective critique of the fractured cultural memory of mobilized time. Acknowledging the shock through the talk therapy

that Rivers provides to his patients enables Prior to recollect his past including his fugue dreams, a past embodying the trauma of wartime. “I was born two years ago. In a shell-hole in France. I have no father,” confesses Prior’s other, Hyde-like half to Rivers (240). For Barker, narratives and talk therapy share the same selective nature; they both “are only a very imperfect approximation of the truth of what really happened” (Stevenson, “With the Listener in Mind” 178). This partial truth, the metaphorical child of mobilized time born out of the womb of no man’s land, has no connection with a past. This other side of Prior also has the kind of “constructive agency” that Rivers argued dreams contain (Rivers 49); he enables Prior to progress into the future. Prior tells Rivers, “He was wounded. Not badly, but hurt. He knew he had to go on. And he couldn’t. So I came” (241). A parody of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Prior comes to figure the extreme case of dream narration theorized by Benjamin who claimed that “the narration of dreams brings calamity, because a person still half in league with the dream world betrays it in his words and must incur its revenge. Expressed in more modern terms: he betrays himself” (Benjamin, “One-Way Street” 62). The filmic quality of Prior’s repressed memories in mobilized time—the short, clipped sentences that evoke a montage prose akin to Hemingway’s “and”-filled syntax or Dos Passos’s compiled “Newsreels”—can only be articulated in a hallucinatory state. In this way, Prior betrays himself to Rivers, exposing a dangerous truth about his past that is incompatible with his conscious identity.

This exposure more broadly reflects Barker’s critique of the war’s memory and its place in cultural identity. During this talk therapy, Barker uses Rivers as a mouthpiece to privilege the temporal mode of retrospect—acknowledging the past from the future—

over historicism—integrating the past into the future. Prior asks Rivers, “If I remember is that enough to heal the split?” and Rivers answers, “No, I don’t think so. I think there has to be a moment of...recognition. Acceptance. There has to be a moment when you look in the mirror and say, yes, this too is myself” (249). Barker’s Trilogy helps contemporary readers do just this; by sterilizing the trauma of the past through literary expression Barker allows readers to acknowledging the historical past that Barker fictionalizes to accept readerly complicity in the shock and trauma experienced by Barker’s historical and fictional characters. To do so, we have to recognize the past of mobilized time in its retrospective context.

After Prior’s revelation, he walks home and witnesses a military drill taking place, establishing the precedent for his return to mobilized time in *The Ghost Road*, the concluding novel of the Trilogy. Prior hears “familiar shouts, the slurring and stamping of boots, lines of regimented bodies moving as one” (266). The parade at the end of *The Eye in the Door* takes a dark turn as he notices that “in the front rank a conchie was being ‘persuaded’ to take part. That is, he was being manhandled first into one position, then another. ‘Marking time’ consisted of being kicked on the ankles by the guards on either side. No attempt was made to hide what was happening...Prior watched, then turned away” (266). This regimented form of “marking time” names Prior’s newfound ability as his fugue state recedes. Prior can only consciously watch this inhumane treatment of the conscientious objector for a limited amount of time before he has to turn away. Like Nick who considers but ultimately dismisses the terrible truth of Geordie’s experience of wartime, Prior can only momentarily accept his complicity in mobilized time. Nick’s turn

away also recalls Tietjen's speech that gave Ford his title, *Parade's End*: "No more Hope, no more Glory, no more parades for you and me any more. Nor for the country...nor for the world, I dare say...None..." (330, ellipsis Ford's). This moment of recognition in *The Eye in the Door* marks Prior's progression away from being a parodic embodiment of the Great War's fractured and fugue-like past to an intertextual memory, fully realized in the final novel of the Trilogy.

"Even the living were ghosts in the making":

Intertextuality and the "Language of Ghosts" in *The Ghost Road*

In *The Ghost Road* Prior returns to the front and records his experiences in a journal, which develops into a textual remainder of the war like Geordie's transcripts from *Another World*. This fictional intertext joins the historical sources and literary references to construct what Barker calls a "language of ghosts" (164). When Prior looks at Hallet, a younger member of his platoon, he thinks, "Ghosts everywhere. Even the living were only ghosts in the making. You learned to ration your commitment to them. This moment in this tent already had the quality of *remembered* experience. Or perhaps he was simply getting old. But then, after all, in trench time he *was* old. A generation lasted six months, less than that on the Somme, barely twelve weeks. He was the boy's great-grandfather" (46). Prior's traumatic temporal experience of the trenches that left him in a state of shell shock in *Regeneration* and in a fugue state in *The Eye in the Door* has accelerated his sense of time. Barker's attention to age and lifespan at war echoes the narrator of Ford's *Parade's End*, who claims that "a couple of months" was "a long space

of time as that life [of a soldier on the front] went” (319). In *The Ghost Road* Prior combats his sense of passive aging by retrospectively framing his perception of the present of mobilized time as “*remembered* experience.” Like Frederic’s split narration between the narrative present and a retrospective time outside of the narrative in *A Farewell to Arms*, Barker’s Prior lives among ghosts and records the filmic, hallucinatory quality of wartime in retrospect.

While Prior parodied Stevenson’s novella in *The Eye in the Door*, he parodies the very format of autobiography in *The Ghost Road*. “If the whole of one’s life can be summoned up and held in the palm of one hand, *in the living moment*,” Prior writes in his first journal entry, “then time means nothing. World without end, Amen. Load of crap. Facts are what we need, man. Facts” (107). Prior dismisses glorifying the written word as anything more than simply that. Instead he privileges facts over mythos and realizes that one’s life cannot be summoned up in a single book—religious, literary, historical, or otherwise. Prior, according to his diary and Barker’s authorial intention, is “closer to the modern framework that we have” than to the Edwardian ideals of his day (Stevenson, “With the Listener in Mind” 177). In contrast to Prior, Ford’s Tietjens could be interpreted as one who held onto the Edwardian ideals many had when going to war, as reflected in his “rule: *Never think on the subject of a shock at a moment of a shock*” (339).⁹⁴ Prior’s attempt at writing in the moment of shock dismisses Tietjen’s rule for

⁹⁴ Tietjen’s rule is further explained: “The mind was then too sensitised. Subjects of shock require to be thought all round. If your mind thinks when it is too sensitised its then conclusions will ne too strong” (339).

mental repression and reflects his attempt to avoid another mental breakdown like the one he suffered in *Regeneration*.

In the process of writing his first entry beginning his sequence of mobilized time, Prior discovers that presenting the facts proves that time does indeed mean something. Benjamin theorizes Barker's critique when he writes that the retrospective frame to autobiographical writing does not present life as it is or "the stuff that life is made of," but instead it emphasizes the "recollection" of the "continuous flow of life" in its selected "moments and discontinuities" that "may be...fleeting or eternal," depending on how that autobiographical recollection is read and received (Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle" 28). While the men on the front are off-duty, Prior realizes that there is a connection—if only an imagined one—between writing and the "continuous flow of life" that Benjamin theorizes: "At least two would-be poets in this hut alone. Why? you have to ask yourself. I think it's a way of claiming immunity. First-person narrators can't die, so as long as we keep telling the story of our own lives we're safe. Ha bloody fucking Ha" (115). Prior's journal is a contradictory text; it purports to give the facts but provides immunity from death; it dismisses the "living moment" of the written word but tells the mythic story of a soldier's unending life. Prior's ironic laugh emphasizes Barker's own postmodern self-conscious construction of "the language of ghosts" (164), verse and prose composed for a future readership that read their authors as Geoff Dyer claimed Owen was read in the aftermath of the war: as "those who *are going to have died*" (33 his italics).

Barker problematizes the retrospective memory of wartime shock by overlapping time zones of the Great War in Prior's journal, particularly the experiential paradox

between the stagnant trenches and the acceleration of mobilization during the final months of the war. “As far as I can make out,” Prior writes:

River’s theory is that the crucial factor in accounting for the vast number of breakdowns this war has produced is not the horrors...but the fact that the strain has to be borne in conditions of immobility, passivity, and helplessness. Cramped in holes in the ground waiting for the next random shell to put you out. If that *is* the crucial factor, then the test’s invalid—because every exercise we do now is designed to prepare for open, mobile warfare. And that’s what’s happening—it’s all different. (172)

With the clarity available to a retrospective author of historiographic metafiction, Barker uses Prior’s journal to question the very “invalid” “test” of the war itself. Prior’s journal bears testimony to how the overlapping of temporalities, the expectation of mobilized time undercut by the reality of trench time, led to a traumatic shock for its participants.

Barker casts wartime in retrospect through Prior’s frontline experiences, revealing the tenuous yet necessary relationship between temporality, language, and public memory. Benjamin claims that “moments of sudden illumination are at the same time moments when we are beside ourselves” when “our deeper self rests in another place and is touched by shock” (“A Berlin Chronicle” 56-7). He compares these moments of shock to “the little heap of magnesium powder by the flame of the match” in order to conclude that “it is to this immolation of our deepest self in shock that our memory owes its most indelibly images” (57). On a larger scale, wartime unites its participants in moments of shock, creating a shared set of indelible images that immolate and recreate a new, collective sense of self. Prior records an uncanny “setting sun rise” as the image that immolated the soldiers’ subjectivities:

I waited for the sun to go down. And the sodding thing didn’t. IT ROSE. It wasn’t just me. I looked around at the others and saw the same stupefaction on every

face. We hadn't slept for four days. Tiredness like that is another world, just like noise, the noise of a bombardment, isn't like other noise. You see people wade through it, lean into it. I honestly think if the war went on for a hundred years another language would evolve, one that was capable of describing the sound of a bombardment of the buzzing of flies on a hot August day on the Somme. There are no words. There are no words for what I felt when I saw the setting sun rise. (197-8)

This moment of shock is shared by all those in Prior's trench with looks of stupefaction. Like the precarious fatigue experienced by the women in Price's *Not So Quiet*, the daily routine of the mobilized men inevitably loosens their hold on reality. This postmodern reversal of time exaggerates Ford's claim in *Parade's End* that "there will be no man who survives of His Majesty's Armed Forces that shall not remember those eternal hours when Time itself stayed still as the true image of the bloody War!" (615). Prior's inability to articulate his emotions when he witnesses the setting sun rise alludes to the very same breakdown of cause and effect that Hemingway's wartime protagonists face when they cannot grasp the action and emotion of their pasts that their author clarifies through cinematic prose. Prior's inability to articulate his emotion in reaction to the "facts" of wartime points to a linguistic breakdown in the process of articulating and recollecting wartime just as "abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete" for Hemingway's Frederic who also ponders, "Perhaps wars weren't won any more. Maybe they went on forever. Maybe it was another hundred years war" (185, 118).⁹⁵ Relying on reader's retrospective knowledge, Barker encodes Prior's diary

⁹⁵ In another scene, Prior almost paraphrases Frederic Henry when he thinks, "Patriotism honour courage vomit vomit vomit. Only the names meant anything. Mons, Loos, the Somme, Arras, Verdun, Ypres" (*The Ghost Road* 257).

through an implied, intertextual conversation between his fictional journal and the literary cannon of Great War literature.⁹⁶

As a self-conscious author, Barker clarifies that the haunting textual presence in her novel is not an escape from or exorcism of the past. Rather *The Ghost Road* reads as a cautionary tale against subsuming the literary past of the Great War into a single unified myth. As he considers the trope of haunting in Sassoon's poetry, Rivers realizes, "The ghosts were not an attempt at evasion... Rather, the questions became more insistent, more powerful, for being projected into the mouths of the dead" (212). Like the powerful amplification of Hemingway's and Dos Passos's critique of mobilized time through the ghosts of Catherine and the body of an American, the literary and historical ghosts of Barker's Trilogy add an urgency to her retrospection. Contemporary readers, Barker puts forth, are obliged to these ghosts, the remainder of the war dead. "One no longer listened attentively enough to the individual voice," Rivers thinks. "There was a real danger... that in the end stories would become one story, the voices blend into a single cry of pain" (229). Barker's intertextuality throughout the Trilogy attempts to bring together respective war stories—literary, historical, and fictional—without blending them into a homogenized and forgotten cry of pain like the unending scream in Geordie's recorded transcripts. Refusing to assimilate the past with the present, Barker communicates through the language of ghosts to create interpretive parallels and differences between fictive and biographical figures—from Prior to Owen to Rivers. Through her ghosts, she

⁹⁶ For a comparative reading of Barker's fiction against the Great War cannon see Ronald Paul's "In Pastoral Fields: The *Regeneration* Trilogy and Classic First World War Fiction" in *Critical Approaches to Pat Barker*. Ed. Sharon Monteith. South Carolina: South Carolina UP, 2005. 147-161. Paul explores how Barker "subsumes or subverts" recourse to the pastoral (148).

reaches out to contemporary readers as Benjamin describes the conjuring quality of déjà vu, “an echo awakened by a call, a sound that seems to have been heard somewhere in the darkness of past life” (“A Berlin Chronicle” 59). Benjamin’s expression of the past as “an echo awakened by a call” implies the need to respond to the past. Barker’s Trilogy enacts this response through pairing and juxtaposing—but never totalizing—the cultural discourses that recorded the memory of the war.

The textual presence of Prior’s journal in *The Ghost Road* self-consciously links the novel’s ending with the legality of the war’s end. Perhaps the most haunting and self-conscious line in Prior’s journal is when he writes, “Nobody’s been inside a proper shop for six weeks, so I keep tearing pages out of the back of this book and giving them to people. Not many left now. But enough” (253). His sense that the end is near, a sentiment readers share as they physically turn the last twenty-five pages of the novel, is first felt from a rumor about a peace treaty. Prior records that “the men cheered up when they heard it...Nobody here can understand why it’s still going on. I lay in bed last night and listened to them in the barn singing. I wish I didn’t feel they’re being sacrificed to the subclauses and the small print. But I think they are” (249). The torn out pages of his journal are defiantly framed as a written remainder outside of Barker’s text that runs counter to the subclauses of the peace treaty. This interconnected, textual marking of wartime makes legible the sacrificed individual voices, while also highlighting the limitations inherent in plotting a novel.

Implying that life and the temporal experience of the war exists outside of the pages of Prior’s journal, Barker narrates the last moments of his experience of wartime.

In the final offensive of his and Owen's lives, the crossing of the Sambre-Oise Canal, Prior remains highly conscious of time in order to synchronize his men's movements. Once "a runner came back with his [synchronized] watch" Prior had "a tremendous sense—delusional, of course—of being in control again [as] he strapped it on. Then they were moving forward, hundreds of men eerily quiet, starlit shadows barely darkening the grass" (261). His irrational yet stabilizing sense of control over time gives way to synchronized bombardment: "The barrage was due to start in fifteen minutes' time ... Concentrate on nothing but the moment, Prior told himself" (270). By sequencing Prior's final moments in her own narrative voice, Barker suggest that Hemingway is correct in his claim that an ideal soldier focuses on the present of wartime but an effective writer can place that present in relation to a broader past and future (*Men at War* xxvii). She focuses on the temporal experience of mobilization, particularly the false sense of control that the watch provides by grounding its wearer in the present. However, "prompt as ever, hell erupted. Shells whined over...the ground shook beneath...Five minutes of this, five minutes of the air bursting in waves against your face...Then, abruptly, silence" (271). The prompt beginning, five-minute measured duration, and abrupt ending sequence the paradox of this short bombardment as planned chaos.

Amid this temporal paradox of mobilized trench warfare, Prior's life ends. After the barrage and during their attempt to take control of enemy territory, Prior is shot and tries to take cover only to fall into a ditch thick with gas. "Banal, simple, repetitive thoughts ran round and round his mind. *Balls up. Bloody mad. Oh Christ.* There was no pain, more a spreading numbness that left his brain clear" (273). The clichéd statements

and idioms bourn out of the war become the only means of expression for Prior—echoing in a British vernacular the lost soldier of Dos Passos’s body of an American—“*Say soldier for chrissake cant you tell me how I can get back to my outfit?*” (1919 378, italics Dos Passos’s). The numbness that takes over Prior’s body leaves his mind clear, suggesting his certainty of his fate. In this state, “he saw Owen die, his body lifted off the ground by bullets, describing a slow arc in the air as it fell. It seemed to take for ever to fall, and Prior’s consciousness fluttered down with it. He gazed at his reflection in the water, which broke and reformed and broke again as bullets hit the surface and then, gradually, as the numbness spread, he ceased to see it” (273). In this fleeting, final moment Prior truly looks with visual clarity at his reflection and his place in the war. His fictional death, synchronized with the historical death of Owen, hints at a moment of acceptance, the kind of acceptance that Rivers claimed would heal Prior’s neurosis—the kind of acceptance that Barker suggests could combat the shock of mobilized time. Barker does not provide closure to Prior’s self acceptance. Instead, as Anne Whitehead claims, readers are left “in an uneasy ‘no-man’s-land’ between past and present; although the past cannot be ‘regenerated’ or brought again into existence, its specters compulsively haunt the present and do not readily submit to the process of narrative transformation” (216). While Prior seems to refuse a definitive regeneration, his textual remainder in the form of his journal is regenerated in Barker’s postmodern plot, preserving the kind of “creative memory which transfixes...and transforms” the past that Benjamin theorized is possible through novels (“The Storyteller” 99). Barker’s Trilogy expands the breadth and

depth of the war's textual remainder by shaping the process of interpretation into the hope of acceptance.

Barker's Trilogy does not end with the war's armistice.⁹⁷ Because she did not want a "very simple anti war message," Barker turns from the deaths of the historical Owen and the fictional Prior to the biofictive image of Rivers's memory of the face of Njiru, a local healer among a South Seas tribe. Rivers hears Njiru say, "*There is an end of men, an end of chiefs, an end of chieftain's wives, an end of chief's children—then go down and depart. Do not yearn for us, the fingerless, the crippled, the broken. Go down and depart, oh, oh, oh*" as he bends over him, "staring into his face with those piercing hooded eyes. A long moment, and then the brown face, with thin streaks of lime, faded into the light of the daytime ward" (276). Barker explains that this turn to Rivers's retrospective memory of the Melanesian culture he observed in his youth was used to "counterpoint [the Great War] by looking at a society that actually succeeded in abolishing war. Or, rather, the British colonial power had abolished it for them" (Stevenson, "With the Listener in Mind" 183). She elaborates, "I didn't want to settle for the irony of all these young men dying in a war to end all war with the next war only twenty years away. I wanted to ask a more difficult question, which is, to what extent are we intrinsically violent toward other groups? To what extent is it part of our biology?" (Stevenson 183). By expanding from shell shock at Craiglockhart in *Regeneration* to Prior's fugue state in London in *The Eye in the Door* to the warfront and pre-war

⁹⁷ Barker explains in an interview, "I wrote and rewrote the final chapter of *Regeneration*, trying to give the sense of completion, and in fact I couldn't make it complete because the story ends with the end of the war" (Stevenson, "With the Listener in Mind" 175). The final image of the larger Trilogy—Rivers's remembrance of Njiru's face—suggests a more complicated ending to her retrospective take on mobilization.

Melanesia in *The Ghost Road*, Barker broadens the spatial and temporal scope to raise but not definitively answer such retrospective questions. Pairing Rivers's historically fictive Melanesian memories with Prior's fictional journal of the historical war enables Barker to achieve a juxtaposition between different textual permutations of historiographic metafiction.⁹⁸ Through juxtaposition—Geordie's past/Nick present, Prior/Mr. Hyde, Prior's journal/Rivers's memories—Barker rewrites the irony of mobilized time that was palpable in Dos Passos's and Hemingway's wartime fiction. Her wartime novels avoid a simple, linear integration of the past into the present and, instead, retrospectively recognize, accept, and sequence the past in relation to the present.

“It’s happening in that present. This is happening in this present”:

Exentric Remains of Civilian Time

in Michael Cunningham’s *The Hours*

Contemporary psychologists would likely diagnose Price's protagonist Smithy and Woolf's character Septimus with PTSD. Originally coined in the 1980 edition of the American Psychiatric Association's manual, *DSM-III*, to classify the effects of wartime trauma experienced by Vietnam veterans, PTSD and “its symptoms could be identified in civilians who had been exposed to traumatic episodes such as road traffic accidents” (Jones and Wessely 234). Over the following decade, PTSD was defined within three

⁹⁸ Dennis Brown argues that the Melanesian material is “re-‘presented’” which makes the Trilogy “show affinities with the fictions of such as Salman Rushdie or Ben Okri, where the ‘historiographic’ vision is informed by idioms and tropes of hitherto marginalized groups, but also places the novels within the ethos of a postmodern social anthropology where communities, kinship systems, rituals, and the like are valued in their own terms rather than ‘translated’ into a post-Enlightenment metanarrative” (Brown 195). Such “cross-cutting” enables Barker to achieve irony (Brown 196). However, Brown doesn't consider the specific irony of pairing it with Prior's journal.

subtypes: “acute” for those suffering symptoms for less than three months, “chronic” for those suffering symptoms for three months or more, and “delayed” for those who experienced symptoms six months or after the stressor (Jones and Wessely 238). Rather than apply the term to an individual’s psyche, I argue that this third iteration of this pathological term that denotes the temporal delay of trauma could better characterize the precarious remainder of civilian time experienced throughout the twentieth century.

Michael Cunningham’s *The Hours* plots this remainder through ex-centric characters who exhibit PTSD-like symptoms across separate but overlapping temporalities: post-WWI London, post-WWII America, and 1998, the contemporary post-AIDS crisis when the novel was published.⁹⁹ In Christopher Lane’s review of *The Hours*, he clarifies that these overlapping contexts “help[] outline our current malaise, which is due in part to the fear that our communities will never fully recover from [the] syndrome” of “numbness” or “aftershock” (30). For Lane, *The Hours* raises the question, “what happens when plagues don’t end, but drag on interminably...?” (30). In this chapter, I explore how the novel also asks, what happens when wars do not end, but drag on precariously through generations?

Cunningham’s novel simultaneously narrates the real-life death of Virginia Woolf’s life in the country during the 1920s, her death when she drowned herself in the middle of the Second World War, Laura Brown’s depression in 1950s America, and the Septimus-like suicide of Richard Brown who suffers from AIDS in modern-day New York City. Yet death is not the only outcome for those suffering from the precarious state

⁹⁹ While it could be argued that AIDS is still a global crisis today, by 1998 the number of AIDS-related deaths in America dropped dramatically.

of PTSD in Cunningham's metafictional world. If "distance enables even those who have no direct experience of war to create works of astounding power about it" as James Tatum claims (35), then *The Hours* plays upon the notion of temporal distance to reflect the trauma of surviving wartime and the means of recreating and accessing its past.

This chapter considers how Cunningham retrospectively sequences the delayed temporal experience of civilians in precarious times outside of war by tracing the inherited precarity between the mother and son, Laura and Richard. I rely on Cathy Caruth's theorization of traumatic narratives to examine *The Hours*'s close attention to the postmodern figure, the "ex-centric": "the different, the off-center" (Hutcheon 73). According to Hutcheon, the ex-centric is the "the vehicle for aesthetic and even political consciousness-raising" in postmodern literature. Cunningham calls artistic and political attention to civilian time by retrospectively sequencing the shared precarity between Woolf and his own fictional ex-centrics, Laura—a mother who positions herself outside of the domestic and a normatively marked sense of time—and Richard—a man dying of AIDS who chooses death to re-mark his place in time.

As retrospective literature, *The Hours* overlaps the competing discourses surrounding the PTSD-like symptoms left over from civilian time, in particular psychoanalysis, personal memory, and history. Although PTSD's symptoms are well known—repetition of the event in the form of "intrusive" "hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors" as well as a "numbing that may have begun during or after the experience"—PTSD's precise meaning remains in question (Caruth, "Introduction:

Trauma and Experience” 4).¹⁰⁰ Caruth posits that this debate over the definition of PTSD should be focused on “the *structure of its experience* or reception,” or the particular way that the traumatic moment is not completely “assimilated or experienced” when it occurred; rather, it becomes known “only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it” (Caruth 4). In other words, what is under-theorized according to Caruth is the belated process of the trauma, the particular way that the memory of the trauma supplants the event itself in a temporal location “outside the boundaries of any single place” (9). However, Caruth sees potential of the expression of “the traumas of contemporary history;” they can unite cultures and sharpen “our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves” (11). And her understanding of “historical” as “events...that...implicate others” shifts the focus away from individual narratives of trauma in order to better understand how “we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (*Unclaimed Experience* 18, 24), an important lesson to bear in mind to approach the narrative sequence in *The Hours* and Cunningham’s retrospective take on civilian time.

Cunningham’s novel is in conversation with Caruth’s careful attention to the imbricated relationships between subjectivity and history, particularly as *The Hours* plots the traumatized survivor’s place in time. With a direct focus on the trope of the kiss as “the vehicle that is able to cut across time and connect two disparate moments” in *The Hours*, Kate Haffey astutely claims that the novel “is very much a text about the experience of time, both the duration of time passing and about the moments that seem to

¹⁰⁰ As a “pathology,” PTSD “cannot be defined either by the event itself...can it be defined in terms of a *distortion* of the event” (4).

rupture the experience of duration” (15). By retrospectively plotting these moments alongside one another, Cunningham links cultures as well as temporalities to a traumatic past outside of linear duration. In Mary Hughes’s “Michael Cunningham’s *The Hours* and Postmodern Artistic Re-Presentation,” she argues that *The Hours* “def[ies] a linear chronological structure with a beginning, middle, and end. Instead [it] spin[s] off stories like ripples in all directions, points of contact and connection as the circle widens. Here is an attempt at dialogue with undetermined others, a dialogue that is carried on in widening circles, ever expanding its reach” (357).

Developing Haffey’s and Hughes’s insightful attention to narrative time in *The Hours*, this chapter draws from psychoanalytic theory on PTSD to explore how that dialogue is widened between traumatized survivors through the sequencing power of retrospective narration. “Narrative language,” for psychopathologists Bessel A. Van Der Kolk and Onno Van Der Hart, helps those afflicted with PTSD to forge connections between the present and the “traumatic memories,” or “the unassailable scraps of overwhelming experiences” (Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart 176). Narrativization, as I’ve shown in Cunningham’s and Barker’s literature and as I will show in Cunningham, also forges broader connections between the present and the precarious past of collective history. We can reapproach Cunningham’s ex-centric characters and interpret their PTSD not as personal afflictions, but as collectively symptomatic of a traumatic history. Just as Haffey explores how the moment of the kiss traverses temporalities to “make possible... a different relation to the future,” this chapter considers how Cunningham’s historiographic

metafiction re-envisioning civilian time as an open-ended and non-linear history of the survivor.

“Her life...is being measured away, cupful by cupful”:

Un-marking Laura Brown’s Time

Laura’s daily routine is carefully apportioned in the wake of World War II, just as Mrs. Dalloway’s time is claimed and accounted for in the aftermath of the First World War. As a victim of the historical circumstance of total war Laura shares more affinities with Woolf’s fictional Septimus. After the war, her sense of time is unclaimed and unmarked. Similar to Septimus waiting among the idling throb of motorcars, Laura cannot find her place in the progressive movement of history. She notices that “there’s not much for idleness” in “this...new world, the rescued world” because “so much has been risked and lost; so many have died” (39). A survivor striving to fit within this new efficient world, she marries Dan Brown “so now she is Laura Brown. Laura Zielski, the solitary girl, the incessant reader, is gone, and here in her place is Laura Brown” (40). Laura, stuck within the domestic space reading Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, contrasts the demobilized “men who have known deprivation and a fear worse than death, who have willingly given up their early twenties and now, thinking of thirty and beyond, haven’t any more time to spare” (45). These “uncomplaining” men “outside the house” have “wartime training [that] stands them in good stead,” leaving Laura precariously untrained, renamed, and unmoved in the supposed peace of a post-war world. Just as Septimus’s PTSD was ignored and even scorned, Laura’s own traumatic reaction to

wartime leaves her the ex-centric position of repressing any feeling of her own personal suffering.

Caruth's understanding of PTSD as a "pathological symptom" illuminates Laura's stress, shifting its interpretation away from the misconception that it is "a symptom of the unconscious" and reframes it as "a symptom of history" ("Introduction: Trauma and Experience" 5). Those bearing the burden of trauma Caruth concludes, also "carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (Caruth 5). Cunningham's depiction of Laura's powerlessness and passivity—her timelessness—retrospectively resituates wartime trauma as a symptom of history that is as detrimental to civilians as it is to veterans. Laura's depression demonstrates Caruth's point that trauma is more than a response to a violent event; it is also "an enigma of survival" (*Unclaimed Experience* 58). Through Laura, Cunningham reflects the survivor's dislocated sense of trauma that readers too experience, disconnected as they are from an experiential link to past wartimes. *The Hours*'s retrospective narration awakens readers to recognize the need to claim one's past in order to fully inhabit one's present.

Cunningham sharpens his characterization of Laura as ex-centric, or a subject out of place in history, by foiling her with her neighbor, Kitty, a fellow suburban housewife who seems to perform her prescribed duties in a timely, effortless manner. To Laura, Kitty, "a figure of bright and tragic dignity—a woman standing by her man," "seemed, simply, heroic" (108-9). Laura has a brief erotic identification with Kitty, who shares the historical experience as a civilian in and out of wartime. When Laura tells Kitty to "forget

about Ray [her husband] for a minute,” Kitty “nods against Laura’s breasts” (110). Before their brief kiss, which recalls Woolf kissing her sister during a post-WWI visit, Laura recognizes their shared precarity: “they are both afflicted and blessed, full of shared secrets, striving every moment. They are each impersonating someone. They are weary and beleaguered; they have taken on such enormous work” (110). Their places within the post-war domestic sphere compliment the middle class “world where the shelves are stocked, where radio waves are full of music” (45). This “blessed” lifestyle nevertheless leaves the women “afflicted” and motivates the suppression of the trauma implicit in their “enormous work,” their daily impersonations of playing socially prescribed roles.

Laura’s real trauma is sourced in living as if she has no memory of the past. Her and Kitty’s repetitive labor obscures the latency of wartime’s trauma and facilitates forgetting, the very process by which the “historical power of trauma...is first experienced” (Caruth, “Introduction: Trauma and Experience” 8). Caruth elaborates that forgetting typifies “the belatedness...of historical experience” (8). Because the traumatic past can never be fully understood as it happens, history connects it to our progressive present, thereby recontextualizing the past in a different place and time. To put it another way, “history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence” (8). Just as linear historicism fails to account for the queer intimacy in Hollinghurst’s *The Stranger’s Child* and Geordie’s memories in Barker’s *Another World*, it also fails to account for Laura’s recognition of her subjecthood in relation to history. Retrospective narration makes this history assailable. Cunningham’s depiction of this intimate moment

briefly pulls his ex-centric out of her timeless domestic labor to remember her repressed connection to the past in order to discover who she is and who she might be.

Proving Hutcheon's argument that reference does not equate to correspondence, Cunningham traces events across overlapping temporalities by narrating Laura's repressed life as a housewife alongside Woolf's confined life in post-WWI Richmond. Ultimately, he demonstrates the historically specific ways in which women were temporally claimed by wartimes. Before Woolf buys a train ticket to London, she considers her lack of control over time: "she is better, she is safer, if she rests in Richmond; if she does not speak too much, write too much, feel too much; if she does not travel impetuously to London wand walk through its streets; and yet she is dying this way, she is gently dying in a bed of roses" (169).¹⁰¹ All of the rules in place are meant to protect Woolf from her chronic headaches, and yet those safeguards leave her in a state of numbness like Smithy's. Determined to speak, write, and feel what she wants, Woolf decides to go to London as she realizes that it is "better, really, to face the fin in the water than to live in hiding, as if the war were still on (strange, how the first memory that springs to mind, after all, is the endless waiting in the cellar, the whole household crammed in together, and having to make conversation for hours with Nelly and Lottie)" (169). Woolf's wartime memories (parenthetically set aside like the short wartime passage in Woolf's *To the Light House*) depict her waiting underground in the cellar like the soldiers passively immobilized in the trenches on the front. They reflect an "endless,"

¹⁰¹ In a book review, Hermione Lee points out that this scene actually occurred in Sussex in September rather than Richmond in June ("Mrs. Brown's Secret"). While Lee finds these factual alterations "irksome," my attention is focused on the veracity of the fictionalization of Woolf's interiority.

frozen moment in time comparable to her post-War life, which “is being measured away, cupful by cupful” (169). “No,” Woolf decides, “she will not telephone from the station, she will do it once she’s reached London, once there’s nothing to be done. She will take her punishment” (169). Her post-war present marked like a recipe, cupful by cupful, puts a feminist twist on T.S. Eliot’s notion of modern life “measured out... with coffee spoons” as he writes in the 1917 poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (13). Her defiant act and acknowledgement of her inevitable “punishment” suggests her inescapable subject position as the wife of Leonard Woolf. Although Cunningham depicts their relationship as mutually loving, Leonard ultimately claims Virginia’s time. When he arrives at the station before her train and takes her back home, Woolf “keeps the ticket in her bag,” but “she will never mention to Leonard that she’d planned on fleeing, even for a few hours” (172).

Cunningham’s retrospective sequencing of civilian time places this scene in relation to Laura’s and Richard’s traumatic pasts. Cunningham narrativizes Caruth’s claim that the attempt to understand trauma resituates history so that it is “no longer straightforwardly referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference)” (*Unclaimed Experience* 11). Instead, by aligning their traumatic narratives, we can “permit[] *history* to arise where *immediate understanding* may not” (11). Put another way, we can recontextualize Woolf’s trauma beyond Leonard’s good intentions, Laura’s depression beyond her husband’s admiring remarks, and Richard’s suicide beyond Clarissa’s mourning.

With tragic irony, Cunningham captures the civilian survivor's struggle to claim her trauma in the face of marginalization. In one of the final narrated images of Laura's post-war life, she glimpses the brief moment of happiness as her husband blows out the candles of his birthday cake. To Laura, "the room seems almost impossibly full; full of the lives of her husband and son; full of the future. It matters; it shines. Much of the world, whole countries, have been decimated, but a force that feels unambiguously like goodness has prevailed" (207). "From a distance," "Laura reads the moment as it passes. Here it is, she thinks; there it goes. The page is about to turn" (208). Laura's readerly alienation from the present moment of her life is tied to her perceived disassociation from the past, the world "decimated" from a Second World War. Her precarious state reflects the temporal split suffered by those afflicted with PTSD who cannot tell their stories, those who live lives split between disconnected temporal realms: "the realm of the trauma and the realm of their current, ordinary life" (Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart 176). And from Laura's subjective point of view confined within the domestic, she cannot bridge this temporal gap. For this reason, Laura attempts suicide and ultimately leaves Richard, her husband, and her daughter to become a librarian in Toronto, outside of America and the narratives of her family's lives.

The Hours represents this temporal experience of civilian time through retrospective plotting, sequencing moments across temporalities to construct a constellation of Laura's post-WWII life in an American suburb, Woolf's post-WWI life in the country outside London, and Richard's and his friend Clarissa Vaughan's contemporary lives in New York City. Cunningham repairs the fractured connection to

the past that Laura experiences watching her husband blow out his candles as she thinks, “Yes...., this is probably how it must feel to be a ghost. It’s a little like reading, isn’t it—that same sensation of knowing people, settings, situations, without playing any particular part beyond that of the willing observer” (215). Using Laura to speak to the reader, Cunningham expresses the urgency of revisiting civilian time in retrospect beyond the passive role of “willing observer.” Laura’s feeling like a ghost during the celebration of her husband’s birthday is similar to Smithy’s sense of joining the procession of the war dead when her spirit broke in the closing days of the war. The irony of survivor’s guilt, of living through death, is implicit in Caruth’s understanding of “*history*” as a “double telling,” or “the oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival” (*Unclaimed Experience* 7). The unbearable crisis of the Second World War—the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima and the death camps in Nazi Germany—becomes all the more unbearable when that past cannot be marked or claimed by non-combatant civilians. And this trauma, delayed into the daily lives of the post-war populace, resurfaces as an unbearable present for survivors disconnected from the progressive flow of history. Left as ghosts watching the living agents of history blow out their birthday candles to mark their place in linear time, the ex-centrics like Laura can only inhabit a marginal space to reclaim their lives from being measured out cupful by cupful.

“It’s happening in that present. This is happening in this present”:

Re-Marking Richard Brown’s Time

While Woolf’s Septimus characterized the WWI veteran unable to cope with being unhinged from the temporal experience of modern life, Cunningham’s postmodern poet Richard represents a marginalized masculinity that resists being temporally marked by and integrated into linear time. In particular, Richard resists fitting his life and lifework into the history of the AIDS crisis. Tory Young clarifies this context in her claim that “in *Mrs. Dalloway* it was the absence of understanding of the damages of war that drove Septimus Warren Smith to suicide,” while “Richard, his double...the urge of the community ravaged by AIDS to embrace his suffering feels like another way of negating his art” (42). When Richard receives the literary award, the Carrouters Prize, he recognizes that his life is celebrated as a performance of his precarity rather than a reflection of his talents as a canonized poet. He confides to Clarissa, “I got a prize for my performance, you must know that. I got a prize for having AIDS and going nuts and being brave about it, it had nothing to do with my work” (62-3). Richard’s life and temporal existence—like Owen’s, Brooke’s, and Cecil’s—is marked and claimed to support the fragile foundations of a linear history attempting to put a crisis into narrative form. Cunningham’s counter-narrative uses Richard’s death as a retrospective recurrence to Woolf’s narrative intention behind plotting Septimus’s suicide. Cunningham’s survivors—Laura and Clarissa Vaughn—mirror Woolf’s “exultant, ordinary Clarissa” who “will go on, loving London loving her life of ordinary pleasures,” while Cunningham’s Richard parallels Septimus, “someone strong of body but frail-minded;

someone with a touch of genius, of poetry, ground under by the wheels of the world, by war and government, by doctors; a someone who is, technically speaking, insane, because that person sees meaning everywhere, knows that trees are sentient beings and sparrows sing in Greek” (211). Richard, like Septimus, is “a deranged poet, a visionary, [and] the one to die” (211).

By overlapping the precarious temporalities inhabited by the fictional Richard, the literary Septimus, and the historical Woolf, Cunningham retrospectively sequences the remainder of civilian time as a temporal paradox, symptomatic of PTSD. Like her character Septimus, Woolf is convinced that “a flock of sparrows outside her window once sang, unmistakably in Greek. This state makes her hellishly miserable...this state when protracted also begins to enshroud her, hour by hour, like a chrysalis” (71). Her headaches leave her in this precarious state, which makes “her periods of freedom ... always feel provisional” (70). Once again her time, like Smithy’s, is not her own. If Woolf later feels as if her life is measured and taken from her, “cupful by cupful” (169), here she is immobilized, “enshrouded” as if bound like an insect in a “chrysalis,” but unable to emerge.

In *The Hours*, Cunningham shifts away from Woolf’s pastoral metaphors and toward temporally paradoxical imagery. Richard, like Septimus, hears voices in his head and “think[s] of them as coalescences of black fire... they’re dark and bright at the same time. There was one that looked a bit like a black, electrified jellyfish. They were singing, just now, in a foreign language. [He] believe it may have been Greek. Archaic Greek” (59). The black electrified jellyfish, more of a free-floating signifier than the classical

sparrow of Septimus's and Woolf's afflicted imaginations, combines contradictory elements—light and dark, land and water, life and death—and retrospectively revises the trauma of returning and repeating the past. Those who suffer from PTSD experience “a number of *temporal paradoxes*,” psychologist John Krystal points out. One paradox is that the remembrance of the trauma becomes compromised, coercing the afflicted to “reexperience aspects of the trauma in the form of intrusive thoughts, nightmares, or flashbacks” (Krystal 6). As readers of *The Hours* we re-experience the trauma of civilian time through the intrusive imagery of Richard's symptoms, symptoms that contradictorily connect and disassociate him from a shared traumatic past with the historical Woolf and the literary Septimus.

Through these repeated references of shared precarity, Cunningham maps the temporal experience of trauma onto the history of civilian time in order to awaken readers to the crisis of memory. To protect ourselves, Caruth argues that we must place a traumatic event in time (*Unclaimed Experience* 61), just as a novelist sequences a period of time through plot. From this perspective we can approach shock “not [as] the direct experience of the threat [of death], but precisely [as] the *missing* of this experience, the fact that, not being experienced *in time*, it has not yet been fully known” (62). This inchoate memory of trauma forces the survivor to return to it repeatedly, a process that Caruth characterizes as the “endless testimony to the impossibility of living” (62). When we apply these theories to the civilian's temporal experience of living through wartime, we can better comprehend what Caruth calls “the enigma of survival” (58). The paradox

of living with an unknowable, traumatic past lies at the heart of civilian time, sequenced across the twentieth century in *The Hours*.

Richard's mental precarity, like Septimus's, is the vehicle through which readers reimagine a different kind of temporal access to the past, one that reaches beyond direct reference. Speaking of their brief romance, Richard tells Clarissa, "It's happening in that present. This is happening in this present" (66). He expands, "We're middle-aged and we're young lovers standing beside a pond. We're everything, all at once. Isn't it remarkable?" (67). Richard's break from linear time enables him to reenact moments in their respective presents, while sequencing them simultaneously. Critic Tory Young argues that Richard opens up new ways of interpreting what did and could have happened in the past, but she ultimately argues that "it is impossible for the reader to try and unravel the differences and segregate these narratives—if we try our confusion begins to resemble his" (47). Perhaps this transference of confusion from Richard to reader is exactly Cunningham's purpose. *The Hours*'s narrative organization, moving from character to character between chapters, reflects the atemporal experience that Richard articulates to Clarissa. What unites "happenings" in "that present" and "this present" are the repeated images that allude to a shared trauma. Cunningham's characters and narrative organization work in concert—not as individual referents—to awaken readers to what Caruth calls "*the site of a trauma*" (*Unclaimed Experience* 100), in this instance civilian time. Like the dream of Freud's patient, a father who dreams about his dead child the night after his death, Cunningham's retrospective sequencing of civilian time becomes "the trauma of the necessity and impossibility of responding to another's death"

(100). This melancholic conundrum, the unfeasible obligation to return to the past—the past that is only a provisional remainder in Hollinghurst or a textual presence in Barker—enables Cunningham to trace the historical past of precarious ex-centrics across the heterogeneous temporalities of his plot.

Richard's death, like Septimus's suicide, marks his time in his own terms and unites the temporalities of the novel, enabling others around him to inhabit a retrospective station where they can bridge the temporal gap between a past and future, between death and life. In this way, too, readers of *The Hours* can come to terms with Cunningham's recursive sequencing of civilian time and find a place within the inevitable progression of the future. After Richard commits suicide on the day of his literary award, Clarissa receives Laura into her New York apartment. As "Clarissa glances over at the glass doors that lead to the modest garden," "she and Laura Brown are reflected, imperfectly, in the black glass" (223). In this moment, "Clarissa thinks of Richard on the windowsill, Richard letting go; not jumping, really, but sliding as if from a rock into water" (223). As if joining the black electrified jellyfish of his afflicted imagination, Richard lets go of his hold on life, an act of fleeing that Clarissa and Laura can identify with but never fully comprehend. If Septimus's suicide was an attempt to communicate the precarious subjectivity of deferred shell shock, Richard's letting go or sliding is an expressive performance, as emphatic and "irrevocabl[e]" as the ringing of Big Ben in Woolf's original text. Caruth interpretation of Freud's theorization of the death drive clarifies the relationship between Richard's and Septimus's performances and history. For Caruth and Freud, the death drive "recognize[s] the reality of the destructive force that the violence

of history imposes on the human psyche, the formation of history as the endless repetition of previous violence” (*Unclaimed Experience* 63).

Survivors, who endeavor to mark their place in the present and safeguard it for the future, reconstruct this repetition after the trauma. Like Woolf’s Clarissa who places herself in the position of Septimus on his plunge, Cunningham’s Clarissa wonders, “Was it...a pleasure of some kind to crumple onto the pavement and feel (did he momentarily feel?) the skull crack open, all its impulses, its little lights, spilled out?...There would have been the idea of pain, its first shock, and then—whatever came next” (223). This moment—“whatever came next”—is exactly the temporal space that Cunningham’s retrospective novel sequences, not just a future for the dead but also for the living.

With meta-awareness, Cunningham elegizes his fictional poet in order to more broadly question the lasting power of literature. Although “it’s possible that the citizens of the future, people not yet born, will want to read Richard’s elegies,” the narrator of *The Hours* claims, “it’s far more likely that his books will vanish along with almost everything else[;] Clarissa, the figure in a novel, will vanish, as will Laura Brown, the lost mother, the martyr and fiend” (225). Although these individual characters—fictional or historical—and works—fabricated or literary—inevitably fade away, the communicative expression of trauma, however delayed or tangential, preserves a trace of a shared past. Hughes argues that here in the last chapter of *The Hours* Richard’s suicide and his literature have equally affective results: “Just as the animating power of an individual’s life radiates out to others in a movement suggested by the plunge, so does the

animating power of literature, thereby nourishing the creation of more life” (355).¹⁰² In light of Caruth’s claims, we can interpret Richard’s personal death and literary creation as a process rather than a balance. The retrospective novel sequences what Caruth describes as “the attempt to gain access to a traumatic history,” “the project of listening beyond the pathology of individual suffering, to the reality of a history that in its crises can only be perceived in unassailable forms” (“Introduction: Recapturing the Past” 156). In retrospect and united in a single narrative, the unassailable forms of each precarious temporality in *The Hours* becomes a whole novel and an interpretable traumatic history. This reconstructed history becomes “the site of its disruption” as well as the center of new knowledge (156), knowledge produced by ex-centrics left out of the discursive generation of knowledge. This retrospective process at the heart of the works of Cunningham, Barker, Hollinghurst, and Duffy is the very way in which “remembering back is not only remembering but it might be being,” as Stein would say (*Wars I Have Seen* 11).

¹⁰² Young further specifies that the power of literature rests in the power of narrative, rather than the physical presence of a book. She claims that Clarissa’s “anxiety that books can provide no comfort because they belong to the ‘world of objects’ is a concern that art is in fact synchronic, that like furniture and ornaments which date and decay, books are finite, rigid markers of clock time, unlike the endless renewability of narratives and the infinity of meanings they inspire” (48-9). My reading of Cunningham’s narrativization of the process of historical trauma supports Young’s argument as another potential of narrative.

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