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Special Issue: Reading the First World War 100 Years after

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'For nearly a decade I have wanted, with a growing sense of urgency, to write something which would show what the whole War and post-war period—roughly, from years leading up to 1914 until 1925—has meant to the men and women of my generation. [...] I wanted to give too, if I could, an impression of the changes which that period brought about in the minds and lives of very different group of individuals belonging to the large section of middle-class society from which my own family comes'

Vera Brittain, 'Preface' to *Testament of Youth*

Just like Vera Brittain did in 1933, but for more than a hundred years now, writers, historians, and scholars have attempted to "show what the whole War and post-war period" meant for a generation of men and women who had to endure one of the most tragic events of the 20th century and the radical changes that the war brought about. Brittain spent more than ten years shaping her acclaimed war memoir *Testament of Youth*, in an attempt to give voice to her generation; likewise, criticism around the First World War has, ever since the Armistice, revisited this massacre in an attempt to give voice to the different histories—and stories—of the war that have allowed us to complete the cultural and literary canvas of the Great War.[1]

Our reading and understanding of the First World War has changed throughout the decades. Traditional criticism favoured the view that combat experience was the only and legitimate approach to write and portray this war. This view has been mostly influenced in the English-speaking world by Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) and Samuel Hynes's *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (1990). The latter coined the trope of 'the myth of the War' and discussed the impact that this myth has had on English culture:

> A generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory, and England, went off to war to make the world safe for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals. Those who survived were shocked, disillusioned and embittered by their war experiences, and saw that their real enemies were not the Germans, but the old men at home who had lied to them. They rejected the values of the society that had sent them to war, and in doing so separated their own generation from the past and from their cultural inheritance. (1992: x)

Fussell's and Hynes's notions around the soldier's traumatic experience in the trenches were central to criticism on the literatures of the First World War in English up to the 1980s, when feminist, cultural, and historiographic studies gradually claimed for a broader approach towards our reading of the conflict. One of the most influential studies in the current cultural understanding of the First World War is Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (1994), which reevaluates our mechanisms of commemoration and remembrance around the war. Among the early feminist revisions of war literature it is also worth mentioning Catherine Reilly's *Scars upon my Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (1981); Sharon Ouditt's, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women: Identity and Ideology in the First World War* (1994); Trudi Tate's *Women, Men, and the Great War: An Anthology of Stories* (1995), Agnes Cardinal, Dorothy Goldman, and Judith Hattaway's *Women's Writings on the First World War* (1999), or Margaret Higonnet's *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars, Lines of Fire: Women Writers of World War I* (1999) and *Nurses at the Front: Writing the Wounds of the Great War* (2001). All these studies called for alternative readings of the war that moved away from combat experience.

Consequently, new parameters of analysis and interpretation that moved away from the Western Front and from the so-called soldier-poets have emerged in the last decades. These claim for the inclusion of civilians' experiences, women's and children's voices, colonial and pacifist readings of the Great War, and other forms of representing the war in popular culture, cinema or drama studies. Such is the case of Michael Paris's *The First World War and Popular Cinema: 1914 to the Present* (1999), Patrick J. Quinn and Steven Trout's *The Literature of the Great War Reconsidered: Beyond Modern Memory* (2001), Gordon Williams's *British Theatre in the Great War: A Revaluation* (2003), Svetlana Paris and Sarah Wallis's *Intimate Voices from the First World War* (2003), Mark Bryant's *World War I in Cartoons* (2004) and Santanu Das's influential *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (2011). The incorporation of these voices to the debate has enabled more vivid and dynamic methods to look at the war, thus enriching a fascinating field that still has many areas awaiting exploration.

The last four years, coinciding with the 100 Anniversary of the war, have richly contributed to new interpretative pathways on the war.[2] Only in 2018, the publication of several co-edited volumes such as Santanu Das and Kate McLoughlin's *The First World War: Literature, Culture, Modernity*, Anna Branach-Kallas and Nelly Strehlau's *Re-Imagining the First World War: New Perspectives in Anglophone Literature and Culture,* Sally Minogue and Andrew Palmer's *The Remembered Dead, Poetry, Memory and the First World War* (2018), or the special issues of the *Women's History Review, Representing, Remembering and Rewriting Women's Histories of the First World War*, or other journals such as *Anglica* or *Anuario IEHS*[3] gives evidence of the interest that this

field still arouses. Books on recovered voices have also been published, such as Mary Thorp's diary, published by Oxford University Press in *An English Governess in the Great War: The Secret Brussels Diary of Mary Thorp* (2018); and new readings that revisit the experience of war in different media, such as Chris Kempshall's *The First World War in Computer Games* (2015), have opened the field to a more comprehensive understanding of the event today.

This special issue, *Reading First World War Literature 100 Years After*, contributes to these new approaches. It scrutinizes the war from different angles and in a transcultural perspective within the English-speaking world, without leaving aside comparative approaches that give evidence of the international cultural impact of the conflict. The volume contributes to existing debates on the literature of the First World War; at the same time, it incorporates new interpretations on how we can read the war in 2018. The eleven articles that constitute the volume shed more light on scholarship of the First World War and put together responses to the conflict that go beyond the canonical and Western-centric perspective of the war. While there are not, unfortunately, any essays addressing women's views about the war,[4] there are, nevertheless, pieces that look at juvenile press, at the war in the colonies, as well as comparative approaches between the literatures written in English and those from other countries such as Turkey or France. As editors, we have attempted to put together a wide array of essays that cover more traditional forms of writing such as poetry, fiction, and drama, as well as approaches to the war that consider the potential uses of the digital humanities or video games in the critical examination of the First World War.

The first six essays in this issue deal with texts from the war period and its aftermath. They look into the responses to the war created by those who experienced the war and its most immediate consequences. The volume opens with Fraser Mann's discussion of imagined space and material place in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). In spite of discussing one of the most canonical American authors from the First World War, Mann's postmodern analysis of the tensions between space and place through the lenses of Michel Foucault's 'heterotopia' (1986) allows for a novel reading of these texts, and their performative and ritualistic experience. Hemingway's spaces are understood both as a representation of the traumatic and violent experience of the European war, and as an opportunity to recalibrate the meaning of America and American identity and aestheticism.

One of the elements that contributed to shaping national identities during the First World War was the different propaganda campaigns the warring nations designed to promote the war. Our understanding of propaganda today differs from the way it was conceived and understood during the Great War. In "'Seducers of the People': Mapping the linguistic shift", Fiona Houston argues that the term has undergone a process of change, and traces the different interpretations and uses of the term from the Edwardian period to the late 20th century. Houston argues that the First World War was "a pivotal moment in history where the understanding of propaganda began to alter", but, at the same time, warns about modern-day tendencies to apply current interpretations of the term to evaluate the role that propaganda played in the past.

The press was one of the key propagandists during the war. In "'Ireland first': The Great War in the Irish Juvenile Press", Elena Ogliari examines the response of the Irish

separatist press, with special attention to the representation of the war in juvenile periodicals, an understudied branch of the Irish press in relation to the First World War. Ogliari explores how the press became a powerful tool to advance the nationalist agenda and how it also contributed to portraying an essentially Irish view of the war that would later shape the Irish experience—and modes of remembrance—of the war. Also looking at Irish representations of the war, Jonathan Patterson compares Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie* (1929) to British dramatist R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End* (1928). Both plays were written and performed ten years after the Armistice, coinciding with the literary boom of the late 1920s and early 1930s. In his essay, Patterson argues that both plays consciously build a description of trench space that works as a traumatic space for soldiers, turning the trench into an "experiential ruin". Trench space helps Sherriff and O'Casey to rebuild trench experience not only in physical terms but also in psychological ones, thus reconstructing the relationships between space—in this case trench space—and trauma.

In "'Sons of Two Empires': The Idea of Nationhood in Anzac and Turkish Poems of the Gallipoli Campaign", Berkan Ulu and Burcin Cakir examine the poetic responses to the Gallipoli Campaign (1915), comparing English and Turkish poems by combatants and non-combatants that have been overviewed by traditional criticism. Gallipoli is considered the first campaign in which the Australian and New Zealander forces differentiated themselves from the British Empire. Ulu and Cakir explore how nationality and ideology shaped the aesthetic construction of the campaign and to what extent the sense of belonging to the empire is portrayed or contested in the poems written in English. Julia Ribeiro also studies the relationships between poetry and history in "'Knowing you will understand': The usage of poetry as a historical source about the experience of the First World War" but from a different angle. In her comparative study of French and British poetry, Ribeiro calls for the need of using First World War poetry as a source in our understanding of the event. She attempts to establish a valid theoretical framework to use poetry as a source in our historical, anthropological, literary, or linguistic analyses. In the second part of her essay, Ribeiro presents two digital humanities projects to show how this theoretical framework can be put to use to better establish a relation between history and poetry as valid resources for cultural historians.

In its combination of the use of sources from the war period and the use of contemporary resources such as digital humanities, Ribeiro's essay represents a bridge in this issue, as it links those essays that deal with the literature written between the 1910s and the 1930s and more contemporary publications about the war. In "'Prefer not, eh?': Re-Scribing the Lives of the Great War Poets in Contemporary British Historical Fiction", Cristina Pividori discusses the novels of three contemporary British authors, Jill Dawson's *The Great Lover* (2009), Geoff Akers's *Beating for the Light: The Story of Isaac Rosenberg* (2006) and Robert Edric's *In Zodiac Light* (2008) in order to study the narrative memory of the war in these three novels. Through Linda Hutcheon's "historiographic metafiction", Pividori examines how the three novels borrow from the writings and lives of three war authors, Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg and Ivor Gurney, and interrogates about the choices that Dawson, Akers and Edric made in their reconstruction—or omission—of war events and the implications these entail.

One of the most widely explored aspects of the First World War is the notion of trauma and the psychological impact of trench experience on the soldiers.[4] In "Portraits of Veterans Traumatic Re-enactments: Portraits of Veterans in Contemporary British and Canadian First World War Fiction", Anna Branach-Kallas examines and compares how veterans' trauma is depicted in a series of British and Canadian contemporary novels. Branach-Kallas claims that in spite of national differences, the discourses of trauma and futility are a useful tool to denounce and critique the catastrophic social consequences of the war. Likewise, these British and Canadian novels, published in the 21st century, serve as a tool to deal with contemporary anxieties, such as violations of human rights or the abuses of institutions of power.

Traumatic trench experience is not, however, the only combat experience portrayed in the literatures of the First World War. There is one aspect of the war that is traditionally associated with a more positive and even idealistic view of the conflict. In "A Different Perspective (?): Air Warfare in Derek Robinson's Post-Memory Aviation Fiction", Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż explores the war in the air in Derek Robinson's *War Story* (1987) to question the traditional view of air narratives from the First World War as representatives of chivalric tales in the modern world. Sokołowska-Paryż argues that Robinson's post-memory representation of air warfare, set in 1916 in the Battle of the Somme, may have been influenced by Robinson's own experience as a pilot in the Royal Army Forces after the Second World War, and may, therefore, necessarily move away from the representation of air warfare as a romantic experience. Sokołowska-Paryż defends that Robinson removes his text from this tradition and portrays the war in a Remarquian fashion in which air narratives are not presented as heroic experiences of war, but as extended versions of trench narratives.

The last three pieces of this volume provide a different angle to our reading of the war. They must be taken as a whole, as a representation of the ongoing discussion around the potential use of video games in our understanding of the history of the First World War and the narratological discourses around this event. In "Great War Games: Notes on Collective Memory, the Adynaton, and Posthumanism", Iro Filippaki examines how *Valiant Hearts* and *Super Trench Attacks* (2014) memorialize the First World War through the trope of the adynaton. War gaming may trigger a more radical affective response than traditional monuments of unknown soldiers, and may, therefore, introduce the collective memory to the age of posthumanism. In "Race, *Battlefield 1* and the White Mythic Space of the First World War", Stefan Aguirre Quiroga argues that there has traditionally been a predominance of white men soldiers in discourses and representations of combat experience. His essay considers the white mythic space of the First World War through the analysis of *Battlefield 1* (2016), and looks at the gamers' negative attitudes towards the inclusion of soldiers of colour in the game. Aguirre Quiroga explores the reasons for this rejection to conclude that it is a continuation of a historic denial of agency for soldiers of colour in our collective memory of the First World War. In the latter part of this volume, Filippaki and Quiroga converse about the potentiality of video games as research tools to study the historical and narratological construction of the Great War today.

Reading the First World War in 2018 is a complex and challenging endeavour. Our interpretation of the war is no longer shaped by a unique collective memory, but by the

multiple voices and methodological approaches applied in our understanding and critical interpretation of the cataclysm. The essays gathered in this special issue contribute to the ongoing debate around literary and cultural responses to the First World War. The editors of this special volume would like to take this opportunity to commend all the authors in this volume for their valuable contributions to enrich the field. They would like to express, as well, their gratitude to all the reviewers who generously devoted their time to the invaluable chore of peer review.

Notes

1. The image of the First World War as a literary canvas appears in the 1915 war memoir of the American journalist Mary Roberts Rinehart: "it will take a hundred years to paint this war on one canvas. A thousand observers, ten thousand, must record what they have seen" (Rinehart, 1915: 11; Prieto, 2018: 189).

2. Some of the studies that have emerged in the last four years reconsidering our understanding and reading of the representation of the First World War are Scott Emmert and Steven Trout's *World War I in American Fiction: An Anthology of Short Stories* (2014), Andrew Frayn's *Writing Disenchantment: British First World War Prose, 1914–30* (2014), Martin Löschnigg and Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż's *The Great War in Post-Memory Literature and Film* (2014), Hazel Hutchinson's *The War That Used Up Words: American Writers and the First World War* (2015), George M. Johnson's *Mourning and Mysticism in First World War Literature and Beyond: Grappling with Ghosts* (2015), Lissa Paul, Rosemary R. Johnston, Emma Short's *Children's Literature and Culture of the First World War* (2015), Andrew Griffiths, Sara Prieto and Soenke Zehle's *Literary Journalism and World War I: Marginal Voices* (2016), Vincent Trott's *Publishers, Readers and the Great War: Literature and Memory since 1918* (2017), Ann-Marie Einhaus, Katherine Isobel Baxter *The Edinburgh Companion to the First World War and the Arts* (2017), or Sara Prieto's *Reporting the First World War in the Liminal Zone: British and American Eyewitness Accounts from the Western Front* (2018).

3. See *Anglica*, 27.3 (2018), edited by Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż and *Anuario IEHS*, 33 (2018), edited by Emiliano Gastón Sánchez.

4. One proposal was received on Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*, but reviewers found it unfitting for publication.

5.   For further discussion on trauma in the First World War see Peter Leese's *Shell Shock: Traumatic Neurosis and the British Soldiers of the First World War* (2002), Ross Wilson's "It Still Goes On: Trauma and the Memory of the First World War" (2014) or Jonathan Hart's *The Poetics of Otherness: War, Trauma, and Literature* (2015).

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Essays

"The road bare and white": Hemingway, Europe and the Artifice of Ritualised Space

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ABSTRACT

Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) are novels in which imagined space and material place interact, collide and contradict. Despite both texts being set in Europe, Hemingway's prose reveals American anxieties regarding war and identity. His protagonists are emasculated by war and alienated from the myths that have generated singular ideals of American masculinity. The novels imbue European landscapes with ritual and symbolism that create new imagined landscapes on which to perform and reassert this lost identity. Simultaneously, they are texts that expose the artifice of such performative endeavours. These oppositions and dissonances are read here through the prism of Foucault's paradigmatic "heterotopia". Foucault suggests that we are in an "epoch of juxtaposition" in which our conflicting understanding of space and place "cannot be superimposed". This paper argues that Hemingway's fiction offers a consciously empty form of symbolic space. The failure of the imagination and the knowing artifice of text suggest that the postwar heterotopia leaves no place for material manifestations of mythic autonomy, agency or free will. Hemingway imposes a distinctly American aesthetic on his European experiences. The now mythical frontier provides a mythic locale for the rituals of war to be performed. In this sense, war is heterotopian in its competing material and mythic constructions. Hemingway's fiction explores the liminal gaps between such certainties. This analysis moves from the vibrant streets of Paris and the whirling chaos of Milanese nightlife to 'clean' Alpine lakes, the reductive simplicities of Spanish life and the violent horrors of the Caporetto Retreat. The rituals performed in Europe provide a chance to relocate lost American identities but this process is ultimately revealed as empty and futile. These are textual spaces that are themselves heterotopian. Their prose experiments suggest sub-textual depth yet simultaneously reveal emptiness and futility lying beneath the sparse and economical tone.

Keywords: Hemingway, landscape, Foucault, heterotopia, ritual

Ernest Hemingway's novels are multi-faceted affairs. His terse prose invites analyses and debate with regards to its stylistic innovations and myriad sub-textual possibilities. His protagonists display a curious combination of masculine bravura and tender vulnerability. His thematic concerns are simultaneously rooted in early twentieth-century contexts and universal questions regarding mortality, sex and truth. It is his complex engagement with European landscapes, however, that are of interest here. Space and place are multi-functional in Hemingway's writing. Europe in particular holds a power over the writer that reflects his love affair with its cities and geographical histories. But Europe also operates as an analogue for mythic America. Hemingway searches for a lost American past in which certainties regarding American selfhood are more readily available. Participation in European conflict provides a material opportunity to enact and perform the self-determining autonomy encoded in mythic American narrative. In this sense, European landscape is both material and symbolic. Hemingway's texts offer a self-conscious exploration of this apparent contradiction.

This argument sets out to read this tension in two of Hemingway's early novels. In *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) Hemingway writes protagonists who are beleaguered by the complexities of their First World War experience. Jake Barnes, traumatised and injured during "that dirty war" (2012: 25), stumbles through the whirling social complexities of Parisian life and seeks ritualistic salvation in Northern Spain. Frederic Henry, meanwhile, is disillusioned by the futility and emptiness of combat. He too seeks salvation, but in a love affair with Catherine Barkley and the 'cold clean' landscapes of Alpine Europe. Through these protagonists, Hemingway plays out American anxieties and imposes an American aesthetic on European landscape. Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry engage in performative activities that range from competitive fishing trips to quasi-Alpine survival. These ritual enactments offer opportunity to perform mythic American autonomy. They suggest a corporeal self that is self-governed and evidence of a singular and certain subjectivity. They act as ballast against the material uncertainties of rapid social change and the impersonal and arbitrary nature of mortality in a newly mechanised era.

Hemingway never set a novel in America but his novels are always about America. They demonstrate anxieties regarding the status of American selfhood in modernity. The First World War denies agency or ritual power over mortality. Technology and the machinations of vast social systems leave the American subject powerless. America's mythic past, however, tells a different story. It offers paradigmatic constructions of autonomy and striking self-definition. The westward movement of Manifest Destiny and the significance of the frontier are mythical-historical discourses that favour and develop pragmatism, bravery and single-mindedness. These are foundational narratives that sit in stark contrast to the arbitrary dangers of the First World War and the isolation felt by post-industrial American subjects. Hazel Hutchinson (2015) describes the American experience of the First World War as one of "conflicting elements" and that, "[f]rom its opening weeks, the First World War was a war of contradictions" It was "[f]ought in defense of idealism and civilisation, [but] quickly became the most incoherent and inhumane war in history" (2). Hutchinson adds that such inconsistency is manifest in American literary responses to the war which is, she argues, "in itself something of a contradiction—the superb made out of the monstrous" (2). This is certainly the case in

Hemingway's writing. The tensions between the symbolic, the ideological and the material are made evident in the ritualistic and the performative. Soldiers and veterans search for meaning through enactments of their mythic past. The brute materialities of mechanised war remove agency. Conscious engagement in myth may bring it back. The novels confront the moral dilemmas facing combatants exposed to technological violence whose previous philosophical certainties are metaphorically blown apart. Prior to the First World War, Aimee Pozorski (2004) claims, modernist fiction and art had approached the *new* "as a radical break from past history and literary predecessors" (75). Technology and the clean, metallic lines of the future were a means to escape the self-serving narratives of the nineteenth century. The events of the war, however, were a catalyst for changes to modernism's relationship with the early twentieth century.

> The trench warfare of World War I […] complicated modernists' interest in "the new" as these atrocities were only modern insofar as they employed killing machines and systemic warfare. Instead of confidence in this new approach to literary valuation, ambivalence came to the forefront to underwrite modernism as a field. (75)

The nature of modernity, therefore, is complex and contradictory. Technology offers newness and progress; qualities long associated with America's national project. However, in the light of the First World War, technology also suggests disempowerment and a subjectivity detached from certainty. The material nature of American autonomy vanishes and is replaced by myth. Such myths are in turn revisited through repetitions of performative ritual and new configurations and understanding of spatial constructions and dynamics. To return to Hutchinson, she explains that at the war's end, "America was a modern, urban, materialistic society and a powerful player on the international stage". However, the contradictions, inconsistencies and "social divisions" that undermined such apparent success meant that "[it] was not long before many were looking back to the prewar years with nostalgia as a golden era of American life" (15) What the analysis in this article contends is that landscape, both as imagined and material, is the site for such nostalgic and mythic constructions to take place.

Hemingway's fiction is part of a long debate regarding America's relationship with landscape and the manner in which myth and historicity overlap in such constructions. Cultural historian Richard Slotkin (1973) argues that America's "myth consciousness" (4) sets it apart from other modern nations. Its "continual pre-occupation with the necessity of defining or creating a national identity" (4) means that America's mythic past is closely tied to the historical record. Slotkin describes these narrative beginnings as a process of "mythogenesis" (4) in which "the founding fathers […] tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness" (4). This is the moment, therefore, when the material nature of historical event and the mythic nature of national narrative start to form their intertwining relationship. Charles Fiedelson (1953) writes that this origin story is the basis for "a mode of perception that united past, present […] ideas and material fact" (81). America is a nation constantly engaged with its mythic origins. Material acts of all types always have the potential to symbolise and propagate those myths and this potential underpins the mundane performance of daily life. This complicates dichotomous understandings of myth and materiality. The superficially

straightforward aspects of work or social relations take on ritual potential. Subjectivity exists in a material present as well as a mythic and narrativised past.

Sacvan Bercovitch (1993) writes of a uniquely American "historicity of myth" (7). This is a system that underpins "national ritual" and "strategies of symbolic cohesion" (1). National myths are treated with material reverence. They do not belong in a forgotten and misty past but in a recent history. They are a guiding principle for hegemonic American identities and aesthetics. America's continental conquest is an example of this meeting of myth and history. Tony Tanner (1987) describes America's westward movement towards an ever-receding frontier as an "attack" carried out with "aggressive delight and almost sadistic savagery" (9). Among such violence lies the opportunity for the autonomy that defines American selfhood. In retellings of this mythic paradigm lies performative and ritual mimesis of this original violence. Jake's vicarious spectatorship of bullfighting or his failed attempts at masculine competition through fishing and fighting demonstrate this. For Frederic, however, the impersonal and random violence of the war cannot stand in for the autonomous violence that lies at the heart of American expansion. Thus, he decides on the dichotomous rituals of sex and enacting a pioneer identity in the purity and cleanliness of central Europe. This is R.W.B. Lewis' (2009) paradigmatic "American Adam" moving "unsullied by the past" (4) and achieving the self-determination and reliance that underpins so much of America's historic self-worth. These notions of identity are then repeated, echoed and propagated in culture. Frederick Jackson Turner (2008) argues that the western frontier is the "true point of view" (2) in America's cultural and literary identity. It is the "meeting point between savagery and civilisation" (3). Turner ascribes both mythic and material qualities to the frontier. It is a physical site whose "wilderness" initially "masters the colonist" (3). "Little by little", Turner continues, the American settler "transforms the wilderness" (4) and creates a "new product that is American" (4). Dominion over land, therefore, is a symbolic and material demonstration of American autonomy. The problem for combatants in the First World War is that the violent materiality and muddy quagmires of the conflict provide no outlet to perform and revisit this mythic relationship with landscape.

In order to read these tensions theoretically, and provide a paradigmatic shape to this analysis, it is useful to turn to Foucault's term *heterotopia* (1986). Human engagements with space involve multiple and competing codifications. Such "intersection[s] of time with space" (22) lead to the imaginative creation of a "hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred places and profane places; protected places and open, exposed places; urban places and rural places" (22). Heterotopian space is both imagined and real. It is "a sort of mixed, joint experience" (24) and a "simultaneously mythic and real contestation" (24). For societies in which experiential actuality is disordered, unsatisfying and dissonant with national myth, the heterotopia provides opportunity to reconcile and reconstruct. Resultant configurations are systems of spatial and temporal compensation,

> […] their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation […] (27)

Thomas Beebee (2008) argues that Foucault's model contains a "cognitive dissonance" that "focuses readers' attention on nation or region" (2) and that "territory and boundaries […] are not ontological givens" (3). Dana Rus (2011) adds that the American frontier is heterotopian in its mythical-symbolic construction. She contends that the frontier "creates a subject and then that subject takes this to other spaces to either propagate [or] rebuild an America or use such a paradigm to impart new constructions of a new place" (217). Heterotopian place has the potential to be mythic and imaginative yet still exist in the material world. However, experiential and existential tensions arise when these constructions are, in Foucault's terms, "absolutely not superimposable" (23).

Hemingway's protagonists experience such dissonance. The anxieties of modernity force them into ritualistic enactment of their mythic past. They are always aware, however, that these are futile processes in which emptiness and meaninglessness are never far beneath the surface. These uncertainties and complex spatial relationships hang over them and their traumatic experiences of conflict. The First World War rebuffs notions of self-determination and autonomy. Europe's landscapes have the potential for America's mythic past to be enacted but are also chaotic sites in which each combatant is made aware of the futility of individual action. Men such as Frederic Henry and Jake Barnes explore their landscapes caught in something of a double bind. They seek opportunities to perform the rituals of America's mythic past but are always aware of their ultimate powerlessness. Stanley Cooperman's (1967) often-cited criticism suggests that Hemingway's protagonists use ritual as a "bulwark against passivity" and a means of countering "fear of the unknown or unmanageable" (184). In the context of the First World War such thinking allows its participants a glimpse of agency removed by the advances in technological weaponry and corporeal vulnerability in the face of new technology and the mechanised nature of the First World War. This combination, Cooperman states, "eliminates the battlefield as a source for ritual" (185). Participation in conflict is no longer an opportunity to enact traditional modes of American masculinity or to play the hero. Its violence is random and offers the subject no real chance to participate in an active sense. Death is arbitrary; the subject plays no part in their mortality. Both novels here demonstrate that the war itself does not allow for performance of American autonomy and that agency is dependent on mythic nostalgia. Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry move through spatial constructions and repeatedly attempt conscious enactment of ritual in their social relations and performative behaviour. Whether it be Jake's comedic fishing trip or Frederic's signifying beard, every action is both material and ritual. This paradoxical tension is what drives each text. The key factor in this is that they are aware of the artifice of their ritual actions even as they are performing them. Therefore, the spaces in which such performances happen are simultaneously sites of possibility and futility. They are places in which Jake and Frederic can demonstrate American autonomy while knowing that this is merely a fiction.

The early sections of *The Sun Also Rises* depict the lively and transactional atmosphere of Paris in the years directly after the war's end. It is a city in which the individual is simultaneously performer and spectator. Jake Barnes and his extended network of associates, rivals and colleagues sustain an uneasy and fragile series of relationships. The city abounds with gossip, scandal and questionable moralities. Jake navigates Parisian public space in sequences that are both evocative and claustrophobic.

The city, like each spatial construction examined here, operates on a multitude of levels. Its contradictions are what Foucault defines through "relations of proximity between points or elements" (1986: 23). These are not simplistic oppositions but constructions and phenomenon whose differences are rendered complex by the human desire to squeeze them together. They exist as palimpsest rather than as two dimensional cartographies. Much has been made of the so-called Lost Generation of expatriate writers in the 1920s. The Paris of this era is now itself a highly romanticised space and central to popular engagement with American literature. However, it is not just retrospectively that such mythogenesis has been attached to Paris. Donald Pizer (1986) explains that it was this very opportunity to both live in a mythic space and to add to that myth that attracted so many American artists there in the first place. Paris held "Edenic power" (142) in which those Americans traumatised by their experiences of war could recalibrate and regenerate their identities. Material Paris is also mythic Paris. Pizer adds that Hemingway and his literary peers in Paris "tend towards the spatial" in a city that "exists as a condition of thought, emotion and memory" (142). These texts, therefore, work as complex representation and as metatextual commentary on the act of writing. The city and the self-aware textual representation of the city are both heterotopian. Hemingway is engaged in what Foucault describes as a "whole network of knowledge that enables us to delimit or […] formalize" (23) space. Hemingway's Paris and the text itself, therefore, are heterotopian in their layers of myth, experience and representation.

These three elements form the underlying tensions in Jake Barnes' first person narrative. The deceptive complexity of Jake's selfhood is always tangible yet clouded and obfuscated by the elliptical nature of his phrasing. As is usually the case with reading Hemingway, the gaps resonate with subjugated meaning and experience. Jake's war trauma is ever present yet barely discussed. His impotence is only evident in coded dialogue or his attempts at a compensatory and performative American masculinity. Jake searches for meaning in his daily activities and his frenzied social life provides opportunity to participate in the economic life of Paris. Every social interaction begets economic transaction. Money is loaned, spent, wasted and earned and Jake's initial sense of self is based on a determination to calibrate a valid selfhood in this context. The war, however, has undermined Jake's American autonomy and his "mala fortuna" (25) hinders his sexual agency. The appearance of economic success and activity offers a manner in which to superficially redress these imbalances. The passages in which daytime Parisian life is depicted are lively and enjoyable. For example, *Rue Soufflotis* is described on a "fine morning", with Jake smoking and reading the papers, surrounded by "flower women", "students" on their way to the law school or the Sorbonne, and "trams and people going to work" (28). Once at work himself, Jake sits "at the typewriter" and completes a "good morning's work" (29). The scenes are of a functioning and vibrant city and Jake is able to participate and engage in what Paris has to offer.

It is during the evening, though, that the veil begins to slip from Jake's narration. The ritualistic nature of his life in Paris is made clearer and the city becomes a Foucauldian "heterotopia of compensation". Jake's social relations and transactions are superficial attempts at creating tangible meaning. He uses Parisian nightlife and café culture as a way to participate in city life. His evenings are spent wandering from bar to restaurant to bar. Paris at night is complex and labyrinthine. Left on his own "on the terrace of the

Napolitain", Jake watches "the *poules* going by, singly and in pairs" (12) until one of them joins Jake at his table. The resultant exchanges contain their own subtexts. Paris' surface glitters but a cab ride along the "Avenue de l'Opera" moves past the "locked doors of […] shops" with their "windows lighted". Georgette, Jake's companion, is a "pretty girl" but only with "her mouth closed" (20). Even the Pernod they share is "imitation absinthe" (21). Paris is a city that refuses to reveal its depths. All that it offers instead is the opportunity to engage in ritualised behaviour. The transaction with a prostitute never suggests intimacy or desire. It is merely a performative and compensatory prop standing in for illusory and fragmentary sexual identity.

Jake's impotence means that his relationships with women are a conscious artifice. The remainder of his evening with Georgette is spent in social and performative activities that leave Jake bored and increasingly angry. The arrival of a boisterous group of young American men disturbs his night with Georgette and their simplistic grasp of night time ritual leaves Jake ready to "swing on one, any one, anything to shatter that superior, simpering composure" (17). Jake desires to disrupt their superficial happiness. They cannot see how shallow and performative such rituals are. For Jake, this is symptomatic of life in Paris. It is a city that shines with surface potential but hides ugly truths and sordid unhappiness. This is evident in the interactions between Jake and Lady Brett Ashley. Despite their attraction to one another, their relationship cannot be consummated. The Adamic certainties of American myth break apart and reform into rage at feminine sexuality. Brett's autonomy and sexual agency are outside of Jake's control. Jake responds with performative ritual through his interaction with Georgette, his acts of quasi-violence and his homoerotic and vicarious admiration of bullfighting. Parisian night life is a heterotopian space in which all of these competing constructions and actions can co-exist and clash. It is a site of experiential contradiction. As with so much else in the text, Jake's impotence is only hinted at. It is shrouded in euphemism and suggestion. During a moment of intimacy, Jake confirms, "there's not a damned thing we could do" (23). The manner in which such dialogue dances around the core truth is matched by Jake's own determination to follow the "swell advice" of the Catholic Church and "not […] think about it" (25). The injury, and by extension the war, are always present yet always repressed. Corporeal injury is the only constant truth of mechanised war but it is the one that Jake refuses to face. Something made all the clearer in the lengthy passages of description assigned to Spain and its promise of extensive and performative ritual.

Foucault describes subjective experiences of space as multi-faceted and plural. "The space in which we live", he argues, "which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space which claws and gnaws at us is […] a heterogeneous space" (24). In space we are surrounded by contradiction and by "diverse shades of light" (24). The understandings and conclusions we take from our surroundings are "irreducible" (24). In Hemingway's Spain, these ontological conditions are evident in self-conscious artifice and constructedness. Hemingway imposes a knowingly imperfect American aesthetic on his evocation of Spanish life. It is an aesthetic that harks back to mythic battles with wilderness and the self-reliant heroism of the frontiersman. Jake and Bill Gorton's travels across Spain's northern landscapes provide Hemingway with an opportunity to revisit, rewrite and potentially satirise the westward continental conquest of America's mythical-historical past. Given that the First World

War is often characterised by spatial stasis or retreat, Spain provides a heterotopian landscape in which Jake and Bill can evoke the rituals of conquest and dominion. The central chapters of *The Sun Also Rises* feature lengthy and poetic descriptions of Spanish landscape. These are littered with phrasing and imagery hugely familiar in American myth. Their travels are across "farming country with rocky hills", "patches of grain on […] bare hillsides" and past "a long string of six mules, following one after the other, hauling a high-hooded wagon loaded with freight" (80). As the men continue their journey across Basque country, the "barren" and "hard-baked" hills give way to a "sudden green valley" in which a "stream" runs "through the centre of town and fields of grapes" (82) encircle the residences. This is a return to an Edenic origin. Jake's loss of autonomy, symbolised by his impotence, is compensated for by his rugged movement across unforgiving land to a nurturing and golden site of fecundity and fertility. He is thus able to enact the mythic adventures of those foundational and Adamic Americans who have shaped hegemonic cultural identities. However, this mythic performance is undermined by Jake and Bill's means of movement. They are not self-reliant travellers. Instead, they are on board a public bus driven through landscape that they do not know. They are spoken to in a language that they barely understand and are victims of frequent jokes, jibes and mockery. This landscape demonstrates the artifice of ritualised space. It is heterotopian in its competing yet simultaneous constructions that are, to repeat Foucault, "absolutely not superimposable" (23). Hemingway is self-consciously interrogating the American proclivity towards a mythic and nostalgic understanding of selfhood. Richard Slotkin (1992) explains that, in American narrative, the "original mythic story is increasingly conventionalised and abstracted until it is reduced to a deeply encoded and resonant set of symbols, icons, keywords or historical clichés" (5). Once more, the novel operates as its own textual heterotopia. Hemingway simultaneously makes use of and undermines such familiar language. He suggests ritualised space then reveals the artifice beneath it.

Another example of this process is evident in Jake and Bill's fishing trip in the "valley of the Rio de la Fabrica" (88). This time their journey takes the form of a hike past a "field of buckwheat" and a "white house under some trees on the hillside" (89). The idyllic setting and a river packed with leaping trout evoke Jeffersonian agrarian ideals and opportunity to make the land productive. Yet, once more, Hemingway undercuts the mythic and ritual potential of their actions when the transparently competitive nature of the two men is made clear. The trip is reduced to a set of comedic and performative masculine tropes. The singularity of Adamic and mythic American masculine subjectivity is undermined as a result. Judith Butler (1988) argues that gender is "in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed" (519). That this is the case is revealed through Jake and Bill's engagement with the ritual of hunting. So long a necessity for American survival, here it becomes what Butler describes as "a stylized repetition of acts" (519) Phallic fishing rods are brandished and Jake's successful haul is organised on the floor "side by side, all their heads pointing the same way" (91). Bill mimics this as he too displays his competence and mastery with his own fish, "each one a little bigger than the last" (91) and surveys them with a face that is "happy and sweaty" (91). The performative implications here are clear. These are men that have been emasculated by their mechanised present. If Paris is a space in which, to use Foucault's

terms, Jake's life is "ill-constructed and jumbled" (30) then this "heterotopia of compensation" is an attempt to meet such panic with a space that is "perfect", "meticulous" and "well-arranged" (30). Jake and Bill's material experiences do not coalesce with myth and so they play out these anxieties in this puerile and immature display. Jake's impotence remains prominent as he and Jake compare the sizes of their catch. Just as their bus journey through Spanish landscape is both mythic ritual and a material rebuff of that same potential, the fishing trip is a comic demonstration of performative compensation.

In San Fermin, meanwhile, the bullring operates as a heterotopia that is, to use Foucault's terms, capable of "juxtaposing in a single real space several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible" (28). Its heightened sense of performative ritual and Jake's insistence that he fulfils the requirements of an *aficionado* are clear indications of the central position that ritual holds for exerting an illusory control and a performance of violence as a means of grasping at long gone corporeal autonomy. The bullring and the traditions of bullfighting are an ongoing preoccupation in Hemingway's writing. They offer a ritualistic encounter with mortality but one that takes place in controlled and artificial environs. The bullring is, according to Gabriel Rodriguez-Pazos (2014), a "space where tragedy is transcended by art" (84). The First World War is a theatre of combat that cannot offer the same. Death is random on the battlefield. There are no opportunities to demonstrate expertise or bravery.

In San Fermin, the chaotic whirl of the fiesta and Jake's increasingly shaky grip on his social life is offset by the potential offered by bullfighting. His self-proclaimed expertise is performed as ritual. His dialogue with local hotelier Montoya about bullfighting is a "deep secret that we knew about" yet the matadors that they admire are "well-framed" (130) on the walls of Montoya's office. Romero, the star matador of the moment, is an idealised masculine figure through whom Jake can vicariously perform. Jake's performative expertise is his doorway to what Foucault describes as a space of "curious exclusions" and "illusion" (29). It is as if Jake's passionate knowledge and appreciation of Romero's skills are compensation for Jake's wartime trauma. Jake brings Brett to the bullring so that he can demonstrate his entry into a secretive world of ritual knowledge. He is keen that she appreciate that she is watching "activity with a definite end" rather than "a spectacle with unexplained horrors" (127). This eschatological and linear urge toward completion is not something offered by the chaos of the war. In the bullring, however, Jake's desire for certainty can play out until a fixed end point.

Romero himself transcends the material physicality of the bullfight. Jake observes that he always remains "straight and pure and natural in line". Not for him the twisting "corkscrews" and "raised elbows" (127) of lesser fighters. Romero's performance "dominated the bull by making him realize he was unattainable" (128). This ritual violence is a dance and an art form. Its obvious brutality is hidden behind a veil of expertise and self-defined dominance. The corporeal nature of this blood sport has little place in Jake's thinking. The notion of pierced flesh or broken bodies would sully his fascination. Romero's body, therefore, is also a heterotopian space. Jake imposes an aesthetic on its appearance and movement that shifts focus away from his own wartime injuries. The violent deaths of a succession of bulls operate as an extended metaphor for Romero's sexual prowess. His sexual encounter with Brett is, like most issues that Jake

flinches from, buried in rumour and euphemism. However, the epic and ritual struggle with the bull always culminates in an act of penetrative completion. The bull sags and falls and Romero presents his sword to an adoring public. This sexualised violence and its ritual autonomy encapsulates Jake's twofold self-awareness. He knows that these are just rituals but also knows that such rituals are the only manner in which he can intellectually process his vanishing subjectivity. His fashionable Parisian social life only throws up petty rivalries and withering disdain. Even the carnivalesque traditions of the San Fermin fiesta are ruined by these relationships. His own ritual activities are undermined and rendered futile and comedic. But in the bullring he can immerse himself fully in an act that will always work toward completion. The bullring is the most transparently artificial space that Jake inhabits but the purity of the ritual and Jake's physical removal from it mean that it becomes, paradoxically, the one that holds most meaning.

The notion of constructed space and place and the ritualistic processes and imposed meanings that can be found there are central in Hemingway's 1929 novel *A Farewell to Arms.* Hemingway's story of disillusionment is a deceptively complex narrative in which Frederic Henry, a volunteer ambulance driver for the Italian army, recounts a gradual yet profound disillusionment with the war. A serious leg injury and the brutality of the Caporetto Retreat result in an act of desertion and immersion in an intense relationship with the British nurse Catherine Barkley. Frederic's narrative ends bleakly as he walks away alone from the Swiss hospital in which Catherine has died during the delivery of a stillborn child. The novel is superficially a tale of attempted heroism, injury, desertion for a love affair and the loss of a child. However, its complexity lies in Frederic's limited reflexive recollections. His narration is a self-consciously limited response to national and personal trauma. Catherine's death and the stillbirth are metonymic of Frederic's new and problematic relationship with heroism and the dynamics of mechanised conflict. The deaths are a reminder that the only certainty to be taken from mechanised war is corporeal damage and the frailty of the human body. Narrative tension exists in gaps between the narratives of American ideology and Frederic's own traumatic experiences. The novel frequently revisits these liminal spaces and explores the process of attaching self-consciously artificial meaning where none is immediately apparent.

The text opens with what Anders Hallengren (2001) describes as "one of the most pregnant opening paragraphs in the history of the modern American novel" (np). It reads:

> In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves. (1)

The passage communicates the destructive materiality of war through restrained and understated description of European landscape. The metronomic march of the military pierces the cyclical rhythm of the natural world. The transient nature of human endeavour and mechanised conflict sit in an uneasy relationship with the ageless earth. Again,

Hemingway presents a landscape in which it is possible to pursue several layers of complimentary yet competing meaning. The strange passive tone of this prose suggests that this landscape is one in which individual human agency is absent or futile. The troops are an anonymous mass far removed from notions of grandeur or heroism. The dust and autumnal falling of leaves symbolise death and the road bare and white is a landscape made empty by the trauma of mechanised conflict. The appearance of this paragraph at the opening of the novel sets up Frederic Henry's singular and ongoing search for meaning. He, like Foucault, seeks to "imagine a sort of systematic description" (26) but this will ultimately prove elusive. The novel moves from the Austro-Italian front through the whirl and chaos of wild Italian nightlife to the sublime cleanliness of Alpine Europe. Each landscape is witness to a series of rituals. These range from the boorish masculine dynamics of the Italian army to the decadence of leave and end up in the reductive roles adopted in Frederic and Catherine's relationship. Some fail instantly, some last a little longer but all are united by the sense that they hide nothing. Beneath the ritual is only emptiness. Yet, this does not mean that they offer nothing to the performative subject. Frederic and Catherine use and embrace ritual as an alternative to intellectual disillusionments and material traumas. They adopt idealised roles and impose a combination of American pioneer traditions and associated pastoral simplicities on European landscape. Ritual and ritualised space offer blanketing warmth or absurd bravura. It offers an alternative narrative that is at least as empty as that provided by the hegemonic ideologies that drive and underpin conflict. Midway through the novel, Frederic states that he "was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice". Frederic has "seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards in Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it" (165). Ideological discourse, therefore, is also ritualistic but, unlike those conscious choices made by Catherine and Frederic, its rituals offer only violent dishonesty. There is no salvation, no warmth nor any performative benefit to it.

One of the major innovations in this text is the manner in which the body continually operates as a ritualised and heterotopian space. Unlike in *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway repeatedly foregrounds corporeal vulnerability in this narrative. The symbolic wholeness of the Adamic American subject is disrupted and fragmented. The impenetrable male body is broken and its organic materiality clashes with its symbolic indestructibility. Soldiers' injuries are omnipresent. A significant early example comes from Catherine in one of her first exchanges with a still optimistic Frederic. She recalls hearing of her fiancé's death and how she hoped he would arrive at the hospital in which she was employed with a noble injury, "something picturesque" (19). This is clearly fantasy when it is revealed that "he didn't have a sabre cut […] they blew him all to bits" (19). Mythic agency and the muscularity of heroism are replaced by the frail and organic nature of corporeal conflicts. Frederic rejects Catherine's statement and assures her that male bodies "won't crack here" (19). As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that exposure to such a forceful and violent death has given her insight. It is knowledge that Frederic will only gain through his own experiences of corporeal pain and slow recovery. The soldier's body, therefore, is subject to competing constructions and offers another example of heterotopian space. Catherine understands the material nature of war in a way that Frederic cannot. The simplicity of traditional valour and the promises of heroism

mean that Frederic sees potential in his body and those of his peers. As the novel progresses, the two figures become aligned in their thinking. The body is weak and fragile. It is subject to the enormous mechanised forces unleashed by the war. Movement, conscious ritual and the mutual satisfactions of sexual intimacy provide welcome alternatives to such stark realisations.

Frederic's own debilitating injury is sustained in comedic anti-heroic circumstances. It is drawn upon several times in the novel as a means of undermining idle constructions of heroism. Heterotopian imaginings of landscape provide the basis for examining constructions of American selfhood. While Frederic lies in a Milanese hospital, for example, the visit of his "war brother" (60), the vainglorious Rinaldi, is a study in the emptiness of such constructions. Rinaldi is unsatisfied with Frederic's prosaic assertion that he was, "blown up while we were eating cheese" (59). He desires a heroic tale of "valorous conduct" (59) that can be reproduced in the *Lancet* as proof that Frederic should receive military decoration. Rinaldi's attitude to the masculine world of combat is an unquestioning celebration of symbolic and performative masculinity. His is a ritual world of good-natured mocking, alcohol consumption and liberal employment of local prostitutes. As juxtaposition, Hemingway offers the thoughtful and isolated figure of the Priest. His visit to the hospital lifts Frederic. Kind, eloquent and gentle, he is the antithesis of the boorish and giggling Rinaldi. Consequently he is the object of derision and mockery. He often cuts a desolate, lonely figure. Yet he engages Frederic in a manner that his other peers cannot. His devotion to spirituality and the idyllic life of his native Abruzzi intrigue Frederic. This is an alternative to the damaging superficialities of military habitation. However, despite promises to the contrary, Frederic neglects to visit the priest's family in Abruzzi while on leave. Instead, he indulges in a decadent Milanese weekend of promiscuity and inebriation. His memories are a blur of "the smoke of cafes and nights where the room whirled" and "nights in bed, drunk, when you knew that was all there was and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you" (12). This distinction between urban deprivation and the simplicity and openness of Alpine Europe is a central opposition in *A Farewell to Arms*.

To achieve this ritualistic self-awareness, however, Frederic must move from a state of innocence to that of experience. Lewis' American Adam embodies "heroic innocence" (5) and Frederic's early experiences with the Italian military serve to underline that he fits this description. His narration, though, spoken from a point beyond the end of the novel, subtly indicates that the masculine group rituals of drinking and regular visits to the local brothel are offset by a sense of cultural isolation. As with landscape, Hemingway cannot fail to impose an American aesthetic on this European community. Frederic makes efforts to ingratiate himself but there is always the sense that his American identity sets him apart. Slotkin (1973) argues that such division is emblematic of America's desire to forge a monolithic and specifically non-European national selfhood.

> […] where the European stood amid the ruins of established society and used its fragments to build a new house, the American felt himself to be the creator of something new and unprecedented […] where the European craved confirmation of older values, the American saw himself as exploring new moral grounds, returning to the primary sources of value for a new beginning, a new creation of the moral universe. (370)

As such, Frederic's return to Europe as the solitary American signifies such division. His elliptical narration of group interactions suggests difference and division. The postcards he sends back to America are "strange and mysterious" (35) and contain very little. Superficially, there is "nothing to write about" (35). Frederic's inability to carry out this act of writing betrays his distaste for his Italian peers. He describes them in his narration in derogatory and stereotyped terms. One superior is "fat and prosperous" while another is a "tiny man with the long thin neck and goat beard" (35). Frederic quickly loses faith in official forms of military protocol. His uniform requirements demonstrate the cumbersome nature of codified obedience and offer another source for examining ritual. The "steel helmets" (32) are too heavy to be worn with any comfort. Endless lines of soldiers in uniform are, "sweaty, dusty and tired" (32). He recalls the "ridiculousness of carrying a pistol" and the manner in which he "carried it flopping against the small of my back with no feeling at all except a vague sense of shame" (28). The men carry a holster as a means of uniform and to display their military status. Rinaldi undermines this when he insists on filling it with "toilet paper" (29). There is, of course, a clear link to Jake Barnes' impotence here. War is a symbolic opportunity to perform masculine feats of sexualised heroism but is also the theatre in which such constructions are proved false.

Warscapes—be they on the battlefield, of a corporeal nature or the seemingly goodhearted friendship of the masculine group—are thus necessarily heterotopian. They are spaces in which these competing understandings of participation in conflict can co-exist and clash. They are also the spaces in which Hemingway's narrative experiments can take shape. This is clear in the central portions of the novel in which Frederic participates in the infamous Caporetto Retreat. This devastating Austrian attack on the Italian front line happened on 24th October 1917, and is described by Giovanna Procacci (2002) as "an event without precedent" (141). He goes on to detail the chaos of the subsequent retreat. "The mass of humanity—men, women and children—fled in total confusion from the advancing enemy often without a clear destination, the civilians without a plan and the stragglers without orders" (141). Such violence, fear and degradation in these chapters are sustained, unrelenting and candid. This is the precursor to Frederic's decision to leave the war and seek meaning elsewhere. To fully construct this juxtaposition, Hemingway details page after page of bewilderment. Frederic wanders through landscapes so broken by war that they are indistinguishable from one another. There is little direction to his movement. This inaction and turpitude is a rebuttal to the American promises of fulfilment that brought Frederic and so many like him to the European theatre. Among days and days of rain, Frederic and his small group attempt to navigate their way through the chaos. The Italian landscape and the power of enemy weaponry are as one. Houses and villages are "badly smashed" and "wrecked" (162). The surrounding woods are full of Austrian guns and there are "iron shrapnel balls in the rubble of the houses and on the road" (166). The retreat itself comprises endless "columns of troops and guns" (173). The movement is slow and frustrating. Cars and trucks grind along for a few yards and then stop for hours. When compared to Jake's journey through Spanish landscape and the references to American myth, these sequences offer something of a subverted Manifest Destiny. This is not a coterie of brave and self-determining pioneers moving toward a god given notion of national completion. Feeble vehicles are "loaded with household goods" with "mirrors projecting up through mattresses and

chickens and ducks tied to carts" (176). Frederic's car becomes stuck in mud and, despite prolonged efforts to shift it, is abandoned. This is not a conquest over hostile landscape. It is a submission to it. Absent are the well-ordered and clearly demarcated lines between frontier and wilderness or between east and west.

Threatened by armed and furious *Carabinieri* who are determined to halt the retreat and arrest deserters, Frederic is faced with a choice. He can accept arrest and a loss of agency or plunge into icy waters of the Tagliamento River and make his escape. The "cold" and "icy" (201) river marks a contrast to the chaos of the retreat and abuses of the "executing officers" (200). The water acts as a cleansing agent for Frederic. It is a baptism in which he is offered a symbolic rebirth. The river marks a liminal space between the materiality of conflict and the remainder of the text in which Frederic adopts self-conscious ritual. Hemingway is too complex a writer to offer simple contrast and water operates as both a physical border between competing landscapes and a contemplative and performative space in which to pursue dwindling hopes of agency.

Frederic and a pregnant Catherine's escape from military police late in the novel encapsulate this use of water. They row thirty-five kilometres across Lake Geneva to the Swiss shore on a pitch-black night. Such action is another example of Foucault's "heterotopia of compensation". This is a space on which myth and imagination are imposed on the material world through the corporeal self. The darkness allows Frederic intense focus on the rhythms of his body and the autonomy of escape. Frederic's narration describes the way that he "pulled, raised, leaned forward, found the water, dipped and pulled" (241). The repetitive nature of such language hovers on the edge of poetic mantra. The rhythms provide order and control in a world where this is no longer possible. The alpine lake at night offers a suitably blank page on which to consciously enact ritual. Frederic can reassert and enact the mythic autonomy refused to him during his frantic and chaotic escape from Caporetto.

Switzerland itself offers a pastoral simplicity. Its neutrality and cold offer empty space in which Frederic and Catherine can perform a simple life away from conflict. The opening chapters of Book V detail an idyllic mountain landscape that is ancient and untouched by modernity. The chaotic noise of the front and the social activity of Italian cities and hotels are replaced by the noise of a "stream in the rocks" (257). Frederic and Catherine enact a pioneer life in descriptions of the land that foreground the romantic and the sublime. Their "brown wooden house" is simply heated by a fire of "pine wood" that, as Frederic recalls, "crackled and sparked and roared" (257). Their view is of "the lake and the mountains across the lake on the French side" (258). They are figures alone in the world and this isolation allows them focus on their corporeal identities. Frederic indulges in memories of "invigorating" (258) walks. He and Catherine look up at "a high snowy mountain […] so far away that it did not make a shadow" (259). Yet, as with Jake's rendering of Northern Spain as an analogue for the American frontier, here too, there is clear evidence that Frederic and Catherine are performing self-conscious rituals that embody both domestic simplicity and the nostalgic traditions of an agrarian past. Their pioneer existence is dependent upon the domestic service of Mrs Guttingen who provides them with heat, food and comfort. This is not an autonomous journey into untapped or uncharted space. It is the performative action of privileged individuals. At no point does the weather create any real danger for them and at no point are they required

to demonstrate the fortitude required for survival. Chiefly, though, performativity and ritual are evident in Frederic and Catherine's relationship and Hemingway's representation of femininity in *A Farewell to Arms* more broadly. Masculine heterosexual gratification and boasts of sexual virility and performance permeate the early stages of the novel. Foucault (1978) argues that discourse of this nature results from the need to quantify sexuality and sexual experience through "the nearly infinite task of telling" (43). Sex is represented and constructed by a discourse that explores "the interplay of innumerable pleasures, sensations and thoughts which, through the body and the soul, had some affinity with sex" (43). Thus, attitudes to and experiences of sex are controlled by language. As a result, heterosexuality becomes normative through dominant narratives. The passive feminine sexual subject is part of the same process. Female sexuality in this novel is a narrative controlled by its masculine speaker. Nurses and prostitutes are the dominant representations of femininity in *A Farewell to Arms*. Nurses are sexually pure while the prostitutes are corrupt. Marc Hewson (2003) discusses the inclusion of this attitude in this novel as evidence of Hemingway's narrow chauvinism with regards to sex. He suggests that "male satisfaction is the sexual order of the day" and that sex "be there when the men want it" (54). The large number of prostitutes mentioned in the early stages of the novel "indicates that the soldiers perceive women as possessions" (54). Catherine's presence in the novel signifies the other side of this construction. Her submissiveness and sexual acquiescence help Frederic reject the chaos of the front and embrace a carefully constructed relationship. Catherine's body and their shared sexual intimacy offer the same ritualistic space for Frederic as that of the constructed and heterotopian descriptions of space elsewhere in the novel. Catherine is nurturing, emotionally responsive and focused on the healing of wounds. She helps Frederic to blanket his trauma by taking her place in the nostalgic rituals of a traditional male–female dynamic.

Catherine operates as a constructed counterfoil to the ritualised and nostalgic masculinity that Frederic retreats to. Frederic can complete his immersion in myth through this relationship. Yet, it is important to remember that Catherine also requires the comfort of such construction. She has already made her decision to oppose the violence of the war. Her relationship with Frederic blankets her from a world that she cannot bear or understand. Sandra Whipple Spanier (1990) reads Catherine as a character that consciously decides to "submerge herself in a private love relationship" in a "courageous effort to construct a valid alternative existence to a hostile and chaotic universe" (86). Catherine's wilful subservience manifests itself in her adoption of a clearly demarcated domesticity. She adopts her role consciously rather than buckling under the pressure of social obligation and group expectation. Just as the pain killing gas protects her from pain during her fatal labour at the denouement of the novel, so her blissful cocoon of romantic tranquillity cushions her from memories of her eviscerated fiancée and the brutality of mechanised conflict. Repeated images of protective layers—the warmth of a heated room, the privacy of a shared bed and, perhaps most telling of all, the blanketing intimacy of sexual engagement—accumulate throughout Frederic's memories of their relationship. At the extreme of her behaviour is the wish to disappear entirely into the identity of the unified couple. She expresses a desire to be immersed in the preservation of Frederic's contentment. Hemingway's economic prose offers a binding symmetry. Catherine states,

"I want what you want. There isn't any me any more. Just what you want" (96). It is important to remember, however, that this devotion is narrated by Frederic. These are the recollections of a reticent and opaque voice. Frederic too wants to abandon war for a self-conscious construction of safety and happiness. He is fully aware of the artifice of his new reality and this is reflected in Hemingway's elliptical prose. His transformation from combatant to civilian is merely the shedding of one constructed identity for another. Frederic convinces himself to "forget the war" and make a "separate peace" (217). The acts of forgetting and of symbolically shedding his identity are conscious decisions. Forgetfulness, so often a passive occurrence, is an anti-heroic assertion.

At the bleak climax of the novel, the deaths of Catherine and her stillborn child provide a stark rebuttal to this new construction. The corporeal reality of the two deaths shows again that Hemingway's novels present a paradox. Only symbolic and self-conscious ritual can help the American subject to enact autonomous selfhood. Yet, death and the fragility of the corporeal self reveal the ultimate futility of such pursuits. *A Farewell to Arms* is a liminal novel, caught in a heterotopian struggle between constructed, imagined landscape and material experience. Moral clarity is only evident in Frederic's fatalist response to the loss of Catherine and her child:

> Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or gave you the syphilis like Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you. (289)

Ultimately, death and corporeal injury are the only certainties available to Frederic Henry and Jake Barnes. Selfhood and its various facets such as autonomy, agency or self-determination are just constructs. Mechanised conflict and the unpredictable violence of combat experience are experienced first and foremost on the body. The particularities of pain and mortality mean that only singular understandings are available in this regard. The body in landscape is undoubtedly material but it can also participate in ritual and performance that helps the American subject to return to the moral certainties of a mythic age. Frederic's polemical tirade is the most lucid moment in *A Farewell to Arms*. Mortality and powerlessness eventually hold sway over ritual and performance. The anonymous "they" overpowers the terrified self. This is not to say, however, that Frederic's actions have been meaningless. Hemingway places value in ritual but this is always underwritten by the fact that this does not extend beyond the ritual itself. If the American subject is to navigate the new uncertainties of the mechanised world then his engagement with space is crucial. He must connect with atavistic and anachronistic rituals and narrate new constructions of selfhood on the land beneath him. Death is a certainty and how this happens is beyond subjective comprehension. To enact myth and ritual along the way is not simply a delusion. For Hemingway, it is where the search for truth and meaning may find some traction. As records of the First World War, then, these novels expose the hubris of nationalist ideology and the futility of patriotic masculinity. They also reveal the indifference of ancient landscape and the possibilities offered by

experimental prose in exploring the gaps and ellipses between hard truths and subjective and uncertain experience.

These novels, then, represent landscapes that are multi-functional. They are a record of European war and its associated traumas and violence. They are also an opportunity for this American writer to recalibrate his American identity in a new creative space. Finally, they are spaces that are both symbolic and material. Hemingway imposes a mythic and nostalgic spatial American aesthetic on his constructions of Europe. However, these constructions are, as Foucault argues of the heterotopia, competing and clashing. In Hemingway's prose, they offer a dissonance that cannot be rectified. These novels are heterotopian in their insistence on space as both a site of compensation and a knowing opportunity for the artifice of ritualised behaviour. Foucault describes the twentieth century as an "epoch of simultaneity" and "of juxtaposition" and "near and far". (22) Hemingway's war reflects such constant and crippling opposition. It is written as an emblem of the trauma of epistemological and experiential uncertainty. These novels offer a knowingly artificial palate on which the traumatised American subject can use the artifice of American ritual and myth to address such difficulties. However, the texts themselves are also heterotopian in their recognition that this is a self-aware process masking persistent and nagging emptiness.

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"Seducers of the people"[1]:
Mapping the Linguistic Shift

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ABSTRACT

In his book on propaganda Jacques Ellul acknowledges the unsavoury connotation - which is a common place of today's culture - surrounding those who write to influence a public. This is an interpretation which is frequently applied to the government propaganda writers of the First World War, yet to do so removes those writers from their context and applies modern understanding to a historical act. Over the last century since the Great War society has developed, causing a social linguistic shift. This shift has affected the way propaganda is understood, and propaganda in an Edwardian sense is not simply synonymous with propaganda as the term is interpreted and used today. My paper demonstrates how this word has undergone lexical development over the intervening years since the War, using corpus-based analysis to track the definition of the term 'propaganda' in Oxford English Dictionaries using the Antconc database software. I combine this quantitative research with in-depth exploration of propaganda theories from the Twentieth Century, and examples of First World War propaganda to ascertain when in history, if indeed a certain time was pivotal, this word began to mutate. This paper argues that better understanding of the development of this term reveals the contradictory nature of many modern-day attitudes to the relationship between literature and politics; the disconnect often at play between how we view our own modern culture and the judgements we are tempted to make about the past.

Keywords: Propaganda, Wellington House, First World War, George Creel

"A common view of propaganda is that it is the work of a few evil men, seducers of the people, cheats and authoritarian rulers who want to dominate a population [...]. According to this view, the public is just an object, a passive crowd that one can manipulate, influence and use."
(Ellul, 1973: 118)

1. Introduction

Trudi Tate, (2013: 58) reflecting on the Great War and the call to arms of artists and literary figures in aid of an official agenda, claims that "propaganda can seem like an act of betrayal". This view of those who write to promote government aims is a common place of today's culture where the term carries an unsavoury connotation; the influencing of a populace through the written word can be understood as manipulative and immoral, as truth is seen to be concealed and lies propounded. Yet this interpretation is neither comprehensive, nor static. Over the last century (and certainly since the cessation of fighting in 1918) society has developed; not only accelerated technological advances, but increasing secularization, consumerism, rise of mass media and advertising have brought about a social linguistic shift. Whilst the "demonic implications" (Miller, 2005: 15) of the word 'propaganda' may have been less pronounced in the Edwardian era, modern critics regularly accuse those who wrote for official agencies during the First World War of crimes against truth; in doing so, however, they remove writers from their context and apply a modern understanding to a historic act. Whilst discussing John Buchan for instance, in a text which otherwise serves as a markedly staunch defence of the writer and his motives during the war, John Burnett and Kate Mackay (2014: X) casually (and perhaps without intentional censure) charge him with the role of propagandist. They state, quite rightly, that Buchan was the Government's Director of Information, yet add in parenthesis that this "meant propaganda". Whilst largely a benign comment, this statement betrays a contemporary sensibility that there is no difference between politically produced information, and that problematic word 'propaganda'. Peter Buitenhuis (1989: 94) is less charitable in his analysis of Buchan's role during the war, accusing him of "falsify[ing] the whole military situation on the Western Front" due to the positive 'spin' his writing often gave to the events that were taking place in Europe.

It is the concern that writers may have manipulated their writing to fulfil an agenda, potentially falsifying facts, which is responsible for the term's reputation as a tool of deceit—a suspicion which it struggles to escape. Cate Haste (1977: 2) claims that propaganda is "most effective if public access to truth is severely restricted", whilst Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (1994: 238) speak of a public that is "corrupted" by the organised propagation of opinion. There is a sense of manipulation and deception implied by these statements, and an allusion to a public that is misled by an official organisation. Yet it is important to consider the decades in which these claims were pronounced; the Cold War and Vietnam War were prevalent in the common psyche at the time, and a shift in public thinking has emerged due to those conflicts. Herman and Chomsky (1994: 234) even allude to a 'Vietnam syndrome' which was created, resulting in a "disparity between the public and its 'leaders'". This is not a phenomenon which is unique to the Vietnam conflict (the Twenty First Century, indeed, finds itself in a very similar situation), rather it was the first example of a 'media' war, with live stream television (as opposed to staged reporting) providing an actual uncensored footage of the campaign. This made the role of propaganda much more difficult; it became impossible for a narrative to be constructed when the public was faced with the truth. This heralds our own relationship to war and the propaganda of war, and indeed it is common to all propaganda of conflict in a mass media and democratic context.

This controlled dissemination of information has been referred to as the propagation of "organized myth" (Ellul, 1973: 11), a phrase which alludes to deceit and falsehood being practised by institutional propagandist agencies. Whilst these agencies are not always necessarily governmental, Harold Lasswell (1927: 14) argues that "all governments are engaged to some extent in propaganda", and Jacques Ellul (1973: 62) confirms this, stating that it is this political propaganda of governments which is "the type called immediately to mind by the word propaganda". Mark Crispin Miller (2005: 10), however, recognises the word's prevailing Catholic sentiments, warning that the religious origins are not to be ignored (the genesis of the term relates to a committee of Cardinals founded by Pope Gregory XV in 1622). This tension between a political and theological use of the word 'propaganda' demonstrates how problematic it can be to attempt to compartmentalise a term which has come to be understood differently by varying groups of people. Ellul attempts to portray how diffuse the range of its meanings has become by listing a number of attempts made by various personages to reach a definition (1973: xii). These attempts are over-complicated, often vague, and lack cohesion amongst themselves. There is an agreement that propaganda is of importance to the individual, that there is a sense of control or influence involved, but whether this stimulus is a psychological manipulation, or simply an honest attempt to change attitudes or opinion, remains unsolved by Ellul.

Indeed, it is this sense of uncertainty which was, for me, intrinsic to the term's interpretation and definition in society; if its meaning can vary from the religious to the bureaucratic, and if there is debate over the integrity of the intended purpose of propaganda, perhaps its meaning can also vary over time from the Great War to more recent hostilities. Herman and Chomsky's (1994: 164) observations of the effect of the conflict in Vietnam, and the subsequent lack of trust in government information (which they accuse of "exposing the general population to [the war's] horrors and [...] unfair, incompetent, and biased coverage") present the power social events have to alter the definition of a word (or at least how it is understood socially). Thus it can be argued that current understanding of the term 'propaganda' has been shaped by the events of the latter part of the Twentieth Century.

Alain Badiou (2016: 18) explores this sense of linguistic evolution by commenting on the understanding of the term 'terrorism', stating that it has undergone a "semantic evolution" over time. Part of the reason for this fluidity, Badiou (2016: 20) argues, is that 'terrorism' is a "non-existent substance, an empty name"; it is an abstract idea rather than a scientific certitude. In a similar manner, Edward Bernays (2005: 73) points out that propaganda "can never be an exact science for the reason that its subject-matter [...] deals with human beings." There can be no certainty in any word, and much less so in one which relates to the abstract and whose interpretation is subject to a varied human observation. The term 'propaganda' does not signify a concrete, but rather an abstract, idea and is therefore subject to this diversity of definition. It is important to recall the problematic relationship between sign and signifier, popular in twentieth-century western thought, and the Saussurean (1966: 10) claim of language as a convention where the "nature of the sign that is agreed upon does not matter"; words evade concrete definition, and are merely the result of societal apperception and progression over time.

Indeed, Muriel Grant (2013: 56) notes that the term 'propaganda' "changed its meaning" during the 1920s and 1930s, "taking on new, negative connotations" as a result of the British publicity campaign during the First World War. Lasswell (1927: 2), too, (who was writing during the era to which Grant refers) declared that "a word has appeared, which has come to have an ominous clang in many minds: Propaganda". Lasswell's use of the word 'appeared' here is indicative of the changing status of the term over time; he hints that it achieved greater prevalence in the aftermath of the Great War than it had previously boasted, in addition to gaining a new 'ominous' connotation. 'Propaganda' was not a new word (its religious roots, as previously noted, date back to the Seventeenth Century), rather an existing one which was put to new use; certainly, the term is far from static. However, to examine propaganda and to attempt to unravel the motives and morality of those who wrote it is an impossible task. Hazel Hutchison (2015: 56) reminds us that writers who attempted to articulate the war and their experiences through their writing should not always be characterised as propagandists, that to do so "oversimplifies the relationship between literary and political activity". Hutchison is perhaps warning against this characterisation of propagandists as they are understood in today's culture; if an Edwardian context was to be re-applied to the term, it could become more acceptable to write under its banner.

George Orwell (2013: 9), in one of his best-known essays 'Politics and the English Language', offers the definitive mid-twentieth century analysis of how a decline in language has led to clichéd phrases being used, which (although boasting a shared and accepted social understanding) in reality lack clear meaning and are, in fact, ambiguous. In a similar way to Badiou, he takes a word (in this case 'fascism') and examines how its meaning has developed. He claims that 'fascism' now has "no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable'. […] there is no agreed definition." For the modern society, 'propaganda', also, has become ambiguous, one is simply aware that it is 'not desirable'. Orwell (2013: 9) goes on to argue that words, such as 'fascism' (words that have no agreed definition) are "often used in a consciously dishonest way", and that each person who uses them has "his own private definition". The term 'propaganda' itself can be manipulated and changed to suit the user, and perhaps those who accuse writers of dishonesty in the name of propaganda are in fact doing so in a dishonest way. Whether or not authors created propaganda during the First World War is not the important argument here, rather what this paper hopes to achieve is to demonstrate that propaganda (in an Edwardian sense) is simply not synonymous with 'propaganda' as the term is understood and used today.

In addition to understanding the development of the linguistic interpretation of propaganda, it is important to explore the various ways it was disseminated, and the forms it could present. Herman and Chomsky's (1994: 32) text offers a tier system which influential media can follow: the information stems from the top tier and filters down into all levels of society, and propaganda campaigns "in general [are] closely attuned to elite interests". This illustration demonstrates how propaganda is created by, and to the benefit of, the elite tier with the consequences felt by the general public further down the scale. It is this trickling down of information from the elite which also accounts for the negativity surrounding public information; the common man believes himself deceived and manipulated by the ruling classes. It is a propaganda model which "suggest[s] that

the 'societal purpose' of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state." (Herman & Chomsky, 1994: 298). The word 'dominate' is crucial; it implies that those with privileged positions control the remainder of society by creating propaganda which benefits them, and not necessarily reflecting the common interest. Ellul (1973: 119), however, disagrees with this: he argues that whilst "it is easy to understand the moralist's hostility to propaganda: man is the innocent victim pushed into evil ways by the propagandist; the propagandee is entirely without blame because he has been fooled and has fallen into a trap", in reality "the individual must participate in all this from the bottom of his heart, with pleasure and deep satisfaction." Propaganda is only successful if the individual participates and the public cannot claim to be wholly victimised when they are instrumental as participants.

Moreover, Ellul (1973: 15) differentiates between overt and covert propaganda: covert propaganda, he argues, "tends to hide its aims, identity, significance, and source. The people are not aware that someone is trying to influence them, and do not feel that they are being pushed in a certain direction." This explains from where the sense of deception stems; the propagandee is being influenced without realizing this is so. This differs from what Ellul (1973: 15) terms 'overt' propaganda where there is a "Ministry of Propaganda; one admits that propaganda is being made; its source is known; its aims and intentions are identified. The public knows that an attempt is being made to influence it." With this in mind, the propaganda undertaken by Edwardian writers could fall into the latter of the two types: to a certain extent, First World War propaganda was overt with the Authors' Declaration being printed in *The Times* on the 18th September 1914, and with Buchan openly taking on the role of Director of Information. However, there was a great deal of secrecy surrounding the Wellington House organisation, as its leader Charles Masterman believed "that for propaganda to be truly effective its actual source and nature must be concealed" (Scott, 1996: 1). There is less deception in a propaganda which is overt; the public knows they are being influenced, and it is their choice to accept the information or not. Again, this places more of the responsibility on the individual, diminishing their victim status. Furthermore, Ellul (1973: 15) extends his argument and claims that "overt propaganda is necessary for attacking enemies"; there is much done during conflict that would not be considered morally acceptable in times of peace, yet the undertaking of such is accepted in order to achieve victory. Propaganda is no different.

2. Oxford English Dictionaries

To find evidence for this complex understanding of propaganda, and to prove its semantic development, it is necessary to analyse the changes in its definition over time; I decided that dictionary representation was the most effective way to achieve this. To maintain consistency amongst the results I chose to look only at Oxford English Dictionaries in order that discrepancies between publishers could be discounted. Furthermore, the Oxford dictionaries provide evidence from the beginning of the Twentieth Century through to the Twenty-first, thereby giving a comprehensive linguistic overview of the last hundred years. In January of 2016 I was invited to use the archives at Oxford

University Press where I was given access to all printed editions of the dictionary. The research included the Full, Concise, and Shorter dictionaries to ensure a wider data set, as lexicographical work and revision were undertaken in the production of the Shorter and Concise publications (rather than a mere abridgement of content from the Full Dictionary), allowing for differences in definition across the publications. Despite the OED now being accessible online, it was not possible to access all historic prints of the dictionary without visiting the archives at the Press. Also available for analysis were the hand-written copy slips which were submitted in the late 1800s as suggestions for definition and use of the term 'propaganda'. These quotation slips were gathered from volunteer members of the public, who were requested to read material from three periods of English Literature: from 1250 to 1526, from 1526 to 1674, and from 1674 to the present-day. These periods were chosen as the founders of the dictionary felt they "represented the existence of different trends in the language's development" (Winchester, 1998: 95). The submitted quotations included suggestions of definition and examples of use in context, and James Murray (the dictionary's primary editor) hoped that "ideally there would be at least one sentence from the literature for each century in which the word was used" (Winchester, 1998: 135). This formed the basis for my choosing Oxford dictionaries over alternative publications: the definitions are generated from public use rather than by a central establishment agency. This method of gathering quotations meant that the "sense of every single word in the [English] language" could be illustrated, and that the dictionary "could show exactly how a word has been employed over the centuries, how it has undergone subtle changes of shades of meaning" (Winchester, 1998: 24).

However, this method also meant that there would inevitably be a time lag; the dictionary is bound to be slightly behind in its response to current usage of a term, as it takes time to register subtle changes within social discourse. These are the limitations of an "evidence-based approach to language study" (Gilliver, 2016: 2). Yet despite this time lag, close readings of the copy slips provide an extra resource and assist in giving an overview of the understanding of propaganda at the close of the Nineteenth Century, in addition to demonstrating the revision and variations that were already taking place in the late 1800s.

I used the corpus database software, Antconc, a tool which tracks associated words within range of a main target word. The programme creates lists of key words, ranks the frequency of associated words, and provides visual representations of words' locations within texts. My first step in tracking the development of propaganda was to find the most common terms found under the dictionary entries. This was to give an indication of which words are most commonly associated with propaganda, and whether this semantic field has evolved over the Twentieth Century (thereby influencing how the term is interpreted by the public in different decades). The earliest publication available to be sampled was the 1909 fascicle (the name given to each separate instalment of the dictionary). This was the year the 'O-P' volume of the *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* was published for the first time, and therefore was the first time the definition of 'propaganda' was printed by the Oxford Dictionary. From 1909 the publications span the Twentieth Century, culminating with the 2007 edition (at the time of my research, it was this 2007 edition that was available online also).

The definitions of 'propaganda' from each edition of the Oxford English Dictionary were collated and entered into the software. Words such as connectives, definite and indefinite articles, and the term 'propaganda' itself were entered into a 'stop list' to prevent them from appearing among the list of terms and thereby confusing the search results. A 'word list' can then be created by the software; this is a list of every word found within the group of dictionary definitions, and which ranks the words in order of frequency of appearance from the most, thorough to the least commonly occurring. Furthermore, the visual representations that can be produced demonstrate which editions have the most occurrences of certain associated words, and will show the year that they begin to appear in the fascicles. The aim is to ascertain when it was (if indeed there is a moment in history which proves pivotal) the word 'propaganda' came to stand for something deplorable, rather than a word which, as Bernays (2005: 50) argues, "in its proper meaning is a perfectly wholesome word, of honest parentage, and with an honourable history."

3. Quotation slips

Pictured below are two of the original copy slips which were submitted during the appeal for public readers; James Murray requested that the public write their target word at the top left of these slips, "arrange them alphabetically and send [the slips] on to the Scriptorium" (Winchester, 1998: 119). The Scriptorium was the name given to the additional building constructed to house the sheer volume of quotation slips; one and three-quarter tonnes of paper was initially transferred there (Gilliver, 2016: 111), and the final twelve-volume publication contains over 1,800,000 "illustrative quotations" (Winchester, 1998: 189). Not all the quotations would appear in the published fascicles, yet by analysing those slips that did survive to publication it is possible to see the physical act of revision that took place when attempting to finalise a definition of propaganda, as well as understanding how the word was used and interpreted before the end of the Nineteenth Century.

It can be seen from Figure 1 how the definition underwent revision; words and entire sentences are discarded in favour of alternatives which impact, if albeit only slightly, the final meaning. 'Doctrine' and 'belief' are omitted for 'principles', and the word 'organised' is added. This new addition creates the idea of institutionalised, rather than individual, information - an idea which is echoed by the 'systematic scheme' found in Figure 2. In the second quotation slip the amendments do not transform the meaning (for example 'kind of institution' is scored through and the synonymous 'association' is chosen instead); it is only the syntax that is altered. The revisions were made by James Murray, the chief editor, who would have final say on how the definition appeared in print. The quotations would be stored away alphabetically whereupon the editorial staff decided upon which would appear in the dictionary, and then compiled additional slips containing the definitions and etymologies (McCulloch, 2017).
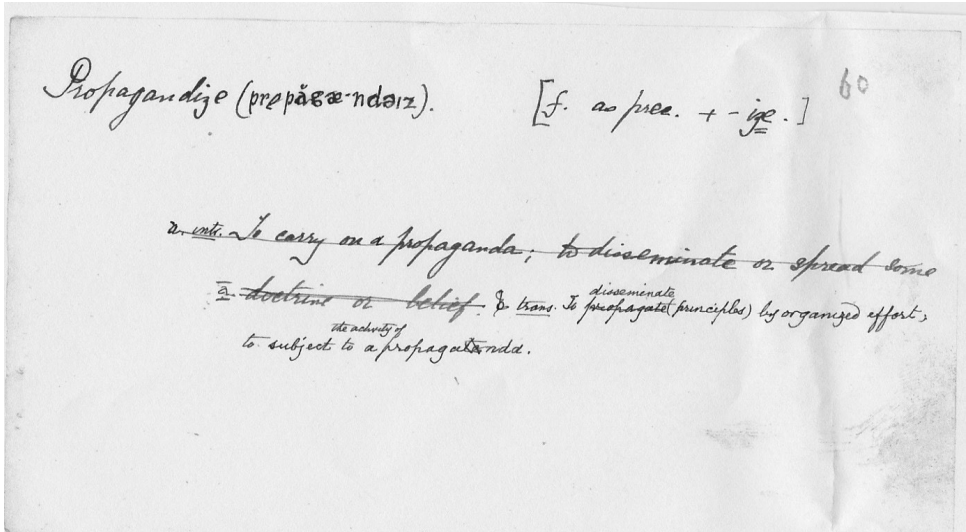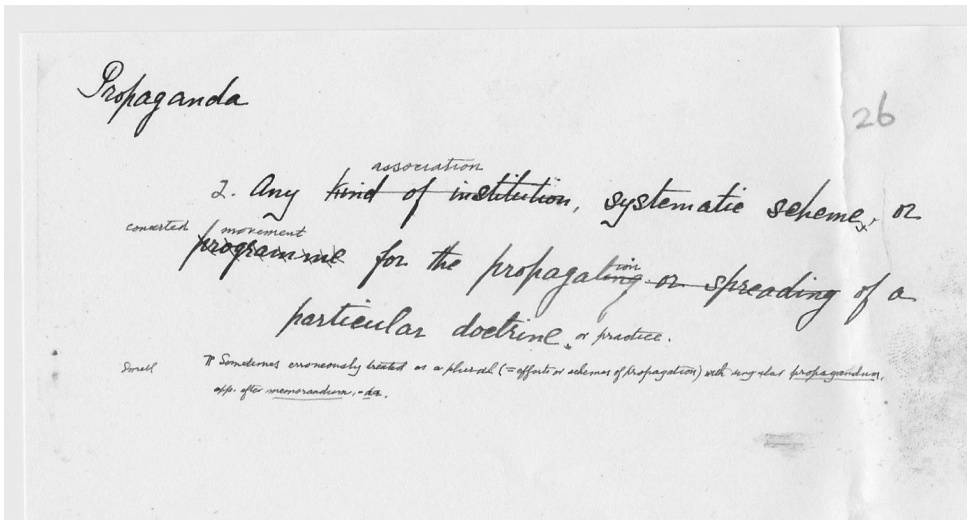
Figure 1: Copy Slip 60

Figure 2: Copy Slip 26

It is clear to see in these examples the process of revision that took place even before the dictionaries were printed. However, even once these revised definitions appeared in print, there was still no guarantee of a concrete status. Ellul (1973: 18) talks about the

"changeability of propaganda" and it is this changeability (both of the term and of the act of producing the material) which is of interest.

4. Religion

I wished to see how this change manifested itself over time; a pattern which I hoped would be revealed through the mapping of the term within the OED. Returning to the Antconc software, and the wordlist of associated terms it created, I found that within the top ten words were three with religious connotations: 'cardinals', 'congregation', 'missions'. These occurred fifty-three times in total and were present in twenty of the twenty-one editions (it is only the 1982 supplement to the *New English Dictionary* which does not contain any reference to these words). There is, then, a theological context surrounding the term 'propaganda' with its original definition referring to the evangelical committee founded in 1622 to promote the Catholic faith. This semantic field is evident in the 1909 *New English Dictionary* [the definition reads: "(More fully, *Congregation* or *College of the Propaganda*) A committee of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church having the care and oversight of foreign missions, founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV" (1909:1466)], and prevails through to the 2007 Shorter edition ["a committee of cardinals responsible for foreign missions, founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV" (2007: 2369)], where it remains the first entry under the definition. Etymologically, this shows that despite Ellul's argument that the term is most commonly associated with the political sphere, the origins of propaganda are theologically rooted, and this religious legacy endures; Miller's claim of a lasting Catholic aura, therefore, boasts truth.

Ellul (1973: 191) discusses the necessity of the Church indulging in the act of propagation to promote their faith and gain followers, in addition to the way in which "churches often participate[d] in campaigns […] designed to demonstrate the participation in civic affairs." Not only did the Christian institution wield power over its own followers, but this cooperation with secular pursuits highlights the power within the Church to influence a populace; religion and the act of propagation are intrinsically bound. Ellul (1973: 230) goes on to argue, however, that by taking on this role of propagandist (especially for theological self-promotion) Christianity "ceases to be an overwhelming power and spiritual adventure and becomes institutionalized in all its expressions and compromised in all its actions." There is in this statement another reference to the organised nature of propaganda regarding the institutionalising of the Church. Moreover, Ellul contends that to partake in the act of propaganda is to ultimately undermine the intended message. This echoes Herman and Chomsky's theory of the corruptive influence of propaganda.

Theological discourse, then, appears to be a vital component of propaganda; returning to the Antconc database, I extracted all terms from the definitions which I felt adhered to this religious lexicon: 'church'; 'catholic'; 'congregation'; 'cardinals'; 'missions'; 'faith'; 'pope'; 'roman'. These terms were entered into an advanced search and plotted using the concordance tool. This tool provides a visual representation of the frequency of these words throughout the dictionary editions, and the results of this search are visible in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Concordance

It is seen from the table that religious terms appear eighty-three times in total, and again are only missing from the 1982 supplement. The above concordance diagram demonstrates the heavy use of theological terminology in the definition of 'propaganda' throughout the Twentieth Century, and how this theme is maintained through to the Twenty-first. Moreover, a certain level of stability is discernible: whilst there does appear to be a 'dying out' in that the 1909 fascicle boasts ten occurrences, whereas there are only three occurrences of religious terms in 2007, there is however a spike in the 1989 publication with the total increasing back to nine occurrences (one more than what appeared in the 1933 supplement). Indeed, these peaks are always to be found within the full editions or its supplements, hinting more at a difference in dictionary style rather than lexical development over the century. Moreover, there are only two instances of religious terms in the 1926 Concise Dictionary—two less than the 2004 Concise.

There does not seem to be any convincing evidence, therefore, of a decrease in the use of this religious vocabulary between the beginning of the Twentieth, through to the start of the Twenty-first Century. This, to a small extent, acts as a contradiction to Badiou's theory of an evolving lexicon, if only in relation to this religious interpretation of propaganda; the theological root for the word is strong, and so cannot be escaped. It is partly this religious connotation of the word that makes propaganda so effective, as it taps into deeply held shared values and a desire for belonging: Ellul (1973: 7) points out that, when it comes to the production of propaganda, "the individual never is considered as an individual, but always in terms of what he has in common with others, such as his motivations, his feelings, or his myths". Lasswell (1927: 71) confirms that since the "flaming vocabulary of religion still has the power to move the hearts of many men, it is a poor propagandist who neglects the spiritual and ecclesiastical interpretation". What Lasswell is showing here is that a religious sect may use propaganda for its own purpose, at the same time as propaganda can manipulate religious beliefs to achieve a motive; in this case he is referring to the adoption of religious lexicon by the British government during the Frist World War to influence and motivate the public. There is a strong bond between the theological and the bureaucratic, as well as an association between governmental affairs and propaganda. The next step, therefore, was to map this political context within the dictionaries and compare the results to those produced through the theological word lists and searches, thereby ascertaining whether a political association boasts the same longevity as the religious.

5. Politics

Walter Lippman (1956: 248), writing on strategic influencing of the public through organised dissemination, stated that "persuasion has become a […] regular organ of popular government". There are two very important things to note in this statement: the first is Lippman's verb compound 'has become' which implies a state of transition, a progression from one concept to another; it alludes to a lack of stasis. It highlights that propaganda as a term, and as an act, is mobile; Badiou's theory of an evolutionary semantics is recalled and there is acknowledgement that the meaning of propaganda has altered over time. Second to note is Lippman's recognition of the use of public influencing by government; he does not actually use the word 'propaganda' but his

argument of government adopting the act of 'persuasion' reveals mobility towards a more political agenda. Furthermore, given the period in which Lippman was writing (the text was originally published in 1922), it can be accepted that this was a progression which was beginning to take place as early as the second decade of the Twentieth Century. Propaganda was becoming political.

It is interesting to discover, though, that the definitions found in the dictionaries do not appear to reflect the timeline of progression as noted by these critics. Another Antconc search was conducted using the term 'politic*' (the asterisk was included to encompass all possible suffixes of the term, for words such as 'political' and 'politics' etc.). The results from this revealed that there were, in fact, only two instances of 'politic*' throughout the dictionary editions, and that these did not appear until near the close of the Twentieth Century. Both the 1999 and 2004 concise editions have identical definitions, and are the only publications to discuss politics. The definition reads: "information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view" (1999: 1145).

Therefore, if a conclusion was based purely on the corpus statistics, it could be claimed that the idea of a political propaganda did not come into recognition until the end of the Twentieth Century; we have here a tangible demonstration of that time lag of the dictionaries reacting to social linguistic shifts. However, the argument could also be made that this development in the late Twentieth Century could be due, in part, to the end of the Cold War in 1991. Gary D. Rawnsley (1999: 3), in his introduction to *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s*, claims that both sides "reduced [the Cold War's] many complexities to arguments and explanations which would be easily understood and accepted by public opinion at home" and that "our own perceptions of the Cold War have been clouded by such undemanding imagery". Tony Shaw (1999: 140) hints at the high level of propaganda material being produced during that era, when British news-reels (coupled with feature films) were "predominantly anti-soviet", meaning that "cinema audiences tended to receive a consistent message". Rawnsley attributes propaganda as having a profound influence on perception of the Cold War, which would in turn influence how propaganda was regarded from that point onwards. The Oxford dictionaries, perhaps, reflect this.

Furthermore, to rely solely on the statistics from Antconc would be to create a false impression. It has previously been demonstrated how Lippman was already becoming aware of a political propagandist agenda by the 1920s, yet there is evidence which hints that a governmental propaganda existed as early as the Nineteenth Century (the Crimean War, for example, saw censorship of the Press by the French, and reports in British newspapers of the reality of life in the warzone) (Cull, Culbert and Welch, 2003: 99). Furthermore, the copy slip (seen below) was produced in 1842 (over sixty years prior to when Lippman was writing, and over a century before the Antconc corpus shows that Oxford dictionaries acknowledged a political context), and states how "the name propaganda is applied to modern political language". From this, two conflicting ideas can be developed. Firstly, it can be derived from the date of the slip that a political interpretation is not a recent development, but rather that it has existed since at least the end of the Nineteenth Century. Contrarily, the word 'modern' is used which alludes to a progression in political linguistics; perhaps the name propaganda could not be applied to

language that is not modern? This ambiguity is what makes a concrete definition of propaganda so troublesome.
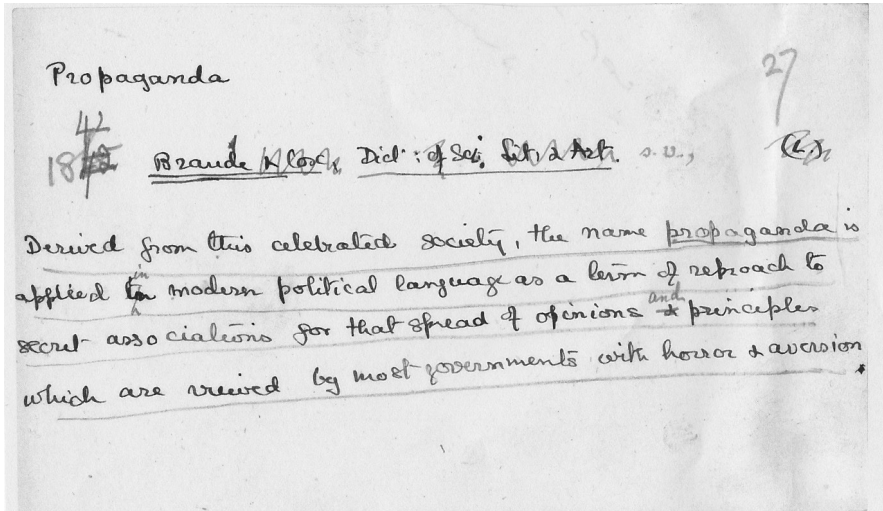
Figure 4: Copy Slip 27

What is most striking in this copy slip, however, is the affiliation between a political propaganda and unfavourable vocabulary: the writer mentions propaganda being used (in political language) as a 'term of reproach' and inducing 'horror and aversion'. This, combined with the definition from the concise dictionaries, which states that the information used in propaganda for a political cause is of a "biased or misleading nature" (1999: 1145), alludes to a direct correlation between government-led propaganda and a lack of accountability; there is support here for Haste's earlier claim that to produce propaganda was to withhold truth from the public, even if only when used in a political context.

This association is one of which George Creel, writing in the 1920s, appears acutely aware; his text *How We Advertised America* provides a contemporaneous analysis of the propaganda used in the United States during the First World War. The text gives detailed overviews of many of the various techniques used by the Committee on Public Information to influence the American citizens, including the pamphlets which were distributed over the German lines (thereby having the potential to indoctrinate the German army and civilian population with Allied proselytism). Creel (1920: 4) goes to great lengths throughout the text to distance himself and his Committee from the stain of the word 'propaganda', for (he states) that word "in German hands, had come to be associated with deceit and corruption". Creel acknowledges the distaste that surrounded the term as early as 1920. However, he attributes the cause of this to be the German misuse and abuse of propaganda. He himself claims that the United States did not partake in propaganda, rather the "world's greatest adventure in advertising" (Creel, 1920: 4). Reading Creel's text, it is difficult to escape the feeling that one is, in fact, a victim of

this propaganda which he is so eager to evade; Creel's work acts as a justification—a defence—of American Great War propaganda, and he employs all his skill to convince the reader that if propaganda is distasteful, then America's contribution is not propaganda. The text is self-justifying, self-promoting, and continues to exalt the American Army long after the conflict has drawn to a close. For example, whilst discussing the distribution of pamphlets over the enemy lines, Creel (1920: 6) states that "these pamphlets blew as a great wind against the clouds of confusion and misrepresentation." This is hyperbolic rhetoric; the lexicon employed here is done so in order to influence, and cause emotion in the reader. It is a form of propaganda.

In fact, much of Creel's (1920: 14) attempts at glorifying the honesty and "stainless patriotism and unspotted Americanism" serve to undermine his desire to evade the 'stain' of propaganda. For instance, he refers to the "deluded soldiers" of the Central Powers; this is not an unbiased analysis. The word 'deluded' influences the reader, forcing a perception and an interpretation upon them. Furthermore, he declares that there was no enforced censorship, yet later describes how the use of feature films was used to present "the wholesome life of America, giving fair ideas of our people and our institutions" (1920: 281), and to suppress the negative impression of America that was created globally by the thriller movies popular in the past. This suppression is, in itself, an act of censorship; American life was being remoulded and redesigned for the global stage by Creel and his Committee, and the image that was released was carefully calculated. In the introduction to the text, Dr. Newton D. Baker (1920: vx) claims that "it was of the greatest importance that America in this war should be represented not merely as a strong man fully armed, but as a strong man fully armed and believing in the cause for which he was fighting". Again, there is the word 'represented' here; this shows that a particular image was being created to adhere to a particular agenda or motive, even if this was not a conscious intention. This analysis of Creel's book demonstrates that even whilst actively attempting to deny participation in propaganda, any attempt to influence the public inevitably makes the agent complicit in this act. Yet most importantly, his comments on German propagation during the war portray how the term was already beginning to develop an unpleasant aura in the early half of the Twentieth Century.

However, despite this early evidence of a negative connotation, it is still possible to see a semantic development in the term's usage over the succeeding years. Miller (2005: 10) argues that "while the word [propaganda] then [in 1842] *could* be used to make a sinister impression, it did not automatically evoke subversive falsehood, as it has done since the 1920s." It is important to note the word 'automatic'; it demonstrates that whilst a negative association with the term 'propaganda' was present historically (albeit under the surface) it gained popular recognition and greater prominence as the Twentieth Century grew into maturity, and became an instinctual and accepted conjunction. Moreover, Miller cites the 1920s as the pivotal moment in history where the mutation began to take place with vigour.

In order to map this (and to see if Miller was correct in his claim), I compiled a new word list of terms from the Oxford dictionary definitions which appeared to confirm Chomsky and Herman's theory of 'corruption', or that represented Haste's idea of secrecy, unreliability, and manipulation. This list consisted of the following: the abbreviation 'derog.' (derogatory); 'misleading'; 'rumour'; 'biased'; 'dishonest';

'tendentious'. These terms were entered into an advance search and again plotted using the concordance plot tool. The results can be viewed in Figure 5:

Figure 5: Concordance 2

The table shows that there are eighteen occurrences of these words throughout the editions; this number is significantly lower than the eighty-three religious terms which were found previously, using the same search method. Moreover, derogatory terms are only to be found in eleven out of the twenty-one editions. This demonstrates that the religious vocabulary is much more prevalent than the defamatory, and that it is recognised by the dictionaries for a much greater part of the Twentieth Century. What can be discerned, moreover, is a point where this critically negative terminology comes into use: the first occurrence is not until 1976 and from thereafter this negative lexicon is present in every fascicle. There would appear, then, to be a pivotal decade where the word's misleading connotations became cemented. Significantly, the Vietnam War drew to a close in 1975, one year before the first allusion to fraudulency appeared under the term 'propaganda' in the Oxford English Dictionary. This confirms Herman and Chomsky's 'Vietnam Syndrome' and supports the impact that social events have upon linguistic development. It could be argued that the Vietnam War played a large role in mutating social linguistic understanding of propaganda, but it appears equally likely that it was a

catalyst that cemented subtle changes that had been taking place in the common psyche for decades (since, for instance, the 1920s as Lippman suggests).

Yet whilst it is evident that there is the potential for manipulation involved in the act of propagation, this manipulation may not necessarily point to an act of evil or corruption on the part of the propagandist. Ellul (1973:36-37) states:

> propaganda must respond to a need, whether it be a concrete need (bread, peace, security, work) or a psychological need. [...] The group must need something, and the propaganda must respond to that need.

Propaganda exists, then, because there is a demand for its existence. Take for an example the following extract from Vera Brittain's memoirs of the First World War (2014: 134):

> They sound ludicrous enough now, these rumours, these optimisms, these assurances, to us who still wonder why, in spite of all our incompetence, we managed to 'win' the War. But at the time they helped us to live. I cannot, indeed, imagine how long we should have succeeded in living without them.

This passage speaks of the absolute necessity of the positive influence of public opinion, for civilians during the First World War needed to be fed encouraging reports for them to maintain morale and endure four years of suffering through warfare. If society did not need propaganda, then there would be no reason for official agencies to create it. Perhaps, then, propaganda is not necessarily evil but simply an evil necessity? It is inevitable, after all, that material will be generated that voices the essence of public emotion, but that also corresponds with official establishment objectives. This does not automatically render it deceptive or malevolent. Bernays (2005: 48) highlights this as he argues that "[I]n itself, the word *propaganda* has certain technical meanings which, like most things in this world, are 'neither good nor bad but custom makes them so.'" This is a crucial argument: the word itself does not demand a negative interpretation; it is the way it is perceived, and the way that it is utilised by society that informs this. Creel (1920: 402) builds on this when he states that "[N]o matter how honest its intent or pure its purpose, a Committee on Public Information operating in peace-times would be caught inevitably in the net of controversy". This shows the impossibility of avoiding criticism, yet perhaps also proves that propaganda is a necessity during war-time; it is a required weapon that helps achieve victory. On the other hand, Ellul (1973: xv) argues that "necessity never establishes legitimacy"; the need for propaganda does not absolve those who produce it.

Ellul (1973: 141) explores the necessity for propaganda during a period of conflict and claims it is due to man wanting "a profound and significant reason for what he does". In order for soldiers to die for their country, they must be made to believe that they do so for a purpose that transcends their individual self. This motivator could be something as candid as inspiring patriotism amongst citizens, or as manipulative as the spreading of outright lies to coerce a population. Although this line of enquiry is extremely interesting, the overall goal of this paper is not to ascertain whether propaganda is 'good' or 'bad',

but rather to track its evolution over time from a religious to a highly political and controversial context.

6. Conclusions

This paper does not, and cannot, provide an infallible answer as to how and when the term 'propaganda' began to mutate from a predominantly religious, innocent sense, to a loaded political interpretation. There are limitations due to the potential for differing definitions in alternative dictionary publications - only the Oxford English Dictionaries were used, whereas Webster's or Collins (for example) could produce a very different pattern, allowing for the possibility of divergent outcomes. There are limitations also due to differentiation within the Oxford English Dictionaries themselves; it was only the concise editions that made any reference to a political context. There is not the space within this paper to explore and discuss the differences between each dictionary in detail, moreover it would distract from the purpose of this work, but it is important to bear in mind these concerns when drawing conclusions from the data, and to understand that the results are by no means consummate. What this exploration does do, however, is to provide an indication of the way that the term has developed and changed over the Twentieth Century, with the side by side comparison of critical theorists and dictionary texts allowing a contrast between the social and the linguistic spheres.

It has been shown through the corpus statistics that the word was firmly rooted in a theological context and that even in contemporary dictionary editions this remained the case. However, in regards to a bureaucratic propaganda there was a disagreement between the results of these data searches and the quotation slips. Although this context does not appear in the dictionaries until the 1990s, there was evidence of its use much earlier in the century through the submitted slips from public readers. Perhaps the dictionaries did not manage to reflect the social psyche of the times, or perhaps this is an example of the limitations of a corpus-based analysis? Whichever the case, the gradual adoption of a political phraseology (whether that adoption happened in the 1920s or in the 1990s) does confirm a semantic evolution of the term.

Where this evolution is most evident, however, is in the growth of a derogatory context. This was not acknowledged by the dictionaries until the 1970s, and its prevalence thereafter points at a pivotal moment in time where the understanding of the word began to change. Even when compared side by side with the theorists, it was evident that a gradual understanding of an unfavourable sentiment towards propaganda was emerging; it is just the timeline of this emergence which is contested. Miller (2005: 9) claims that a shift took place around the 1920s as "prior to World War One, the word *propaganda* was little-used in English […] and, back then, *propaganda* tended not to be the damning term we throw around today". The conflict, according to Miller, put into motion the wheels of dissent. Bernays (2005: 55), too, commented on the nature of propaganda since the Great War stating that the "the practice of propaganda since the war has assumed very different forms from those prevalent twenty years ago. This new technique may fairly be called the new propaganda." This 'new propaganda', Bernays argues, focuses on the "anatomy of society, with its interlocking group formations and loyalties." He uses an example of housewives who believe manufactured foods to be unhealthy and therefore call for them

to be banned. Without organisation and vocalization, their cause will go nowhere; "whether they realise it or not, they call upon propaganda to organize and effectuate demand" (2005: 57). There are two vital observations here: firstly, Bernays refers to the First World War as a turning point, a pivotal era in time which changed the way that propaganda is not only perceived, but also the way that it functioned. This confirms Grant's earlier claim of a propaganda that was altered due to the Great War of 1914. Indeed, this can be taken one step further: the occurrence of derogatory terms commencing in the 1970s and continuing into the late Twentieth and early Twenty-first Centuries can be correlated to the response of the public to the Cold and Vietnamese wars and the mutating effects that these conflicts, too, had upon the interpretation of the word. Certainly, Ellul (1973: 89) believed this as he argues that:

> The first World War; the Russian revolution of 1917; Hitler's revolution of 1933; the second World War; the further development of revolutionary wars since 1944 in China, Indochina, and Algeria, as well as the Cold War—each was a step in the development of modern propaganda.

He feels that *all* conflict is influential in shaping social lexicon, which is understandable when one recalls the focused way governments utilised propaganda to encourage populations and promote war motives.

The second observation to be taken from Bernay's statement is his use of the phrase 'new propaganda'. This implies not only a change in the term itself, but in fact a development in propaganda as a phenomenon. Not merely the word, but the thing also, has evolved. Ellul (1973: 25) confirms this theory when he states that "to view propaganda as still being what it was in 1850 is to cling to an obsolete concept of man and of the means to influence him; it is to condemn oneself to understand nothing about modern propaganda." Modern propaganda is not the same entity it was one hundred years ago; the definition of the term has mutated *because* the phenomenon itself has mutated; it is a relational process.

There is undeniably a process of change undergone by the term. The influence of conflict and a shift in social context has altered irrevocably the sense of the word from how it appeared at the start of the Twentieth Century. Whilst it can be argued that there were many pivotal points throughout the last hundred years where these changes took place, what cannot be argued is that the propaganda recognised today is the same as that which existed in 1842 or 1914. Any attempt to apply modern day context to the propaganda of a historical era would, ironically, be an act of deception and corruption in itself.

I think it is important to acknowledge that what many authors wrote during the First World War *was* propaganda; it was produced with the intention of influencing public opinion and supporting official aims. However, when speaking of propaganda, it is crucial to differentiate between the modern, and the historic. The material produced by Wellington House belongs to the latter category; their work may have formed part of the cannon of writing that began to manipulate how propaganda was perceived (the First World War proving a pivotal moment in history where the understanding of propaganda began to alter) yet at the actual time of their writing the act of producing propaganda was a far more innocent undertaking than it eventually became.

Notes

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1. Ellul (1973: 118).

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"Ireland first":
The Great War in the Irish Juvenile Press

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ABSTRACT

Inspired by Ben Novick's studies on the response of the Irish advanced nationalist press to the First World War, this paper focuses on a less-explored topic, i.e. the representation of the conflict in the separatist press for Ireland's youth. Combining literary and historical interests, I devote my attention to the editorials and literary contributions published in the pages of the juvenile periodicals during and after the war, to highlight how these papers came to popularise, among the youngsters, a specific reception of the first 'total' conflict. Spy- and war- stories, ballads and *aislings* took hold of the boys' and girls' imagination: a powerful propagandist instrument, popular literature buttressed a nationalist agenda. At the same time, given the readers' young age, these periodicals aimed to shape what was to become Ireland's public memory of the Great War. In the public sphere of post-war Ireland, many soldiers were treated with disdain or indifference. The First World War and its protagonists were condemned to a period of oblivion, which has lasted until quite recently. Textual attention to the rhetoric and literary strategies adopted by the contributors helps to expose the nuances and shifts in the Irish nationalists' view on war.

Keywords: Irish juvenile periodicals; Great War; Easter Rising; popular response, rhetoric.

Lord Dunsany, the Anglo-Irish noble who wrote fantasy stories that influenced H.P. Lovecraft, was numbered among the wounded of the First World War in the official military records of 1916. In the second year of the conflict, he was serving as captain with the Fifth Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers: yet his wound was not sustained in military action at the front, but from a squad of rebels in Dublin on April the 24th. Dunsany was then on leave in the Irish capital city, waiting to be mobilized to France. That morning he went to Dublin Castle to offer his services to the British forces, because there were rumours of a rebellion: indeed, the Easter Rising had just broken out and, while he was reaching the place to which he had been appointed, he was shot in the head, wounded and taken prisoner by a group of insurgents (Dunsany, 1938). He survived the

attack and, after the recovery, went on to fight in Flanders: the Baron lived through the war and lived enough to see that the Irish people's hostility towards their fellow countrymen who had served in the Great War was not confined to the emotionally heightened moments of the rebellion, when an officer in a British Army uniform was logically perceived as an enemy by the rebels. In the Ireland of the late 1910s and early 1920s, it was not uncommon that the Irishmen who had fought and perhaps perished in the First World War were 'welcomed' or remembered with hostility. Or, in a luckier scenario, with indifference.

In 1929, Dunsany felt obliged to raise the issue of the commemorations denied to the 49,400 Irish soldiers who had perished fighting on the Continent, whose deaths often provoked hostility and indifference in post-war Ireland (Dawe, 2015: *passim*). He did so in the poem "To the Fallen Irish Soldiers", in which the lyrical I explicitly addresses the dead, urging them to wait for their due honours in a passage that is worth quoting in its full length: "Sleep on, forgot a few more years, and then / The Ages, that I prophesy, shall see / Due honours paid to you by juster men".

Here Dunsany bitterly observes that the sacrifice of thousands of Irish soldiers had not been officially acknowledged by the Irish State. In the specific instance, the poem originated from the author's frustration in seeing that the project of building a war memorial in the central area of St Stephen's Green, Dublin, was met with resistance. In 1919, a Trust Fund had been founded to consider designs for a permanent memorial to commemorate all the Irish who died in the Great War, but a decade later works had yet to begin. Eventually, the Cumann na nGaedheal government gave its permission to build a war memorial, but it imposed an out of the way district for its location. The First World War Irish dead were to be commemorated in the far-off Islandbridge, in the expressly designed Irish National War Memorial Gardens: a granite monument was erected in 1939, but never civically inaugurated and dedicated (Myers, 2012: xv-xvii; Dolan, 2003: 40).

Moreover, just as Dunsany believed that the First World War dead were not adequately honoured, so too most ex-servicemen who had managed to return from the trenches did not think that their sacrifices were adequately acknowledged at home either by word or deed. The oblivion surrounding the war dead reflected the silence surrounding the experience of those Irishmen. Upon their arrival in Ireland, many veterans soon realized that they were far from being seen as heroes and that their experiences of war, including tokens of their army lives such as uniforms and medals, had to be locked away (Dawe, 2013: 4). The veterans themselves sometimes deliberately chose to hide their army experiences so as to avoid several institutional and social hurdles. These men were frequently discriminated against: in the 1920s, for instance, job priority in government was given to ex-Free State soldiers, while the service in the British Army could even be held against the job applicants (Bourke, 2002: 166). At worst, the Irish ex-servicemen could be murdered: in the early 1920s, having been soldiers in the British Army could be a sufficient reason to be perceived as enemies of the Republic.[1]

The present article is concerned with exploring the origins of the Irish ex-servicemen's miserable lot by detecting the shifts in the popular response to Ireland's participation in the Great War through four juvenile periodicals—*Our Boys*, *Fianna*, *Young Ireland* (in Irish: *Éire Óg*) and *St. Enda's*. These magazines deserve critical attention because they aimed to construct the public discourse on the global conflict and

to shape their young readers'—the citizens of post-war Ireland—attitudes towards ex-servicemen. Combining literary and historical interests, the focus will be on the editorials and literary contributions published in the pages of the juvenile periodicals during and immediately after the war, to highlight how these papers came to popularise, among the youngsters, a specific reception of the first 'total' conflict. Textual attention to the rhetoric and literary strategies adopted by the periodicals' contributors will also help to expose the nuances and shifts in the Irish nationalists' view on the Great War. In the wake of the studies by Randall Stevenson and Ben Novick, the article thus attempts to trace periodical literature's reciprocal relations with broader developments in the society of its time, and with the expectations of a changing readership during and after the conflict, when the Home Rule crisis was not yet resolved and the Easter Rising of 1916 was fresh in the public's memory.

The soldiers' plight was, in part, the result of the chronological proximity (or coincidence) of the First World War with the Easter Rising and the ensuing fight for national independence. The veterans returned to a country fraught with political tensions, radically changed from the place they had left. At the very end of the conflict, the Irish nationalist parties led their battle against the British Empire to a higher level by initiating the Anglo-Irish War, which was followed by the Civil War of the early 1920s and the creation of the Free State in 1922. The victors of the internal struggle managed the government that emerged from it—the Cumann na nGaedheal government—and devoted much energy to writing the official nation-building narrative.

In the eyes of the victorious nationalists, Irish participation in the so-called "Empire's war against Germany" was a problematical addendum to the glorious narrative of Irish national development, i.e. an event that could challenge the legitimacy of the recently accomplished separation from London (Myers, 2012: 2; see also Johnson, 1999: 36). They were not eager to legitimise the rightness of the cause for which the First World War Irish soldiers had fought: the only right cause was the nationalist one that led to Irish independence; on the other hand, the slaughter of the Great War pertained to British politics and motives, and therefore the Irishmen who had fought on the Continent had only furthered the political agenda of Ireland's oppressor. Accordingly, the new construct of Ireland's history claimed that the only true Irish hero was one who fought for such 'Irish causes' as independence: since honours had to be paid to those who had died in the effort of throwing off the British yoke, the heroes of the Easter Rising were officially and enthusiastically commemorated in the Free State every year. This was not the case for approximately 50,000 Irish men who had died in the Great War (*ibid*.). The very decision to locate the war memorial dedicated to the fallen soldiers in Islandbridge contained the implicit, albeit clear, message that the soldiers' service on the side of England and the Allies was not to be connected to the emergence of an independent Ireland. Moreover, until the mid-1980s, this site was in an emblematical state of ruin, because the Government's refusal to provide for its care allowed the site to fall into dilapidation and vandalism over the following decades. Its bad state epitomized the oblivion to which Ireland's participation in the First World War had succumbed (Dolan, 2003: 2, 143; Dawe, 2015: 36).

The immensity of the Great War and Ireland's participation has been downsized in the history of the country for decades. To the victors go the spoils, including writing the

nation's history (Novick, 2001: 17). The victors were the advanced nationalists, those Irish men and women who, when Ireland was still subjugated to the British Empire, wanted an absolute separation from London, deeming the option of Home Rule insufficient. Their official national narrative, albeit written after achieving independence, lays its foundations in all their previous political and cultural activity. Even the hostile or neglectful responses to the Great War, bound to be widely spread in post-war Ireland, were first shaped during the conflict itself by means of the counter-narrative about the war constructed by the advanced nationalists.

In the war years, countering the recruitment campaign promoted by pro-war unionists and nationalists and the representatives of the British forces was the campaign of the advanced nationalists. The separatists waged a battle of images and words against the British government to portray enlistment as an unpatriotic act through the medium of the so-called "Sinn Féin press": the battle was performed in the newspapers of radical organisations such as the Irish Republican Brothers (*Irish Freedom*), Sinn Féin (*Eire* and *Sinn Féin*), the Irish Volunteers (*The Irish Volunteer*), and the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (*Irish Worker*) (Johnson, 2003: 34). This seditious propaganda against the war and recruitment was deemed a threat by the British if we judge from the fact that, as early as October 1914, a debate in the House of Commons—reported in the *Times* editorial "Recruiting in Ireland" on the 31st—cited it as the cause of the low number of voluntary recruits from Ireland (Fitzgerald, 2007).

Britain's reaction was not long in coming: already in December 1914, the Defence of Real Act—the Act promulgated in August to keep morale high—was used against the press in Ireland for the first time. The *Sinn Féin*, *Irish Freedom* and *Irish Worker* newspapers were suppressed, while their Irish-American counterparts *Gaelic American* and *Irish World* were prohibited distribution in Ireland. Yet, designing schemes to circumvent censorship, the separatists wittily sniped in print and their message was spread quite far among the population (Novick, 1997: 53). Recent scholarship has thoroughly investigated the modes of distribution as well as the rhetorical devices employed in nationalist and anti-war journalistic propaganda (cf. Novick 2001; Hay 2012), not neglecting surveys of newspapers issued in the years of the First World War: suffice to mention Catriona Pennell's *A Kingdom United* (2014), which charts the evolution of British and Irish public opinion with regard to the conflict until Christmas 1914. These studies also attest to people's growing interest in the Irish war effort, first aroused at the turn of the century, when a deluge of academic or non-academic books flooded the market casting light on the Irish experience of the war, including civilian responses to it.[2] Previous historiography had constructed the experience of the Easter Rising rebels as an event of greater significance than the world conflict for Ireland's national history. As Ben Novick convincingly summed up, "the Easter Rising, not the Great War, had traditionally been acknowledged by historians of Ireland as the central political events of these years" (2001: 17). On the contrary, recent historiography on the conflict has contributed to restoring, to Irish collective imagination, the immensity of the Great War and of its impact on Ireland.

Yet, when addressing the aspect of the popular response to the conflict through the press, the focus has usually been on the representation of the First World War in papers aimed at an adult readership. Therefore, the present article explores an aspect that has not

attracted considerable attention, because it aims to pinpoint the main tenets of the response to the Great War and Ireland's involvement in the conflict in the nationalist press for the Irish youth.

Our Boys, *Fianna*, *Young Ireland* and *St. Enda's* were four periodicals competing for the cultural allegiance of Irish adolescents, aged 12-19. They waged a battle against *Gem*, *Magnet* and all the other British magazines modelled on the *Boys' Own Paper* that enjoyed enormous success in Ireland between the XIX and XX centuries; a success that, in the same years, spurred the nationalists' appeal for juvenile periodicals made in Ireland and truly Irish, resisting the deluge of foreign trashy literature then invading the country. Irish nationalists took an active interest in promoting home-grown substitutes for the examples of British popular culture, deemed a main factor in distracting the youngsters from fighting for national independence. At last, in the rapidly evolving paper landscape of the 1910s, four periodicals for Irish youth were established, all of them championing nationalist values and the de-Anglicisation of the country.

The monthly *Our Boys* magazine was the first to be published, in September 1914, by virtue of the commitment of the Christian Brothers, who were determined to shape the future of Ireland in a Catholic and anti-British direction. Conceived as an educational auxiliary to the Christian Brothers' work in schools, *Our Boys* was the medium through which the Brothers cultivated a holy patriotism in their readers, whom they envisioned as the torchbearers of a renewed Catholic nation after the attainment of independence (Keogh, 2015: 700). Born under the aegis of Pope Pius X, this periodical largely outlived *Fianna*, *Young Ireland* and *St. Enda's*, being the most popular of them: not only did the first issue sell 30,000 copies, but the monthly circulation rose rapidly to 40,000, with an estimated readership of 100,000 throughout the country and the Irish diaspora abroad (*OB*, Oct. 1914; Coldrey, 1998: 27). However, the main difference between *Our Boys* and the other magazines lay not so much in the degree of popularity as in the editorial line adopted: whereas the Christian Brothers' paper was marked by a moderate Redmondite tone in its earliest numbers and later underwent a shift towards a more radical stance on politics, *Fianna*, *Young Ireland* and *St. Enda's* were the mouthpiece of the advanced nationalists from their inception.

The short-lived *Fianna*—it was published in the 1915-1916 two-year period and then resumed only in de Valera's years—was the unofficial organ of the Irish Boy Scouts, whose object was "to train the youth of Ireland to work mentally and physically for the independence of their country" (*Fianna*, Mar. 1915: 3). The magazine was an additional weapon to the armoury of the boys who pledged to work for Ireland, because the opinion articles, editorials and fictional stories were all geared to provide the youngsters with a 'rebellious' mentorship. For instance, "The Siege of Zaragoza", an adventurous account set in the Napoleonic era, and the other stories with foreign settings were meant to "give boys ideas of how other countries run revolutions" (*F*, Apr. 1915: 3).

Unlike the contributors of *Our Boys*, the *Fianna*'s did not buttress a Catholic agenda, because the paper mirrored the non-sectarian policy of the organization the Irish Boy Scouts, which addressed both Protestants and Catholics in its appeal to fighting for Ireland. The lack of sectarianism was a major difference distinguishing *Fianna* not only from the monthly edited by the Christian Brothers, but also from *Young Ireland* and *St. Enda's*. The former was founded in 1917 as the instrument to spread Sinn Féin ideology

among the youth by the publicist Aodh de Blacam, who, in the first leader article declared that "the Irish-Irelander magazine" *Young Ireland* had to "always be stoutly Irish and devotedly Catholic from cover to cover", and added, "It's Catholic, because it's truly Irish" (*YI*, 21 Apr. 1917: 1). Nationalism and the equation between Irishness and Catholicism, with the second element of the equation conceived as a quintessential characteristic of Irish identity, were upheld also by the contributors of *St. Enda's*. This periodical was largely an amateur operation, with many of its reporters and compositors being university or high school students; nonetheless, it had a clear editorial line, which was centred on the promotion of highly particularised notions of national activism inspired by the teaching of Patrick Pearse, the leader of the Easter Rising and founder of a Gaelic School called St. Enda. Nurturing the memory of the dead hero, the monthly *St. Enda's* was engaged in carrying out his designs of nation-building, by striving to forge the character of the young Irish citizens, who would commit themselves to the freedom of their country.

Since *St. Enda's* was first published in March 1918, just a few months before the end of the Great War, it might seem superfluous to take it into account in the present analysis: however, this omission would be a mistake, because the numbers of *St. Enda's* issued in the early 1920s feature some war tales that best exemplify the abovementioned process of 'downsizing' the First World War. Moreover, a survey of these writings, placed against the background of fictional and non-fictional contributions published in the other three periodicals in the earlier years of the conflict, enables today's readers to detect those mutations that occurred in the attitudes held by nationalists towards the war and Irish soldiers in the British Army. A chronological criterion is adopted in the following analysis in order to pinpoint the shifts in attitude and their dependence upon concurrent historical events, such as the destruction of Louvain and the brutal repression of the Easter Rising. The juvenile periodicals are read as texts resulting from a dynamic exchange between the cultural-ideological movements that originated them and the historical context. This approach is applied to texts of multifarious nature: the poetry and fiction published in the magazine are analysed for their rhetorical complexity but, at the same time, attention is devoted to other forms of expression such as advertisements, editorials and cartoons.

Proceeding in chronological order, the examination cannot but begin with the earliest issues of *Our Boys*. Since its first number, which came out in September 1914, *Our Boys* featured the column *The World's News*, reporting the main events that had taken place in the previous months. The war was then paramount and, in a terse style, the reporter described the technological innovations in the military field, the generals' tactics, the official messages of the Kaiser and the King: all the paraphernalia of warfare are condensed in brief sentences like "Kluck's right wing was faced back with loss of men and guns" or "the Western fighting line extends 520 miles" (*OB* Aug. 1915: 337) that, thanks to their unimaginative laconicism, jettison any celebration of the war. This sharp style contrasts with the rhetorical complexity and convolutions of the fictional pieces,— mainly tales describing trench-life—which nonetheless play a function analogous to *The World's News*'s conciseness insofar as the repetitions, pleonasms and refrains employed in poetry and fiction come to convey the ordinariness of the horrors experienced by the Irish soldiers.

Unlike much British popular fiction intended for juveniles (cf. Fussell, 1975; Boyd, 2003: 15-16), *Our Boys* offered no space for the potent *mythos* that depicted war in a romantic fashion, as a time for youthful heroism when to display widely acclaimed characteristics such as patriotism, camaraderie and athletic prowess. In *Our Boys*, to die fighting at a young age is not the noblest death of all, but just the death of a boy: rather than celebrating the glory of warfare, these stories expose its horrors. In June 1915, the periodical featured a realistic tale by Richard Grant, significantly titled *A Message from the Front. Lifting the Veil of the Valley of Death*, which relates how the young Irish soldier Bernard Tracy spent his last St Patrick's Day on the battlefield; "the everlasting torrents of the rain [...] had rendered field and trench and torn roadway all alike a marsh of unutterable muddiness" and rain is again pouring together with shrapnel. Under rifle fire and German shells, the Irish Fusiliers fight bravely and the enemy is flying before the last onslaught led by Bernard. But the Irish battalion's victory is marred by the death of half of its soldiers, including the story protagonist: eschewing any happy ending or a laudatory tone in its conclusion, the tale follows a plot pattern that is usual in *Our Boys*'s war stories whereby there is no reward for the bravery of the soldiers (*OB*, Jun. 1915: 264-265). Running over "muddy main roads and muddier by-roads, past dismantled farmhouses and demolished villages", the Fusiliers may die in action, shot or killed by the "abominable gas" in a place of which they do not know the name as the narrator of *A Touching War Incident* points out, while bitterly commenting "None of the glory and pageantry of war here. Nothing but its naked horrors" (*OB*, Aug. 1915: 321-322). Not even the author of *Selfish: or a Strange Revenge*, a short-story published in the 1915 September issue, attempts at concealing the destructive consequences of war: here a character gazes aghast at "the scattered limbs and mutilated forms, which but a few short-hours before had moved about in all the grace and pride of manhood" (*OB*, Sept. 1915: 13).

To probe the veracity of these fictional accounts, in September 1916, *Our Boys* gave space to the letters sent from the front by Father Francis Gleeson who, as the Chaplain attached to the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, witnessed the war at first hand. These letters, collected under the title *A Soggarth Tells His War Experiences*, provide further images of pervasive muddiness, of villages evacuated ("the whole village is black, bleak, sad, deserted") and the ferocity of the enemy's attacks ("the activity of aeroplanes is tremendous" and "bullets flying over and hither in reckless fury"), which the Irish regiments suffered heavily (*OB*, Sept. 1916: 5-6). For Gleeson, who made frequent visits to the front lines and often conducted mass under fire, the only solace derived from seeing, in the soldiers' deeds and words, the evidence of their religious devotion: he noticed that they heard the offices "with prayer books and Rosaries in hand" showing "the greatest reverence" (*ibid.*).

The devotion of the Irish soldiers is an element emphasised both in Gleeson's accounts and in the fictional pieces detailing life at the front. Within the limits of a short tale, the authors often depicted either the spiritual awakening of the servicemen—stories of last-minute conversions are frequent—or their unshakable faith in the Catholic God. A couple of considerations may be drawn with regard to the function of the emphasis on religious devotion. First, it reveals to what extent the contributors of *Our Boys* were determined to present their readers some positive stereotypes to be emulated, i.e. exemplary models who display Catholic virtues in the face of adversity. Second, it

contributes to delineating the reasons why, according to those writing for *Our Boys*, the war had to be carried on, despite the sorrow and destructions brought about by the conflict. All the stories published between 1914 and the spring of 1918 represent the Irish soldiers in the British Army under a positive light: they are shown respect, though this is signalled through stories that extol not their bravery, but their commitment to Catholicism and—as I am about to explain—to Ireland. Even if there is no glory in dying in active combat, the Irish servicemen's sacrifice was necessary: the Irish who died on the Continent had to be mourned and commemorated because they fulfilled the duty of any good Catholic and patriotic Irishman by fighting the Germans.

Regarding Irish nationalism, *Our Boys* held moderate positions, endorsing the policy of John Redmond, whose central objective was legislative independence from Ireland through Home Rule. As Redmond enthusiastically supported the British war effort and his own country's participation in it, linking the sacrifice of Irish people with the implementation of Home Rule, the Christian Brothers looked favourably on those youngsters who enrolled to fight in Europe, among whom there were some of their readers and former students. In the eyes of the Brothers and their collaborators, however, the political reasons underlying the endorsement to the war effort were as crucial as reasons of another nature: the Great War came to be legitimised on moral grounds as a defensive war.

In *A Message from the Front*, the dying Bernard Tracy takes pride in having served "God and Ireland", claiming that he "came out here [at the Western front] to fight the men who are profaning the churches" (*OB*, Jun. 1915: 265). The soldier of another tale likewise "enlisted to defend Christianity" against the Germans (*OB*, Dec. 1914: 87). The words uttered by these characters evoke the burning of churches and cathedrals, the destruction of the library of the University of Louvain that preserved ancient Irish manuscripts and the summary executions in France and Belgium after the German invasion. These episodes enraged the Catholic Irish public and the Church so that many clergymen pledged support for Redmond's positions on Ireland's participation in the Great War (aan de Wiel, 2003: 1-41; Pennell, 2014: 179). Since the Christian Brothers and *Our Boys* embraced the positions on war held by most clergymen of the Irish Catholic Church, many opinion articles and editorials published in the magazine were used as a political platform from which the journalists denounced Germany as a ruthless barbaric destroyer of liberty and the Christian civilization. "Inhuman outrages are reported," the author of a 1914 editorial writes, identifying "the damage or destruction of the historic churches of Louvain, Malines and Rheims" as the nadir in the descent into "old barbarism" (*OB*, Nov. 1914: 86). In June 1915, a journalist states to "be disgusted" by "German war morality": the depravity of the Huns was confirmed by another barbaric act—"the destruction of unarmed merchantmen" with the sinking, on May the 7th, of Lusitania (*OB*, Jun. 1915: 270).

Our Boys's focus on German immorality brought to its contributors the criticism of the radical nationalists, such as the senior members of the Irish Boy Scouts writing for *Fianna*. The journalists of *Fianna* were vocal in faulting *Our Boys* for not questioning the accuracy of the alleged German atrocities. As the ultimate affront, they compared the Christian Brothers' periodical to the British *Marvel* insofar as both papers sanctioned the so-called atrocity propaganda (*F*, Jul. 1915: 2). The contributors of *Fianna* were

outspoken but not unfair in their accusations, because, since the very beginning of the First World War, the British press and propaganda had constructed the German as a barbaric people driven by bloodthirsty militarism: the stories about the atrocities committed by the Huns, which were prominent in early pro-war propaganda, only corroborated this negative perception (Pennell, 2014: 93). In the case of Ireland, pro-war propagandists played with the Irish people's moral duty to defend Belgium, a small Catholic nation like their own, and its churches. With analogous purposes, in May 1915, the press aroused widespread indignation by publishing gruesome tales on the sinking of Lusitania: civilians had to be defended against unprovoked German aggression.

Stories detailing German brutality were given to the consumption of the Irish people in the hope that they would boost the recruitment rate in the island, but atrocity propaganda did not turn out to be such a powerful tool as the pro-war militants expected. On the contrary, it became a weapon in the hands of their opponents: in the earlier years of the conflict, the semantics and images of atrocity propaganda were so prominent in the collective imagination that the contributors to the advanced nationalist periodicals, including *Fianna*, *Young Ireland* and *St. Enda's*, appropriated it, though reversing its original ends.

The appropriation of the "Others'" language was one of the first strategies enacted by the advanced nationalist to undermine the legitimacy of the Irish war effort as a nationalist cause. The authors of *Fianna* started employing this strategy as early as 1915, when, in the landscape of juvenile periodicals, their monthly was the only one counterbalancing *Our Boys*'s views on war issues. At first glance, *Our Boys* and *Fianna* seem to mark the opposite polarities of the nationalist spectrum, especially if we consider how they handled the topic of German atrocities: if the former was horrified by the Huns' misdeeds to the point of calling Irish boys to arms, the latter either blamed or laughed at the gullibility of those who believed in the stories of atrocities. This sharp contrast in opinions originated from the commitment of the Scouts' magazine to construct the British rather than the Germans as Ireland's enemy: an ambitious plan that was carried out, in most cases, by resorting to the literary medium.

The tale *Eirig! Eirig!* ("Arise! Arise!" in Irish), published in *Fianna* in two instalments between August and September 1915, epitomises the periodical's act of ridiculing their political opponents by exploiting the semantics of atrocity propaganda. Respecting all the stylistic features of an *aisling*, the tale presents a first-person narrator who, inadvertently, falls asleep and starts dreaming: his dreams are coloured by the fears of a German invasion, a possibility then discussed in the press. He finds himself staring at the green meadows and fields where the cattle are grazing, but, as soon as he opens *The Independent* and reads "the latest German 'atrocities', yes! atrocities", the landscape changes under his eyes. The once prosperous nation is now plagued by "a villainous and hell-emitted soldiery" who is responsible for the worst atrocities: the indigenous population is "hunted, stabbed, shot, murdered". The narrator is certain that the soldiers are Huns, "the vilest of them", and that he is staring helplessly at the devastation of Belgium. At this point, a beautiful lady turns up, reprimanding the narrator for not realising that the oppressed country under his eyes is Ireland, not Belgium: the destruction of altars and executions of priests and civilians—alleged crimes of the Germans in Louvain and France—were, in fact, the wrong-doings of the British. Thus, the tale depicts

the growing nationalist awareness of an Irishman, who, as the dream suddenly ends, resolves to fight for Ireland's freedom (*F*, Aug. 1915: 2 and Sept. 1915: 11; cf. also Novick, 2001: 85-86).

The construction of Britain as Ireland's first and foremost enemy was a crucial process for the contributors of *Fianna*, eager to legitimise the independents' cause as the only one Irish people had to fight for. As previously noted, Germany was constructed as the enemy threatening Ireland and England in equal measure, thus creating an irreconcilable opposition between these nations. Gross dichotomising is an imaginative habit that pertains to wartimes. It consists in a binary vision which relies on the stark antithesis between the "We", individual with specific names and personalities, and the alien "he"—the enemy—which is a mere collective identity. The latter threatens "Us" and therefore it must be destroyed, or, at least, contained and disarmed (Fussell, 1975: 75). During the Great War, the advanced nationalist press for the Irish youth spared no pains to dismantle the binary system concocted by pro-war propagandists that opposed the Germans to the Irish, and to apply the label "he" to the British. One of their techniques was to reverse atrocities propaganda, but there was a whole gamut of strategies.

One of *Fianna*'s techniques consisted in depicting the Germans under a positive light: not only did its writers remind readers that "till the war was actually declared, Irish people were actually neutral towards Germany", but they also described the Kaiser's subjects as "quite decent chaps", so decent that the British Army servicemen fighting on the Western Front "have been asking themselves why they are fighting at all". To endorse these remarks, the editors of *Fianna* quoted on the same page a mysterious letter they claimed to have received from an anonymous soldier after the Christmas Truce, in which it is confirmed that "the German soldiers are "jolly, cheery fellows for the most part, and it seems so silly under the circumstances to be fighting them" (*F*, Feb. 1915: 9). Obviously, in keeping with this strategy of rehabilitation, no account of Huns' misdeeds ever found space in this periodical and their absence was justified on the basis that the gruesome stories of atrocities were, to use an expression common today, fake news: indeed, "it is as easy to manufacture a German atrocity as it is to sharpen your pencil" (*ibid.*).

If Huns' atrocities are a fabrication, Redmondites' promise that Ireland would be paid off by Home Rule for its loyalty after the end of the war is a myth. These myths had to be debunked and the naïve Irishmen awakened. From its establishment, the objective of *Fianna* was to open the eyes of the Irish about the right cause as expressed in their declaration of intent of the periodical, which juxtaposes the Great War with a war for independence yet to come:

> Peace has passed away—war instead rules the countries of Europe. The time has come when every country must fight for her liberties. Are you prepared then, to stand by your country and help her fight for her liberties—liberties that she has been deprived of for the last 700 years? Prepare yourself. […] You have a cause to fight for, be prepared to die for your cause, and keep before you always "Ireland First". (*F*, Feb. 1915: 1)

Unfortunately, according to the contributors of *Fianna*, *Young Ireland* and *St. Enda's*, the Irish had been brainwashed into the Great War. The brainwashing affecting the Irish was put into effect through the Anglicisation of the country, which imposed British

culture in Ireland, and the artful construction of the German as the only enemy to fight. The English curriculum taught in Irish national schools, together with the invasion of juvenile literature from Britain, was considered a decisive factor in uprooting Irish cultural heritage: they were the instruments which made Irish people to believe that British culture was superior to their own and the one to defend, even by embracing weapons if necessary (*F*, Nov. 1915: 8).

The Irish mind had been so perverted by the phenomenon of Anglicisation that people were no longer able to discern what was Irish from what was foreign. This is the issue at the core of Dalcassian's *From a Long Way to Bodenstwon!*, a tale the title of which stands out as a mockery of the famous wartime song *It's a Long Way from Tipperary!*. During a visit to the grave of the revolutionary Theobald Wolfe Tone in Bodenstown, the tale's protagonist finds himself watching "a marching regiment" and later realises that "they were Irish and they wore the English khaki [and] they sang *'Tis a Long Way to Tipperary*". The soldiers did not know that the wartime melody they were singing, despite referring to the Irish town of Tipperary, was a British music hall song written in 1912; in Dalcassian's view, the soldier's lack of knowledge derived from a general confusion about Ireland's history and current situation, especially with regard to the role played by British rule in shaping them: they "did not know that their country and their minds were not their own!" (*F*, Jul. 1915: 1-2).

The inability to recognise the alien element in Irish culture mirrored the impaired historical vision of the youngsters at the moment of their enrolment. These boys did not understand that "the number of Irish quoted daily as dying for England in the Dardanelles is a great tribute to English rule and English influence" (*F*, Oct. 1915: 4); the very same rule that evicted Irish tenant farmers and committed atrocities "no illustrated ha'penny Press can record" (*F*, Jul. 1915: 1-2). On the pages of *Fianna*, even if the recruiting sergeants and atrocity propagandists are blamed for deceiving Irish boys into enrolment, it is the Irish boys themselves who are condemned with the utmost contempt. There is no respect either for the Irish serving in the Continent or for the people in Ireland creating a "home-front" against Germany. There is no respect, but harsh criticism, mockery and derision. The soldiers are often portrayed as fools, taking pride in their brave feats on the battlefield when they should not: *Fianna* recurrently features the stock character of a vain arrogant Lieutenant of the Irish Fusiliers, who spends his time in Dublin pubs boasting the glories of his brigade, like having slaughtered the enemy of "gallant little Belgium".

Civilians who supported Ireland's participation in the war were likewise treated with disdain, while those believing in pro-war propaganda were sneered at in fictional and non-fictional pieces. The tale titled *The Spy Peril* mocked the phenomenon of spy-fever in Irish society, which was connected to the emerging fear of the "enemy within", i.e. the enemy that does not come from abroad but lurks in the country waiting to strike it. Since the enemy took the form of the spy, some people started to be obsessed with pro-German spies and espionage. The obsession degenerated into the appearance of amateur spy-catchers, ordinary people who took it upon themselves to deal with spies: they accused other ordinary people of being enemy spies and reported them to the authorities (aan de Wiel, 2012: 25-27; Pennell, 2014: 98-107). It was such a common phenomenon that *Fianna* decided to fictionalise it. In *The Spy Peril*, a husband and his wife report each other to the police: neither the one nor the other is a spy, but the news on spies in the

papers made such an impression on them that they saw pro-German spies everywhere. Yet, like the soldiers wearing the English khaki, they did not realise that there was a more dangerous enemy within: the British oppressor.

In these works, beneath a veneer of irony, there is ill-concealed contempt, a constant element when referring to Irish servicemen or those who believed in the necessity of joining Britain in the Great War. To the contributors of *Fianna*, these people paid "a great tribute to English rule" over Ireland, because they employed energies and resources which should have devoted to the attainment of national independence. The appropriation of the language of atrocities propaganda, the rehabilitation of the "Huns" as well as the denigration of the Irish serving in the British Army were all strategies geared to open the eyes of the Irish on the contemporary political situation: Ireland's colonial oppression made the war against Britain the only one worth fighting. The soldier's sacrifice at the front was delegitimised or even condemned, because, by continuing their fight on the European battlefields, they deprived Ireland of much needed human resources: ultimately, those who served for the "cause of small nations" were tainted with the stain of collaboration.

When *Fianna* ceased to be published in February 1916 due to financial problems and the obstacle of censorship, *Young Ireland* and *St. Enda's* emerged as the mouthpieces of the radical fringe of nationalism among the youth. The delegitimisation of Ireland's support in the Great War was perpetuated in the last two periodicals, but the attitude towards the soldiers took other forms. All these papers provided their young readership with an arena where to publicly discuss national matters, striving to control "the direction" of the debates and to mould the views of Irish boys and girls. However, it should be considered that the readers' opinion may, in turn, influence the editorial line of a newspaper: since newspapers are business depending on sales and advertising, they ultimately rely on the opinions of their readership, which are variable (Boyd, 2003: 67; Pennell, 2014: 6). In the case of the juvenile magazines here analysed, the beliefs of their purchasers—the youngsters or their parents—at a certain point contributed to modifying the editors' attitude towards the ex-servicemen. A survey of the articles on war issues published in *Young Ireland* over the span of two years, from 1917 to 1918, sheds light on this process of reciprocal influence between press and readership.

Conceived to mould the nationalist ideals of Irish boys and girls, *Young Ireland* was closely affiliated with Sinn Féin: many of its contributors were activists of the party and, when *Young Ireland*, had to convert into an adult paper, it was Arthur Griffith—the founder and leader of Sinn Féin—who took over its reins. Sinn Féin's ideas informed the articles and the fictional pieces of *Young Ireland* and changes in the party's policy were to be reflected in the notions promoted by the periodical. Changes to Sinn Féin's philosophy were brought about by the Easter Rising: though it was a military failure, the uprising came to represent a turning point in the campaign for independence, thus affecting the policies of the parties upholding the advanced nationalist cause. After the brutal repression of the Easter Rising, many Irish men and women, who had previously sided with the moderate factions, were drawn to more radical views. Sinn Féin saw its electoral base expanding to include ex-servicemen and the families of serving (or fallen) soldiers; thus, in 1917 and 1918, with the December 1918 General Election coming up, Griffith's party veered towards a more conciliatory tone in its vocabulary when

discussing the war and the lot of the Irish soldiers to fuel its supporters' sympathies and win more votes (Johnson, 2003: 56).

In an attempt to mitigate their tone, Sinn Féiners endeavoured to despoil their messages about the Irish soldiers of either any element of denigration or any accusation of collaborationism, even if the soldiers' sacrifice was still denied any legitimisation. Moreover, frustration increasingly grew among Irish people as the costs of war mounted: the memories of tragedies like the destruction at Gallipoli of the volunteer Tenth Irish Division were still vivid and painful for many (Novick, 2001: 56-62). People's weariness was exploited by Sinn Féin and the magazines, which, besides evoking the halting of Ireland's participation in the war, harnessed the growing frustration against their political enemy.

In *Young Ireland*, this complex attitude towards the war found verbal expression in two forms: it resulted either in grievances about Ireland's death toll or in the occlusion of the First World War, which was often displaced from the magazine's narrative. In compliance with the first modality, the editor's speech featured in the first issue focused on the destructive consequences of the war: "the wars of history were mere street-fights, school-yard squabbles, compared with this one," he thundered (*YI*, 21 Apr. 1917: 2). A notion reasserted few months later when a reporter observed that "a week of this war is probably more destructive of life and capital than a year of the great Napoleonic wars" (*YI*, 28 Jul. 1917: 6).

These critiques of war occurred frequently in other papers as well, including *Our Boys*, which, in 1918, abandoned its pro-Redmondite positions in favour of a more radical stance on Irish politics. In July 1918, indeed, the journalists sent out a message of resistance against England's designs to introduce conscription in Ireland, by extolling the ninety Sinn Féiners who in "Ireland, too long exasperated by British empirics and their broken pledges, rose against the unconstitutional and immoral imposition of a blood tax against the national will" (*OB*, Jul. 1918: 125). As clear from these extracts, with Sinn Féin attracting increasing consensus, *Our Boys* was forced to adjust its views on Irish politics, in order to fit public opinion and its readership's desire. Interestingly, eager to mirror the new attitudes the becoming prevalent in the political landscape when referring to the Great War, *Our Boys* opted for the composition strategy of occlusion, which was the predominant characteristic of *Young Ireland*'s pieces on the same subject.

Since 1917, the topic of the First World War underwent a gradual silencing in these two magazines insofar as their writers made only passing references to the conflict, which usually recurred in articles and stories about the future of Ireland and the campaign for independence. It was the case in the summer of 1917, when the contributors of *Young Ireland* started speculating about post-war opportunities for their country and, among other things, coveted the idea of a Peace Conference where Irish representatives could demand the recognition of Ireland's ancient sovereignty (*YI*, 18 Aug. 1917; see also: 28 Jul. 1917 and 25 Aug. 1917). But no direct reference to trench-life or to Irish participation was ever made in *Young Ireland*, apart from the few attacks to the possibility of conscription in Ireland, which were similar to those published in *Our Boys*. However, the contributors could not fail to mention and attack the plans for establishing conscription, because they were functional to their jingoistic campaign against England: notions of

exploitations, unfairness and oppression characterised the deeper structures of these pieces in order to give a full picture of the consequences of foreign rule over Ireland.

The silence surrounding Ireland's participation in the war and the tragic historical event itself contrasts sharply with the prominence and wealth of articles on the other two wars promoted by both *Our Boys* and *Young Ireland*—the war on Anglicisation that was conducive to the war for independence. *Our Boys* was conceived as a response to the corrupting influence of foreign papers such as *Gem* and *British Bulldog*, which threatened the survival of Irish culture: thus, from its establishment, the Christian Brothers' magazine offered great publicity to all the preserves of Gaelicism—above all, Irish folk music and sports. And the articles on Gaelic culture grew in number after the execution of the Easter Risers, because the rediscovery of Irish Gaelic heritage and the cultural emancipation of Ireland were perceived by separatists as the prerequisites for political independence. Yet, while the an analysis of the rhetorical strategies employed in *Our Boys* is not relevant to a survey of the journalistic response to the Great War, an investigation of *Young Ireland*'s war on Anglicisation is needed. In *Young Ireland*, besides the occlusion of the First World War which clashes with the recurring appeals to rediscover Gaelic heritage and to fight for Ireland, there is also the use of the language of British and pro-war propaganda to promote the separatists' objectives: the Great War is never explicitly mentioned, but it provides the imagery employed to enhance the notion that the wars for de-Anglicisation and independence were the only just wars.

The appropriation of the semantics of pro-war propaganda is exemplified by the article "Recruiting" published in October 1917. The anonymous writer starts the piece by spurring any of its readers "[to] do his or her bit" to "roll back the tide of invasion": indeed, "a great peril" is threatening Ireland. "Invasion", "peril" and the call to arms were recurring words in the numerous books, published after the success of Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) in pre-war years, which brandished the spectre of a German invasion of Britain or Ireland (cf. aan de Wiel, 2012: 29-30; Stevenson, 2013: 28). Yet the semantics of this fear-mongering literature is here at the service of the campaign to recruit soldiers, not for the British Army, but for the Gaelic one: the youngest among the periodical's readers, too young to fight for Ireland with the use of violence, were expected to learn Irish, thus countering the noxious effects of British culture. In keeping with the strategy of appropriating the opponents' rhetoric, the article's power of persuasion is enhanced by a vignette—reprinted in later issues as well—which provides an effective visual correlative to it and satirises pro-war recruiting posters. It depicts a man wearing a Tara brooch and pointing his finger at the viewer: under him, the caption "Are you learning Irish?" (*YI*, 13 Oct. 1917: 4). The visual reference to the posters portraying Uncle Sam or Lord Kitchener is clear as well as the attempt to confine the experience of the Great War to the background and to reduce it to a touchstone to assert the centrality of nationalist battles.

The First World War had been displaced from these wartime nationalist narratives, but the descent into oblivion reached its baleful climax when the conflict was over and the Anglo-Irish War began in 1919. *Our Boys*, *Young Ireland* and *St. Enda's* still featured stories with war settings, but the battlefields of Europe described in the tales such as *A Message from the Front* were replaced by the Irish landscapes where the guerrilla war between the IRA and the Black Tans was being fought. In *Our Boys*, the good Catholic

soldiers gave space to boys and girls working for independence as assistants to local IRA commanders, messengers or lookouts (Flanagan, 2001).

It is in juxtaposition with the Easter Rising that the Great War is (rarely) referred to in the juvenile periodicals after the outbreak of the Anglo-Irish War. The juxtaposition is at the core of two tales featured on *St. Enda's* in the early 1920s—*The Choice* and *Two Soldiers* (*SE*, Jan. 1921: 13-14 and 12 Feb. 1922: 2 respectively)—, which constructed the experience of the 1916 uprising as the true expression of essential Ireland. The tales have a similar schematic plot insofar as the protagonists are either two brothers or cousins who make opposite choices: while one enlists in the British Army, the other joins the Irish Volunteers and dies fighting for Ireland in the uprising. If the latter is honoured for his sacrifice, the other is blamed for his choice: some of the harsh criticism characterising *Fianna*'s attitudes towards the British Army servicemen steals into the pages of *St. Enda's* when describing the lot of the boy who left for Flanders. In *The Choice*, while the tombstone of the gallant hero is covered with "wreath and beautiful flowers, […] eloquent testimony of Nation's love and reverence", his brother is buried in "a foreign land, under a foreign flag", but he deserves no pity because "in the hour of his country's great need he did not see or understand" and enrolling he "left [his] own Motherland an easy prey to her foe".

These two tales well exemplify the nationalists' negative opinion on the Great War in the early 1920s. Then, all the magazines for Ireland's youth reflected the polarisation characterising the period. In war years, through articles either mocking or neglecting the soldiers and Ireland's war effort, the periodicals even anticipated and promoted the climate of growing radicalisation which would lead to the glorification of the minority of the Easter Rising, "Ireland's little hero-band", to the detriment of the far larger numbers who had served for the cause of small nations. In *Fianna*'s defamatory remarks and in the occlusion enacted by *Our Boys* and *Young Ireland* one can read the hostility or indifference that shaped public attitude towards the conflict and the ex-servicemen in post-war Ireland for many years.

Dunsany was too optimistic in his 1929 poem, when he prophesied "a few more years" of wait for the soldiers before seeing their merits acknowledged. The Irish ex-servicemen were honoured much later. Fianna Fàil, the party that dominated Irish political life for most of the twentieth century, was determined that Irish First World War veterans would not receive national honour, condemning them to oblivion. Thus, a collective public amnesia around Ireland's participation in the Great War was artfully perpetuated. In 1966, the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising was celebrated across independent and nationalist Ireland, while the Somme was commemorated almost exclusively in Northern Ireland (Myers, 2012: 2). It was not until 30 years later, that Dunsany's prediction came true: on the 80th anniversary of the Armistice on 18th November 1998—few months after the signature of the Good Friday Agreement, which determined a major political development in the Northern Ireland peace process and a détente in the political relationships between Ireland and Britain—the President of Ireland Mary McAleese and Queen Elizabeth II jointly dedicated a memorial on the site of the battle of Messines Ridge to all those Irishmen who gave their lives during the First World War.

Notes

1. According to Peter Hart, since its acquiring the status of Ireland's army in 1919, the IRA created a taxonomy of its enemies, subdivided into "types" including "ex-servicemen, Orangemen, freemasons, tramps, fast women": those people were "the most likely to be denounced as informers or enemies of the republic and shot, burned out, or intimidated" (1998: 291). Unfortunately, while the majority of those who really informed were never suspected, those actually intimidated or shot mostly never informed. Since many of the punished were Protestants, ex-soldiers and 'tinkers', Hart has argued that they were murdered not for what they did, but for who they were (*ibid.*: 300-315). For further details see also: P. Taylor (2015) and N.C. Johnson (1999: 51).

2. D. Fitzpatrick's *Ireland and the First World War* (1986) paved the way for a series of detailed studies on Ireland's participation in the First World War. This includes T.P. Dooley, *Irishmen Or English Soldiers?* (1995), and T. Denman, *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers* (1992), which are regimental histories comparing Irishmen's and English soldiers' experiences of the war. Moreover, of great value are the works by K. Jeffrey (1993 and 2001), A. Gregory and S. Pašeta (2002), and J. Horne (2008). In line with a renewed interest in the cultural representations and commemoration practices of the conflict around the world at the turn of the century—see, for instance, the works by J. Winter (1998 and 2006)—in Ireland there has been a growth of interest in these aspects related to the Irish experience of the Great War. For instance, the studies by A. Dolan (2003), N.C. Johnson (1999 and 2003), Haughey (2002), J. Horne and E. Madigan (2013) deal with the symbolic role of public commemoration in politics of everyday life in Ireland and with war writing. For full bibliographic entries, see Bibliography.

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Dramatic Representation of Trench Space as an 'Experiential Ruin' in R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End* and Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*

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ABSTRACT

Physical forms of ruin and psychological forms of ruination is an area within spatial theory that will enhance literary studies, especially literature of the First World War. The literary representation of the trench as a ruined space is a predominant feature of literature that emerges from the Great War. Among the different genres, it is drama that is ideally poised to offer a critique of the way both physical and psychological ruin can be depicted on the stage. Both R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End* and Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie* consciously depict trench space as a site of embodied trauma for soldiers who experienced trench warfare and, consequently, trench space functions as an 'experiential ruin.' This 'embodied exchange' emphasizes the relationship between the battlefield (or cite of trauma) and the actual war-related trauma itself. Both Sherriff and O'Casey have created plays that show the decaying landscape and decaying psyche as inseparable victims to the devastation of the First World War.

Keywords: Spatial theory, ruins, embodiment, ecology

When soldiers from Britain confronted the Western Front, they encountered an apocalyptic landscape: destroyed buildings, collapsed churches and steeples, bombed-out villages, and forests decimated by relentless shelling. Nearly all the natural topographical features of this war-generated ruinscape were underscored and grotesquely outlined by earth gutted and scarred with thousands of miles trenches and dugouts. Gone were the pastoral images that in years before might have prompted feelings of tranquility. This denuded scene now fiercely rejected any semblance of the Edenic or the sublime that may have traditionally been associated with nature. In fact, soldiers of the First World War did not witness the

awe of the sublime, they experienced only the traumatic. Similarly, they did not merely observe ruin and devastation; they experienced the ruin as a ruin. Since a ruin is fundamentally defined by the very process of decay or ruination, either through "classical" ruination in which something decays over an extended period of time or through "new ruins" that occur quickly as a result of natural or manmade devastation, it is clear that trenches of the First World War should be defined as a ruined space and analyzed for how they functioned as an "experiential ruin" where an "embodied exchange" occurred between the soldiers who occupied and inhabited said trenches and, by extension, the ruin's own history (DeSilvey, 2013: 472). By understanding the trench as an experiential ruin, we can acquire a greater understanding of what attracted authors, poets, and playwrights to revisit these physical places as a way of inspiring ideas for narratives with the goal of articulating to the world the physical and emotional conditions they had to endure. This was particularly true for playwrights of the First World War. Consequently, it is drama that can, through staging and production, visualize the trench space and the ruin on stage to illustrate what Georg Simmel calls the "balanced tension between two forces: Nature and the human Spirit" (371). Caught in the middle of this veritable "no-man's-land" of tension wherein the embodied exchange occurs, are the soldiers struggling with incomparable traumas of war while entrenched in a state of psychological decay.

Within the cannon of what Paul Fussell calls the "literary war" of the Great War, the genre given the least amount of attention from literary critics and historians of the First World War is drama. The real issue with this frequent omission is the failure for scholars to see theatre as the ideal, privileged place to address trauma, particularly the large-scale trauma of the First World War. For example, trauma can be performed on stage, theatre has non-verbal ways of expressing trauma, the audience becomes a secondary witness without being a victim or survivor of warfare, and plays also allow for a process of working through traumatic experiences while arousing awareness to traumatic events as its dramatic duty. Two of the best examples of the dramatic representation of life in the trenches are Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie* and R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End*. Both Sherriff and O'Casey rely on experiences within the trenches to propel their respective storyline. The spatial relations that emerge from soldiers occupying trench space contribute to the individual soldier's trauma. Additionally, while O'Casey is often included in texts about Ireland's response to the Great War and Sherriff's play is heralded as a primary example of a Great War play, neither play has been analyzed together or for the way they uniquely illustrate the spatial representation of ruins. Both plays are unique in the way they explicitly depict trench space as an experiential ruin. In both plays, the trenches are not simply for the purpose of set design or historical authenticity, but the uniqueness stems from the trenches taking on the qualities of an additional character that shapes the narrative.

It should also be noted that both playwrights had difficulty getting their plays into production. As will be discussed, the resistance to, if not distaste for representing modern warfare on the stage, speaks to society's lack of desire for allowing culturally traumatic events, particularly the Great War, play out on the stage. However, it is of critical importance for production companies to move beyond their initial resistance to viewing

these war plays in order to try to understand, at least in some small way, how these works allow for a much needed witness to both the lived-experience of Sherriff's play and the anti-war rhetoric of O'Casey's play and how they both encourage and allow audiences to work through their trauma in a way more productive than ignoring the often unstable conditions of post-war British life. Within the context of this argument, however, is the important connection between O'Casey and Sherriff and their representation of the trench as a ruined space and as a primary contributor to spatial disorientation and its link to issues of post-traumatic stress disorder and physiological deterioration. Both playwrights compare trench space to ruins in order to illustrate that their soldiers now physically inhabit a ruined space. Consequently, both playwrights allow for and encourage a comparison between the ruins of battle and the "slow ruination" soldiers experience. The spatial relations of the trench and the ruin are coterminous agents in how they contribute to the ruination of the traumatized subject. Understanding the soldiers as traumatized is an important link to Cathy Caruth's notion of trauma as a "latent" experience "fully evident only in connection with another time, another place" (2011: 8). *The Silver Tassie* and *Journey's End* can be understood as an attempt to illustrate how spatial and temporal displacement is represented by tangible ruins—a representation communicated best by their respective stage adaptations.

Almost immediately after returning home from the front, Sherriff began writing stories based on his war experience. The difficulty, however, occurred when one story began to bleed into another story and, after several months of writing, Sherriff had only fragments of two potential plays. The frustration he felt producing only partial, incoherent narratives in two competing works was interrupted when Sherriff contracted scarlet fever. In a later interview, Sherriff attributed this particular illness after the war as the "turning point" in his writing. He explained, "For some weeks I lay in bed with nothing to do. In a cupboard nearby were my old war letters, and I began to sort them into chronological order" (Wales, 2016: 111). One might identify this as the type of ordering of experiences necessary for a narrative to crystallize. In fact, becoming reacquainted with his letters produced a palpable nostalgia that began to engulf the playwright. The byproduct of these feelings of remembrance and desire to reimage and experience the battlefield was a collection of volumes Sherriff would title *Memories of Active Service*. A further condensing of these experiences, woven around a coherent storyline, would become what we now know as *Journey's End*.

With the tangible representation of his *Memories of Active Service* neatly compiled beside his bed, Sherriff felt, at the time, that he had everything he needed to write a play that would both accurately represent his own personal experiences on the front and be true to the horrors of trench warfare as experienced by all who had endured it. The narrative itself seemed to be set, the autobiographical underpinnings were subtly infused, but something was missing. Sherriff toiled over the uneasy feeling that a seemingly integral piece had not yet been realized, which prohibited the play from being completed. In the midst of this internal, authorial struggle, Sherriff got the idea that he should revisit the areas of the battlefields in both France and Belgium. It was in May of 1921 that he, being accompanied by his father, participated in a bicycle tour and set about revisiting the

landscape that still bore the fresh scars of the Great War. It is noteworthy, that when Sherriff returned to those traumatic spaces, he did so with the intent of confronting, or reconfronting, the frontline. However, it was not the trench space that sustained his attention, but the ruins that now punctuated a landscape desperately struggling to be reclaimed and rebuilt in the wake of previously untold devastation.

Sherriff quickly developed what his father notes as a distracting fixation on sites of ruin and trenches slowly becoming reclaimed by nature (Wales, 2016: 122). Both Rose Macaulay and Chris Woodward have observed how ruins become a key site for self-reflection; an act in which Sherriff is clearly engaged (*Pleasure in Ruins*, 2011: 23). His father comments further that throughout the tour, Sherriff's camera moved away from panoramic images of his previously occupied battlefields, and focused only on the details of the desolate fields: shards of splintered metal, weaponized relics choked by wild grass, caved in trenches partially reclaimed by nature, seemingly endless piles of rusted ammunition boxes, and "everywhere, buildings in ruins" (*Letters*, 2018: 432). Although most of the trip was spent revisiting and meticulously documenting the exact places listed in *Memories of Active Service*, the observations extended beyond his noted geographical reference points and onto the surrounding ruins of villages, collapsed churches, and burnt out barns. Near the end of the trip, Sherriff even began to philosophize over the land for what it is now and what it once was; and, with it, came the captivation of seeing a landscape being slowly reclaimed by nature. He began to imagine, perhaps in a future date, generations of Britain's youth would visit these same foreign fields, observe the ruins, and dig the dirt for its relics—hidden remembrances of times past. Thus, it was in and among the ruins and fragments of war that Sherriff found his missing link; and once this journey, both literal and metaphorical, was complete, so was his play—replete with ruins and relics of its own.

In a letter to his mother dated 28 September 1916, Sherriff describes his introduction to the front: "My first impression … was that of blackness and rain: innumerable huts with shining wet roofs and thousands of glimmering trench lights" (*Letters*, 1975: 22). It was if "[t]housands of men lived in this giant wooden city" waiting to be sent to the Somme or the Ypres Salient (22). One of his first tasks was to expand the trenches by digging into muddy no-man's-land. It was here that Sherriff acquired what he referred to as a "frantic desire to live," but also the desire to avoid the work of an infantryman on the front, if he could in anyway avoid it (71). Sherriff's terse introduction to the gloomy physical and psychological conditions, as well as the disparate war experiences of officers and infantryman, become two of the three essential components of *Journey's End*. The third component is his desire to accurately link the psychological conditions of warfare with where these conditions were lived and experienced: in ruins and trenches.

During the author's post-war trip to the battlefield, the ruins of the trenches represented a transcendent place in which the past trauma, present condition, and future potential existed simultaneously. This experience gave Sherriff the inspiration to write a play that uses the setting to create a ruined state that anticipates the soldiers doom, as the trench they are occupying will one day be collapsed and, eventually, reclaimed. Thus, the play itself

deals with time to a similar end as it utilizes its spatial dimensions. Both are working in unison to forecast a countdown to the play's final act—the trench as a ruin becomes a powerful memento mori that Sherriff is fully aware and one in which characters are painfully unaware. Additionally, what has been overlooked is how Sherriff uses the ruin to reinforce the play's circular narrative. I understand the play functioning as a circular narrative because it is early in Act 1 that the characters, officers of an infantry company, enter the trench called Lancer's Alley via ruins. Raleigh, who is one of the officers, says:

> It's funny the way it begins—in that ruined village, a few steps down into the ruined cellar of a house—then right under the house and through a little garden—and then under the garden wall—then alongside an enormous ruined factory place —then miles and miles of plains, with those green lights bobbing up and down ahead—all along the front as far as you can see. (2016: 21)

The soldiers now physically inhabit a ruined space. The spatial relations of the trench and the ruin are coterminous agents in how they contribute to the ruination of the traumatized subject. Sherriff's play can be understood as an attempt to illustrate how spatial and temporal displacement is represented by tangible ruins. In the beginning of Act III, Scene I, Raleigh becomes afflicted with ruinenlust, which Robert Ginsberg describes as an "aestheticization" whereby the viewer sees the ruin in a Romantic sensibility in an attempt to understand the conditions of the present (14). But Raleigh is also a manifestation of Sherriff's romantization of the ruins from his post-war bicycle tour in which he imagined the day one might discover some hidden relic of a war that exists only as a distant memory, if it is remembered at all. Raleigh tells Osborne, "I can show you places in the forest that nobody knows about […]. It gets thicker and darker and cooler" (71). Osborne responds, "They say there are ruins, somewhere in the forest, of villages that William the Conqueror pulled down to let the forest grow" (71). Raleigh then laments, "I know. We often used to look for them, but haven't found one yet. [Pause]. You must come and help look one day" (71). The conditions of the present are so traumatizing that the aestheticization of the ruin becomes a form of mental escapism. This conversation is similar to many that were had in the trenches: the idea of psychologically escaping entrenchment by describing an actual, familiar place that existed before the war in order to alleviate the symptoms of their trauma. The play ends with the image of the far point of Lancer's Alley being heavily shelled contributing to the collapse of their dugout. Once the soldiers in Sherriff's play enter into the ruinous space of the trenches, they are incapable of leaving. Both their fixation with ruins and the stage directions that have them constantly touching and staring at the mud walls of the dugout point to their entombed physical condition. This suggests the trench is an embodied space to which human consciousness becomes inseparably linked by traumatic experience.

The link between physical ruins and psychological forms of "ruination" is a relatively new concept of spatial theory that has yet to be used in the study of literary forms, particularly those used in response to the First World War. Caitlin DeSilvey and Tim Edensor, in their 2013 article "Reckoning with Ruins," argue that ruins can be used to examine the way human behavior is influenced by our external environments. They, and

many other scholars, do this in response to the fairly recent resurgence in scholarly interest regarding ruins. In so doing, DeSilvey and Edensor introduce the concept of "fast and slow forms of ruination." Slow ruins "slip into ruination more gradually" often as a result of social or economic collapse (467). Fast ruins are typically the result of war and natural disaster (467). What is unique about the First World War is that the literature, especially memoirs, poetry, and drama written by combatants and noncombatants, both implicitly and explicitly compare the feeling of physical and emotional ruin to the architectural and environmental ruin around them. While the scholarly response to the Great War has resulted in numerous volumes from both historians and literary scholars, the connection between spatial theory of the ruin and literary forms has been overlooked. The literature of the Great War often captured this relationship between fast and slow ruination, and this is particularly true with Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*. O'Casey's play is an ideal text to use in linking this theory in human geography with literary studies.

Scholars who have brought ruins to the forefront of the debate on space/place theory are Tim Edensor (2013), Robert Ginsberg (2004), Andreas Huyssen (2006), Dylan Trigg (2013) and Leo Mellor (2014). Dylan Trigg agrees with Mellor in that "ruins designate location of memory, in which trauma took place and continues to be inextricably bound with that location in both an affective and evidential manner" (262). These traumatic sites marked by the ruin, according to Andreas Huyssen, "can be read as a palimpsest of multiple historical events and representations" (2006: 17). Making places into a palimpsest is an essential function of the ruin. For Ginsberg, as with Huyssen, the ruin represents to the cultural consciousness that the collective has survived something (2006: 363). Ginsberg extends Huyssen's concern by observing, "[i]n a world of scientific mastery over nature, the ruin remains a bastion of mystery and a lesson of nature's mastery over humanity" (2004: 319). Ginsberg emphasizes the relationship between the ruin and environmental decay over historical trauma because he sees nature as that which will outlive human histories (405). But this begs the question of if there can be a true, or authentic, ruin. Huyssen classifies an authentic ruin as having "an undisputed origin" that happens over a lengthy period of time (as in slow ruination) and not "quick ruination due to war or demolition" (468). Opposed to "authentic ruins," argue Edensor and DeSilvey, are "new ruins," which, by Rose Macaulay's definition "still smell of fire and mortality" (2013: 467). Ruins also challenge temporality by taking on a state of pluritemporality in that "ruins serve as emblematic sites at which to re-examine and recast our relationship with the past and our understanding of the temporal" (471). But the symbolism of the ruin is not just limited to spatially or temporally, but experientially.

The Silver Tassie is unique in the way O'Casey explicitly connects ruins to the trenches as a way of understanding both spatial history and post-war cultural disillusionment. O'Casey's play begins in the Heegan household. There is then a sharp juxtaposition with the second act, as it begins "[i]n the war zone: a scene of jagged and lacerated ruin of what was once a monastery" (1928: 41). The next transition leaves the trenches and moves to a hospital before returning home to a dance hall for the last act. The different settings intentionally parallel and contribute to Harry Heegan's symptoms of slow ruination. It is in

the ruins of war's devastation that Heegan first becomes disillusioned and disoriented before struggling to come to terms with his injury in Act III where he is forced to work through his symptoms and struggles with memories of the trenches and the broken promises of his future while hospitalized. The purpose of Act IV is to show that the Harry who was present in Act I is not the same Harry the audience witnesses at play's end. Much of what can be traced in each of these acts is how the hospital and trenches function similar to Foucault's heterotopias of deviation. Though Foucault's theory of heterotopology has been applied to a myriad of spaces—both real and imagined—it has not yet been fully applied to trench space. An analysis of O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie* makes that link apparent. For Foucault, a heterotopia is a place contrasted with utopias and is "in a sense a placeless place" separated from the actual or the real ("Of Other Spaces"). Related to this is the way the trenches are an embodied space to which human consciousness becomes inseparably linked by traumatic experience. O'Casey's Harry Heegan suffers the same symptoms of "ruination" and, even though he survives the war to return home, he is nevertheless ruined by his experience within the trenches, which is compounded by theme of betrayal the play strongly conveys in each of its four acts.

The play itself generated mixed reviews to say the least. Even before its production, it was well-known that Yeats thought the play was "too abstract" and, in a letter to O'Casey, said, "I am sad and discouraged" to have read it; even going so far as to claim, "you are not interested in the Great War; you never stood on its battle fields or walked in its hospitals, and so [you] write out of your opinions. You illustrate those opinions by a series of almost unrelated scenes […] there is no dominating character, no dominating action, neither psychological unity nor unity of action; and your great power of the past has been the creation of some unique character who dominated all about him and was himself a main impulse in some action that filled the play from beginning to end" (1928: 113). O'Casey's response was a sharp one. He defends both himself and the play by saying, "Now, how do you know I am not interested in the Great War? Your statement is to me an impudently ignorant one to make, for it happens that I was and am passionately interested in the Great War" (115). He continues, "Do you really mean that no one should or could write about or speak about a war because one has not stood on its battle-fields?" (115). O'Casey then asks a poignant question, "Does a war consist only of battle-fields?" (115). The Silver Tassie is arguably O'Casey's attempt at answering this question. Thus, Yeats's initial dismissal of the play is not entirely fair. Perhaps this is due to a combination of Yeats's own distaste in representing modern warfare on the stage, but it could also speak to the society's hesitance, if not resistance, to allowing war, particularly the Great War, play out on the stage. Even noted playwrights like R.C. Sherriff had a difficult time getting his plays into production because people largely wanted to move on from the war's devastating cultural impact. However, *The Silver Tassie* does have a "dominating character" in Harry Heegan and certainly has a "dominating action," the slow disillusionment and disenchantment Heegan struggles with when returning home.

Act I, set in the eating, sitting, and part sleeping room of the Heegan family home, establishes much of the religious debate about which the later acts elaborate including: the "sacredness of life," the nature of sacrifice, communication with God, and the meaning of

eternity and eternal reward. Most of the conversations in the Heegan household are had without Harry present but serve as an introduction to the concepts Harry will struggle with post-war when he is dealing with the injury of being paralyzed from the waist down. It is important to note that Harry is not setting out for the war for the first time but is returning to the trenches. Mrs. Heegan comments, "you'd imagine now, the trenches would have given him some idea of the sacredness of life" (21). Before we are introduced to Harry, the stage directions read, "Harry is wearing khaki trousers, a military cap stained with trench mud" (28) and "has gone to the trenches as unthinkingly as he would go to the polling booth (28); thus, the twenty-three year old has seemingly not been disenchanted by his initial experiences on the front. The Harry in Act I is more like a young, successful footballer than a traumatized soldier. When Harry notices the Silver Tassie in Act 1, it is a powerful talisman that reminds him of his past accomplishments—scoring the winning goal to win the Silver Tassie trophy for the Avondale club—and, by extension, it is a symbol for the kind of success he expects to have in life after the war. It could be argued that Harry, like many of the young men headed to war, felt a certain sense of invincibility. But the end of Act 1 foreshadows Harry's ruin, as it concludes with Mrs. Foran remarking, "Every little bit of china I had in the house is lyin' above in a mad an' muddled heap like the flotsam an' jetsum of the seashore" (39). This seems to be a clear allusion to T.S. Eliot's "heap of broken images" from *The Waste Land*, but it also foreshadows the muddled psychological heap of Harry Heegan when he returns from the trenches as broken as the ruined structures encountered in his service on the front lines.

As previously stated, the setting of Act II is sharply juxtaposed with that of the first act. The scene is set within the ruins of a monastery. The walls are mostly caved in, the windows are shattered, the arches broken. But, "between […] two lacerated fingers of stone can be seen the country stretching to the horizon where the front trenches are" (40). "Here and there," the stage directions continue, "heaps of rubbish mark where houses once stood. The ground is dotted with rayed and shattered shell wholes [and] across the horizon in the red glare can be seen the criss-cross patterns of the barbed wire bordering the trenches" (40). What is unique about this scene with respect to ruins is that ruins are typically romanticized from the perspective of the ruin-gazer standing outside of the ruin gazing into the derelict structure and idealizing the present through the physical remnants of the past. Conversely, O'Casey deliberately places his soldiers from within the ruin whose perspective on the outside world is shaped by the lacerated walls of a ruined monastery gazing onto not a pastoral, or idealized landscape, but onto shattered forests, and land scarred by trenches. The monastery is a victim of a "fast form or ruination," but the soldiers occupying this ruined space are subject to the slow decay of their surroundings. For Christopher Murray, "it is this 'distortion' of setting—to suggest the point of view of a consciousness enduring a nightmare—which stamps the design as expressionistic" (193). According to Murray, "[t]o say more on this subject would be tedious [but] [i]t is labored so far only to counteract O'Casey's later denial of any knowledge of expressionism. The point is important because in forsaking realism O'Casey was committing himself to the unpopular theatre, the theatre of art. [This] new play was to be an off-key love story blasted apart by war and rendered

nightmarish by betrayals of many kinds" (193). Additionally, I agree with Ronan McDonald, who says, "The broken shell of [the] monastery in Act II not only evokes the persistent religious theme, but also provides a view of the 'country stretching to the horizon where the front trenches are' (ST 41). Nowhere in O'Casey's work is private life and human subjectivity more thoroughly compromise by cold instrumentalism and publicly sanctioned barbarism. The [setting of Act III], then, "is fitting for this conduit between public and private, as traumatized and wounded soldiers are brought onstage" (McDonald, 2002: 120).

The ruin as an antithetical image to the pastoral plays a significant role in developing Harry's state of ruination. For example, Act III is similar to Act II in that its primary setting, "the upper end of a hospital ward," is complimented by its exterior: the tranquil grounds of the hospital's estate. Harry first impulse when he enters into the main room is to move past the fireplace and to face the window onto the grounds. Throughout the third act, Harry frequently "looks out into the ground," typically whenever someone tries to engage in conversation with him. What's interesting is that, if following the stage directions, Harry never breaks his gaze from the window onto the grounds, even when being spoken to directly; thus, transforming the window into a kind of mirror space that reflects a vestigial image of his broken self. This is especially true when Surgeon Maxwell attempts to speak to Harry while Harry is "looking intently out into the grounds" (84). As Harry leaves to rest for his operation in the hopes of regenerating feeling and mobility in his legs, "half-way out he turns his head and stretches to look out into the grounds" before going on (85). Harry's constant fixation on the pastoral grounds can be understood as a way of counteracting the state of ruination he is struggling against as well as a stabilizer to the heterotopia of deviation the hospital signifies. Of course any hope of physical or emotional reclamation from his ruined state is destroyed when his family visits him only to discover he has been abandoned by Jessie, his love interest before the war, and his mother, whose worries seem to be more towards his war pension than concern over his actual health. So much so that Harry remarks to Susie, "If I could mingle my breath with the breeze that blows from every sea, and over every land, they wouldn't widen me into anything more than the shrivell'd thing I am" (95). Harry is reduced in such a way that he mimics the setting of Act II where "every feature [seemed] a little distorted from its original appearance" (42).

The purpose of Act IV, set in the dance hall of the Avondale Football Club, is to take the the downtrodden state of Harry developed in Act III and link it to the new signification of the Silver Tassie trophy. Christopher Murray explains the influence the tune "the Silver Tassie" had on O'Casey, writing, "Around the same time he got started on *The Silver Tassie*. Something sparked when he heard his new friend Billy McElroy, a coal merchant, sing the Burns song, 'Go fetch to me a pint o' wine / And fill it in a silver tassie.' The song is a farewell to a loved one as a young man leaves for war. In O'Casey's imagination the young man was a footballer from East Wall, the silver tassie at first the trophy he wins and then the priest's chalice at Mass, and the Great War. He knew there was a play in it when he had a tune to sing" (190). Slowly over the course of the play, Harry becomes a ruined subject, a process which is demarcated by the changing meaning of the silver tassie. At the beginning of the play, the silver tassie is a trophy symbolizing the hope Harry has for his

future. In Acts II and III, the idea of the silver tassie has a greater connection to a priest administering the sacrament than it does a trophy. By the end of Act 4, however, the silver tassie acquires metonymic qualities in that it becomes more of a representation of hope potential that befell not only Harry but an entire generation who fought in or experienced loss because of the First World War. Harry, looking at the condition of the cup, which has been flattened under his wheelchair, laments that the cup is now "[m]angled and bruised as I am bruised and mangled" before throwing his once cherished cup onto the floor (129).

Both Sherriff and O'Casey rely on the graphic images and experiences of soldiers within the trenches to propel their respective storyline. The spatial relations that emerge from soldiers occupying trench space contribute to the individual soldier's trauma. A study of Sean O'Casey's Harry Heegan and Sherriff's Osborne and Raleigh provides needed insights into not only the embodied exchange between soldiers of the trenches and subsequent cultural disenchantment but also how drama, as a literary form, was and is uniquely positioned to illustrate the "dominating action" of the first half of the 20th century. Their plays confirm the need to study trench space, not only as an embodied space, but as an experiential ruin, meaning the trench is the link between the soldier as individual-in-context and the history of war trauma. It also suggests that trauma theory should conduct more research to present a definitive connection between traumatized people and traumatized landscapes. The poets and authors discussed here have all provided evidence that their traumatic experience could be seen as an extension of the large-scale traumas witnessed against nature. It is also clear that there is still much to say about war's ability to disrupt the spatial histories of the places in which the conflict occurs as well as how the Great War—and wars in general—contribute to both ecological decay and the ruination of individuals affected by conflict. As soldiers and anti-war activist playwrights turn to literary forms to articulate their experiences, scholars from within literary studies will only benefit from continuing to link concepts in spatial theory to address these issues. The intent is not only to suggest how formidable the ugliness of this world can be but to suggest that we can still have the hope of redemption from our ruins; and that these shattered landscapes need not equate to the ruined collective or individual.

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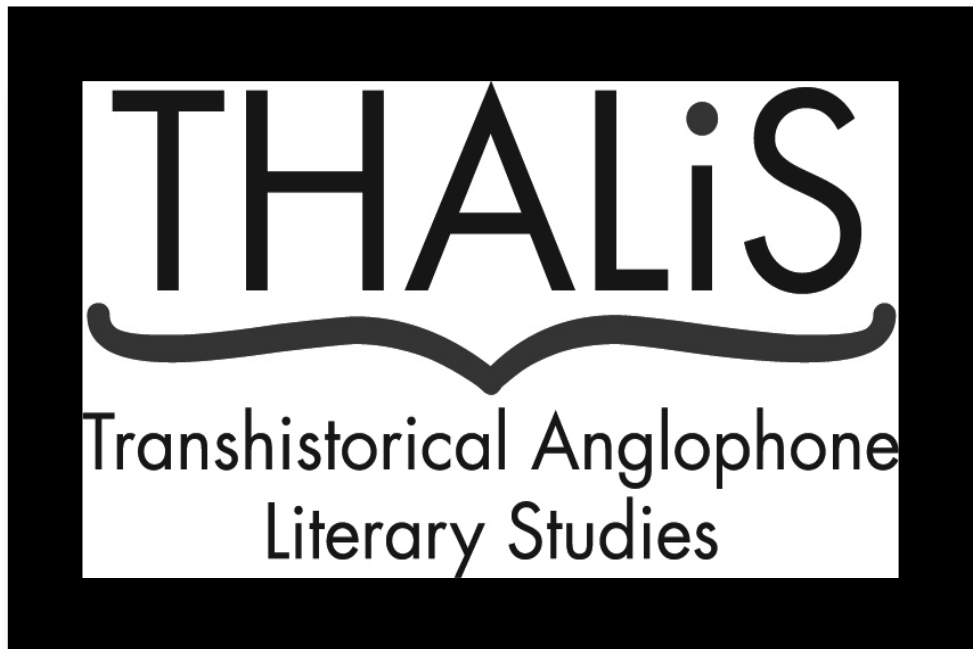
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"Sons of Two Empires": The Idea of Nationhood in Anzac and Turkish Poems of the Gallipoli Campaign

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ABSTRACT

An unexpected failure of the Allied forces and a monumental victory for the Turks, the Gallipoli Campaign (1915) is thought to be the first notable experience for Australians and New Zealanders on their way to identify themselves as nations free from the British Empire. For the war-weary Turks, too, the victory in Gallipoli was the beginning of their transformation from a wreck of an empire to a modern republic. Despite the existence of a substantial body of research on the military, political, and historical aspects of the campaign, studies on the literature of Gallipoli are very few and often deal with canonised poets such as Rupert Brooke or national concerns through a single perspective. Aiming to bring to light underappreciated poets from Gallipoli, this paper is a comparative study of less known poems in English and Turkish from Gallipoli. While doing this, the study traces the signs of the nation-building processes of Australia, New Zealand, and Turkey with emphasis on national identity. To this end, the paper examines a number of Gallipoli poems in English and Turkish that were composed by combatant or non-combatant poets by using close reading analysis in search of shifts in discourse and tone. The study also underlines how poets from the two sides identified themselves and the ways the campaign is reflected in these poems. At length, the study shows that Gallipoli poems display similar attitudes towards the idea of belonging to an empire although they differ in the way warfare is perceived. With emphasis on less known poems and as one of the very few comparative studies of the poetry of the Gallipoli Campaign, this paper will contribute to the current research into the legacy and literature of the First World War.

Keywords: The Gallipoli Campaign, poetry, nationhood, Anzacs, Turks

1. Introduction

On 26 December 1915, General Liman von Sanders, commander of the 5th Imperial Army, sent a telegram to Enver Pasha. In official terms, Enver Pasha was the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army but in practicality he was the omnipotent of all, military or non-military, after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. Typical of von Sanders's stereotypically straightforward German style, the contents of the telegram were clear. The Allied forces were getting ready for evacuation and it seemed to him that the Gallipoli wars had come to an end with a spectacular victory of the Turkish army (Atabay, 2012: 309). The Pasha was overjoyed and announced that he would make a speech at the parliament to honour those who defended the Turkish homeland. Enver Pasha was known to have a boastful character and his address inevitably reflected this:

> These men [the British] will not be able go further into the Strait and defeat our armies in the battlefield even if they bring a land army of half a million men. Having seen this… Kitchener, too, gave in to the idea of evacuation after his visit to Gallipoli. He, too, was well aware that our infantries were much better than his ("Meclis-i Mebusan," 1916: 320).

Enver Pasha's confidence was not vain. By the time he was giving this speech behind the lectern in the parliament on 10 January 1916, it had already been four days since the last battleship left the Gallipoli shores. Indeed, it was a sweeping victory for the Turk and an unexpected humiliating defeat for the Allied forces in the first legs of the war.

The Gallipoli Campaign was the first amphibious operation in modern military history that brought an end to the unvanquished title of the British Navy that unquestionably used to rule the waves since the victory at Trafalgar. The defeat in Gallipoli had other reverberations as well. In England, the government would soon change hands and Churchill's role as the leader of the navy would be pacified; the delay in the Allied helping hand would lead to the October Revolution in Russia; and, encouraged by the triumphant Muslim soldiers, resilience in other Ottoman fronts would grow harder. All these reasons and more often lead scholars, historians, and researchers to focus on the military, political, and historical reasons and results of the campaign.

The number of studies on the socio-cultural or literary edge of the campaign, however, is very few and majority of these works concentrate on the idea that there was a growing sense of 'mate-ship' between Turks and Anzacs during the last months of the campaign. According to this, particularly, after the August offensive in Suvla, the fearful and savage image of the Turk was replaced by a brave, resilient, and honourable enemy.[1] As George Skerret, a stretcher bearer from New Zealand, wrote in his diary, the "unspeakable Turk" was now a man who simply fought in defence of his country and loved ones (cited in Shadbold, 1989: 111-2). Other observations of the Anzac trooper seem to have galvanised this notion as well. Diaries of and newspapers articles about the Anzacs testify that they were aware that Turks had not attacked any Red Cross tents or wounded soldiers on their way to field hospitals, or used poisonous gas throughout the conflict (Tuncoku, 2000: 81; 85-119). Soon, this realisation turned into a sense of comradeship that would further be strengthened by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's address[2]

embracing the Anzacs who fell in Gallipoli as their own sons. In time, both sides came to believe that the other had justifiable reasons to fight in Gallipoli.

Another common idea in studies on socio-cultural aspects of the Gallipoli Campaign is that the campaign was a starting point for the brave bush-man image of the Anzac soldiers. Many studies in the second half of the 20th century, regard Gallipoli as the first notable stage where they proved their worth as the descendants of a mighty empire. However, contrary to these established views, more recent studies imply that the influence of the campaign was not actually quite like it had always been depicted. Undermining the "myth" about the birth of antipodean nations, Thomson argues that the real motives behind the "sacred and unassailable" story of the Anzacs was only a government-designed attempt to cover up the failure of the British Empire and her dominions in the first half of the Great War (1995: 64). He believes that the stories about the bravery of the Anzacs in Gallipoli were carefully crafted "myths" and researchers need "to challenge historical myths that empower some people at the expense of others" (*ibid.* 73).[3] A similar point of view is also advocated by Laffin. Based on the criticism that the theme of honest friendship between the Turks and Anzacs was a result of the realisation that the whole campaign was heading towards a defeat after the failure of the Suvla landings and, at length, the evacuation, Laffin argues that the courageous Anzac image was but a mask shrouding the frustration (1989: 174).[4]

Based on meticulous research in archives and military documents, the ideas posed by Thomson and Laffin share strong arguments although diaries, prose works, and newspaper articles of the time show that the idea that Gallipoli left a noteworthy mark on the nation building process of Anzacs and Turks actually holds true. Indeed, a close look at the works written in late 1915 and early 1916 shows that individual experiences of soldiers with their counterparts had created a mind-set that led to rupture of all three countries from the British and Ottoman empires, respectively. Partly based on constant failure at the battlefield as well as on the incapable and inconsiderate attitude of some, major and minor, British officers, many diary entries from Anzac soldiers, for instance, justify the shift from pro-British frame of mind to ideas that defied the British as untrustworthy leaders and motivated the Anzacs to turn to their kinsmen. It is because of this shift that historians like Jonathan King believe that Anzacs went to Gallipoli as British soldiers and came back as Australians and New Zealanders (2008: 1). As for the Turks, the development of the idea of a national Turkish identity was slightly different although the contributory role of Gallipoli as an effective stimulant towards a national— rather than an imperial—identity is undeniably similar to the shift observed in the Anzacs. Having lost a great portion of her lands after the rise of nationalism ignited by the French Revolution, the Gallipoli victory was a new beginning for the Ottoman Turks who now realised that relying on an ethnically Turkish identity free from imperial ties could save them from the ruins of a six-hundred-year old empire.

As it has been mentioned above, military records, historical accounts, and official documents have so far constituted the basis for analysis of the campaign. However, poetry written by soldiers who fought in Gallipoli also follows a similar pattern of change towards national identity. It is true that studies on the poetry of the Gallipoli Campaign have so far centred around mainstream poets like Rupert Brooke, Geoffrey Dearmer, A.P. Herbert, and Francis Ledwidge or approached the literary legacy of the campaign from a

single perspective—either Anglophone or Turkish—as in Jill Hamilton's *Gallipoli to Gaza*, Ömer Çakır's *Türk Şiirinde Çanakkale Muharebeleri*, and David Childs and Vivien Whelpton's *British and Irish Poets of the Gallipoli Campaign* are among the very few works on the poetry of the campaign. The aim of this study, therefore, is to trace the reasons and early signs of national awakening and consciousness in the less known poems written about the Gallipoli campaign in English and Turkish. In line with assumptions on the close connection between identity and nationhood such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, which suggests that the nation is a collectively interpreted through a process of imagining its identity and the identity of its citizens, and building up on recent commemorative studies on the Gallipoli Campaign, we propose that poems from Gallipoli employ strong evidences that prop up the notion that the campaign was highly effective in changing the way soldiers from Australia, New Zealand, and Turkey identified themselves. To do this, we provide a close reading of several works from minor and/or soldier poets who were in Gallipoli during the campaign and support our findings with evidence from diaries and historical records of the campaign to highlight the shift from the imperial to the national throughout the campaign.

2. The Beginnings

When Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, Australia and New Zealand, then dominions of the British Empire, were also drawn into the fiery circle of this mainly European conflict. However, the Antipodeans looked enthusiastic about joining the war as it can be seen in Andrew Fisher's speech: "Should the worst happen, after everything has been done that honour will permit, Australians will stand beside the mother country to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling" (Curtis, 2014).[5] Fisher was soon proved to be right. In weeks, thousands of men presented themselves at the military offices and marquees set up across Australia and New Zealand in order to fight for what Rupert Brooke called "Mother of men / England" (1970: 10-1). Written en route to Gallipoli, Brooke's lines depicting England as a mother giving birth to valiant men was indeed the summary of the ardour shared by volunteers from Australia and New Zealand. For many, enlisting meant a chance to pay the debts in return for everything the motherland had provided so far. James Drummond Burns was one of those soldiers who heard the call of "the bugles of England […] blowing o'er the sea" (2012:1-2):

> Oh, England! I heard the cry
> Of those who died for thee
> Sounding like an organ voice
> Across the wintry sea.
> They lived and died for England,
> And gladly went their way -
> England, Oh! England,
> How could I stay?
> (*ibid.* 17-24)

Based on Horace's *"dulce et decorum est pro patria mori"* dictum,[6] Burns draws a passionate picture of how honourable fighting for England could be. The tone of the poem

is so vehemently set that it almost sounds like a commissioned poem written for war propaganda. However, Burns, son of a Presbyterian minister, was merely a twenty-year-old scholar when he penned the poem. Soon after he enlisted in mid-1915, Burns was promoted to Corporal due to his devoted service while "For England" had already become known and was used to urge reluctant men to join the army when he ("James Drummond," 2016).

Burns, who fell in Gallipoli in September 1915, was one of the many soldiers who portrayed the spirit of those who felt indebted to England. However, the desire to support the Empire when the need was dire was only one of the motives for these men. Although many of these "lads" had already proven that they were good fighter material, young able men from Australia and New Zealand were still willing to show their families (as well as the world—especially the British) that they were not simply agricultural bush-men from the down under but also worthy sons of the Empire decorated with masculinity (Roper, 2016). Those who queued at enlistment offices were aware that they, as people of the antipodes, were soon to undertake their most important test (Fewster, 1983: 19-20). Major H. M. Alexander, a British officer who took part in the campaign, had observed that soldiers from Australia and New Zealand, though they were initially disappointed for not being sent to the Western front, were more than enthusiastic than anyone else to prove that they were fearless men that the Empire could count on (1917: 145). The British Major-General Hunter-Weston, who would be held responsible for some of the major tactical mistakes that cost thousands of lives in the days to come, also remarked that Anzacs were "…a fine body of men, but undisciplined in peace. I think they will be grand fighters. Grand physique, intelligent looking and, I should judge, with plenty of grit" (cited in Robertson, 1990: 59). In short, volunteering in the army was a matter of honour for the young men in Australia and New Zealand and it would be unacceptable for them to be left behind when England was sending "her bravest forth," (Harrington, 1988: 4):

> The drums beat loud, the banners fly, we're going aboard to-day,
> The transports, and the convoys too, wait ready in the bay.
> …
> We'll show how Austral sons can fight - and die, should need arise
> To guard their sunny Southern land, the fairest 'neath the skies.
> (*ibid.* 1-2; 20-1)

A trooper in the 4th Light Horse, Australian Imperial Forces (AIF), Edward Harrington's lines above is the reflection of the panorama in Australia, a British dominion with a population of fewer than five millions at the time of the war (Robertson, 1990: 16). Volunteers from New Zealand showed no less eagerness and they, too, were keen to prove their courage. *Diggers' Poems*, a small anonymous collection of poetry by returned soldiers, opens with a poem simply entitled "Anzacs." The speaker who watches the "great white ships… / Bringing the spent men back" is not at all discouraged by the scene (1920?: 1; 4). Instead, he feels proud and heartened since he knows that the reward of endurance is something that cannot be disregarded:

> What means these great white ships at sea,
> Ploughing their Eastward track.

…
They mean that New Zealand has been there
They mean that she has played the game,
And her wonderful sons have won their share
Of everlasting fame.

Battered and worn and war scarred-
Those who had left their land
Strong in their glowing manhood,
By England to take their stand.
Those who had sailed when a war-cloud burst
Out on a distant foam,
To the tune of "New Zealand Will Be There,"
Thus they are coming home.
(*ibid.* 1-2; 5-8; 9-16)[7]

As the poem presents, the load of homecoming ships only strengthened the newly enlisted young men who witnessed the appreciation the sick and wounded received on their return. They were ready to experience the battlefield more than ever, having more reasons to fight. It is true that some volunteers had more pragmatic reasons to join in; some enlisted to avoid unemployment, some due to public and/or family pressure, and some to take care of their relatives or friends who had already joined the war while some were there to win the heart of a sweet heart. But on a more idealist note, and in addition to the motive to show their manly virtues and allegiance to the Empire, these soldiers also shared a more philosophical incentive. The number of volunteers who believed that the Germans were violent oppressors and someone needed to give an end to their evil deeds was substantially large. Liberals in mind and romantics at heart, these men saw themselves as freedom fighters who were doing their bit for the future of a peaceful world. "Our Hope," an anonymous poem from *the Kiwi*, a troopship magazine compiled by the soldiers en route to Gallipoli—or Karipori, as it was known to Maori soldiers—employs this attitude fused with the pride people of New Zealand felt:

We come from New Zealand, the land of our birth,
A little Dominion, the greatest on earth,
Our reason for ploughing this trackless sea
Is to help in the struggle to make men free.

We are not anxious for fight, but re-joice in the right,
Our national principle—which we hold tight—
For this, many of our land this day are at rest
And we, too, now journey to join in the test.
(2017: 1-8)

The spirits were high and Anzacs were ready for any hardship battlefield might offer. However, the test mentioned in "Our Hope" soon proved to be a difficult one. The naval attack on 18 March was a disaster and a land-based operation was imminent. Very few things went according to the plans after this point and the short-cut to end the deadlock on the Western front - as this was how the campaign was defined by the Allied decision

makers - did nothing but produced yet another stalemate of trench warfare. A considerable body of research has been devoted to the reasons behind the failure of the amphibious operation that began on 25 April and it would require a lengthy survey to go through these causes. At this point, it should suffice to say that the long list of reasons that brought about this catastrophe, military and non-military alike, were initially rooted in the haphazardly prepared battle plans. The maps were outdated; there was constant breakdown in the chain of command and communication lines; drinking water was scarce and this led to the spread of diseases like dysentery and typhoid fever; soldiers had not been propped up accurately for the windy, hot summer of Gallipoli; food was blunt; and the Turk, who had clearly been underestimated, was literally invisible in the labyrinthine territory of the peninsula. But as far as the morale of the Anzac soldier was concerned, the real fly in the ointment was the disaccord between the British officers and Anzac soldiers.

3. From Sons of the Empire to "Australians" and "New Zealanders"

The early signs of friction between the Anzacs and the British officers had surfaced in Egypt, where the antipodeans were given the acronym "ANZAC" replacing the impractical Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Hamilton, 2003: 43).[8] Egypt was the home of the military camp where the Anzacs were initially transferred to be trained by the class-centred British officers. There are accounts from this period indicating that British officers were discontent by the sloppy attitude of especially Australian soldiers (Tuncoku, 2000: 35). From the British perspective, these unruly soldiers who were unable to abide by rigid British military discipline were untrustworthy (Laffin, 1989: 79). In the coming months of the campaign, this lack of faith would lead to further disputes and controversial reports and accounts. No matter how Anzacs were perfectly cut out for fighting both physically and mentally, it was true also that they needed to be instructed and trained. A ditty Anzacs used to sing in Egypt demonstrates that even they themselves were aware of their lack of military discipline:

> We're the Anzac Army,
> The A. eN. Zed. A. Cee,
> We cannot shoot, we don't salute,
> What bloody good are we?
> (1-4; cited in Hamilton, 2003: 43)

However, the state the Anzacs were in with regards to military skills cannot be compared to the mistakes made by the British high command and officers: orders were confusing, objectives and instructions were often complicated, and there was lack of communication between units. Decision makers in London were also aware that the whole campaign was planned in an unmethodical way. The reverberations of the shortcomings of the military schemes undeniably emerged during and after the landings in April. Food was monotonous, water was scarce and with the coming of a hot summer, flies had become "a bigger foe than the Turks" (McMullin, 2002: 135). On top of these, imprecise orders issued by commanders who did not take initiatives unsettled

communication protocols while minor officers ignored major sanitary issues and inadequate supplies. Also, there was lack of valuable intelligence including location of Turkish artillery positions (Prior, 2010: 120-31). Although a considerable number of soldiers were deployed in days after the initial landings, they did not know what to do. Reverend O. Creighton, chaplain to the 86th Brigade of the 29th Division, relates how the soldiers felt in his diary:

> *Wednesday, April 28:* … What are the Australians doing? How is the Navy getting on further up the Dardanelles? We know nothing.

> *Thursday, April 29:* This is a perfectly interminable wait. Day after day passes and we get no news and no orders… It seems quite inexplicable why they send us no orders. (2013: 53-4)[9]

This was the British point of view; the criticism Anzacs would soon raise would be much more bitter. As the campaign progressed and the soldiers remained pinned down to the narrow beaches of the Strait, Anzacs began to grumble about almost anything from indecisive commanders to the blunt diet they had nothing but to accept. These issues surfaced particularly after 24 May 1915. This was the day of the 24-hour armistice[10] to collect the rotting bodies on no-man's-land when the Anzacs encountered the "unspeakable Turk" for the first time only to realise that he was not as evil, cruel, or inhuman like he had been depicted in the British propaganda. During the supervised truce there were times when both sides exchanged food and cigarette with notes attached and, as an Anzac soldier wrote, "Two enemy friends left after having shaken each other's hands" (qtd. in Kerr, 1998: 90). The memoirs By Lieutenant Colonel Percival Fenwick, Deputy Director, NZ Medical Corps gives a very vivid account of this significant encounter and its psychological responses to the enemy and the conditions:

> May 24, Anzac Cove—The most ghastly day. We were met by some Turkish officers who arrived on horseback followed by 50 very fine looking Turks, carrying Red Crescent and white flags. One of the officers was a German doctor. We exchanged cigarettes with the other officers frequently and the senior Turkish medico gave me two pieces of scented wool to put in my nostrils. Further along the plateau, the distance between the trenches narrowed. We kept very carefully in the center. The narrowest place was not 17 feet apart. Our men and the Turks peered over the sandbags and all seemed pleased at the chance of seeing each other without the fear of immediate death as the price of curiosity (Fenwick, 2000: 89).[11]

Feeling as if they were "dumped" to the razor-sharp coasts of Gallipoli (East, 1981: 94), Anzacs were now more critical than ever and their complaints were becoming more straightforward and pungent and they believed that "the Indians, New Zealanders, and Australians are still doing magnificent work but loosing too many good men whilst the Tommies are holding back" (*ibid.* 78).[12]

Harley Matthews's "True Patriot" (1940b: 18-30) reflects the early beginnings of such condemnatory point of view of the Anzacs. The whole poem is a narrative of a group of Australian soldiers pushing onwards towards the hills to reach a Turkish village during the initial landings. Simply named after his hometown in Australia, Taree, a private in

AIF, engages in a heated dispute with a pro-British corporal when the company receives orders to fall back and return to the main camp with no logical reason. On the way back, Taree questions the previously given orders:

> "Anyway, what good will it
> Do us? There'd only be
> Women and children there."
> The corporal turns on him - "And who are you
> To judge the High Command?
> Where that fire burns the map shows there are stores
> Of ammunition. So we now can push
> Forward as it was planned-"
> "God! Ammunition? They've enough for me
> Just out in front. This High Command of yours
> I'll bet we never take the ridge ahead.
> It only knows what's on maps."
> "You only know what you see here. The High
> Command knows everything
> That happens everywhere." "My mate is dead,
> Out there in the barbed wire.
> Does it know that?"
> (*ibid.* 66-82)

Taree is the mouthpiece of the rest of the company while the corporal, who the poem reveals to be a bank clerk before the war, is depicted as an incompetent opposite of the uneducated yet sensible and reasonable bushman. When the soldiers are lost in the ridges, it is again Taree who finds the way back to the encampment while the corporal stubbornly follows the maps provided by the British commanders which soon prove to be faulty. Indeed, much of the intel the Allied High Command relied on was so outdated that this shortcoming was even noticed by von Sanders who noted that the "… only defect being that they were based on reconnaissance that were too old and that they underestimated the powers of resistance of the Turkish soldier" (2000: 64). Indeed, the reconnaissance was so bad that the Allied attacks and schemes laid out by British commanders began to seem like it was doing more good to the Turks:

> Water - It was behind our talk of guns.
> Guns - Why we heard guns drumming in the south?
> Slaughter by battleships —
> Mines blowing up advancing bataillions —
> Of generals' new schemes to have more killed.
> …
> "Who says the navy is no help? The fool."
> "I do. And our artillery is as bad.
> They've killed more of our own than Turks…"
> (Matthews, 1940c: 74-78; 104-106)

As it is related in Matthews's poem above, the recklessness of the British officers resulted in not just great losses but also lack of trust. By the end of the summer of 1915,

Anzacs were devastated by "the experience of great loss and the feeling of betrayal" (Edmund, 2015: 38). At the end of the campaign, the Anzacs had lost almost 35.000 men and sorrow, misery, and a deeply downhearted mood summarize the state Anzac soldiers were in during the evacuation (Karatay, 1987: 41).[13] The excitement to defend the Empire was now replaced by a sense of reserved, defensive individuality. It is known that the Great War brought about a great change on all levels, and redefined ideas of Englishness (Barlow, 2000: 8); Gallipoli was no exception to this assumption. The discourse that employs the idea that Turks were great fighters and an honest enemy along with the notion that the dislike Anzacs developed for the British was a result of the defeat of the Allied forces falls short when one considers how the campaign unfolded. As can be seen, the Anzac soldier had enough reasons to come up with these convictions which would play a significant role in the perception of an empire-free national identity.

With this new frame of mind, therefore, the tone of the poems gradually changed. For one thing, many Anzacs did not consider themselves unsuccessful; the commonly accepted notion was that they had done their best in the given conditions. D. H. Souter's lines display how they felt about the overall Gallipoli experience: "We are content: we had our day, / Brief but splendid, crowned with power / And brimmed with action every hour" (1929: 1-3). Published on the same page with Souter's untitled poem, J.C. Hackney's "Australia Hears" is a more intense representation of the same disposition:

> What, gone? The Australians gone? From Anzac gone?
> That lurid crater where for eight long months,
> They lived with death, dined with disease,
> Till one in every two fell ill,
> And one in every four was shot.
> And one in every eight lay dead.
> …
> The impossible to do, the impossible she did,
> And thrice had won had others done the same.
> And when the last, the greatest, task arose,
> That she must go
> At such a risk
> That five-and-twenty thousand beds were ready for the fall,
> She went:
> Nor lost one man, nor left one man behind:
> Triumphant thus
> Australia! Proud, but sad.
> (1929: 1-6; 15-24)

Sad but proud, Anzacs were now beginning to employ a more nationalist discourse in many poems like Hackney's. The Gallipoli Campaign was so devastating for the Australians that "[h]ardly a family was unaffected by the immense casualty toll and its enduring ramifications" (McMullin, 2002: 532). The focus in soldiers' poems were now on their own kinsmen from their own hometowns and the sons the Empire were now Australians themselves while the heroic deeds Anzacs showed were their own and not for the freedom of European nations.

Leon Gellert's "The Change" also provides a glimpse of this shift of interest. Reminiscing on his days in Gallipoli, he visualizes the dreadful conditions of the battlefield. Then he turns to the present when he hears "…men tell strange trembling tales / With big beseeching eyes" (Gellert, 1917b: 15-6). But he refrains from remembering these stories and regrets having answered the call; instead, all he can picture is his brothers-in-arms: "I do not feel the bush-call, now / I feel my brother's pain" (*ibid.* 19-20). The change Gellert projects is also reflected in his means and devices as a poet. As the title indicates in his sonnet "The Australian Muse," what Gellert the poet needs now is a native muse that can "…touch the tender strings" and "[a]dd fame to fame, and rhyme to gloried rhyme" (Gellert, 1917c: 1; 11).

While the glory Gellert relates was indeed a source of pride for the Australians, some poets underlined the idea that the deeds these soldiers undertook was in fact a collective effort. Projecting the typical down-to-earth bush-man characteristics of Australian soldiers, Harry McCann of the 4th ALH[14] argues that the image of the Australian hero found in the papers is nothing like what these "cobbers"[15] are in real life. These comrades-in-arms are no Caesars, Napoleons, or Cromwells, nor can they "…be classed "gallant guardians" of European nations (McCann, 1916: 25). From the second half of the campaign onwards, these soldiers were depicted as simple Australian laymen who were fighting for their honour but their actions should not be explained by Empire's glory or in exaggerated ways. McCann's lines eventually summarise this shift from soldiers fighting *pro patria* to plain Australian cobbers when he says: "I gaze on Bill, me cobber, sure I smile a little smile, / For his happy, careless nature doesn't fit the poet's style" (*ibid.* 20-1).

At length, the pro-Australian discourse reached its peak with the renowned Australian bard Banjo Patterson. His "We're All Australians Now" is an apt expression of Australian nationhood that played an important role in Australia's—not only political but also cultural and intellectual—rupture from a purely British identity:

> Our six-starred flag that used to fly,
> Half shyly to the breeze
> …
> Flies out to meet the morning blue
> With Vict'ry at the prow;
> …
> And with Australia's flag shall fly
> A spray of wattle bough,
> To symbolise our unity,
> We're all Australians now.
> (1917: 1-2; 5-6; 9-12 *sic.*)

A similar attitude also developed among New Zealanders. Just like the Australians, they pushed gallantly during the landings but they were also disappointed especially after the landings. "The cream of New Zealand's flock" felt that they were not "a chip off the old British block" anymore ("The Landing," 1920?: 30; 32). And again, as in the case of the Australians, the reproachful perspective was further galvanized towards the

evacuation and led soldier-poets to concentrate on themselves rather than the defenders of the Empire:

> Your New Zealand Sons are sleeping, far over in a lonely land;
> They did their best, along with the rest, and that's how died and fell.
> They showed the world New Zealand's lads knew well the way to die;
> And they sleep there, and they sleep there, quiet where they lie.
> …
> The wild flowers bloom around their graves;
> The sad sea breeze that blows
> Sings, "Never a coward came from the land
> Where the wild clematis grows."
> ("Gone-But Not Forgotten," 1920?: 1-4; 9-12)

Coming from the other end of the world, New Zealanders also lost thousands of men but this bitter experience—especially when it was culminated with the distrust of the British generated throughout the campaign—sparkled the notion that they had major differences from their ancestors in Britain. Many more poems like "Gone-But Not Forgotten" show how the sons of the Empire turned local colours and rendered the "Britain as motherland" discourse weakened, or even invalid. One final example disclosing this idea could be given from "In Appreciation." Addressed to a New Zealander soldier who the poet regards to be a stranger, the poem opens with an acknowledgement of the bravery of New Zealanders in Gallipoli:

> Dear stranger, I've read your grand verses,
> With brave and true heart shining forth;
> And whatever the trials or reverses,
> How grandly you noble men fought.
> ("In Appreciation," 1920?: 1-4)

In the following stanzas, the poem depicts the battlefield and reassures the idea that these soldiers deserve to be credited the honour they were bestowed. The poet speaks so highly of his own people that he struggles to find the words to honour their memory: "Can I find any words to express / Our pride in New Zealand's brave sons?" (*ibid.* 11-2). Towards the end of the poem, the poet explains the function of the word "stranger" in the first stanza:

> I called you a stranger, but surely
> I'm entitled to call you a friend,
> For did you not go forth so truly
> And offer your life to defend?
> (*ibid.* 13-6)

It is now clear that the poet did not really know who he was addressing at the beginning. It was clear to him that the stranger was a soldier yet an anonymous one. But now he has become a friend, a native friend, and a New Zealander defending his own country—and not Britain—against the German threat.

4. From Ottoman Subject to a New Turkish Identity

The Turkish reception of the campaign was more complicated. The main problem, of course, was the fact that the Ottoman Empire was already crumbling by the time the Great War started and the general idea was that the Empire needed to take sides with one of the "Great Powers" to survive.[16] This tendency was not in vain; corruption in authorities, a bankrupt economy, and ever continuing struggle to keep the Empire intact against the independence seeking dominions were only the starters in the long menu depicting the downfall of the Ottomans. The humiliating defeat in the Balkan Wars was the last straw for the war weary Ottoman army. On top of all these alarming issues, the First World War started before the Empire could pull herself back together.

In these atrocious times, people looked up to several theories and ideologies. Some believed that a new emphasis on the Ottoman identity could change the minds of the minorities who were openly expressing their wish to free themselves from the Empire. Others found hope in Islam and hoped that the Empire could go back to her glorious days if she placed her trust in Muslim communities. There were also those who believed that Ottoman policies should focus on ethnic Turkish communities. Enver Pasha himself was one those figures who were dreaming about a pan-Turkic union with the ethnically Turkic nations around the Caspian Sea.[17] However, these ideals remained to be only instrumental compared to the impact the Gallipoli Campaign, or *Çanakkale Wars*[18] as it is referred to Turkish, which played a significant role in the birth of the notion of national identity that sparkled the Turkish Independence War and stimulated the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic in the years that followed.

For Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca, the celebrated Turkish poet of the early years of the newly established republic, the Gallipoli experience was the "preface" of a new country (2009: 13-4). The significance of Gallipoli for the Turks could be explained in a number of reasons. First and foremost, the result of the conflict was an irrefutable victory. Raising the morale of the nation, it was a memorable accomplishment that the Ottoman communities had been longing for ages (Karakoyunlu, 1987: v). It was also the remedy for the shame brought on the Ottoman Empire by the blows she received at her doorstep by Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece. Indeed, seeing Gallipoli victory as the antidote of the Balkan Wars was the summary of the initial reception of the campaign when it was over in early 1916. At the time, many believed that "…the victory in Çanakkale has now wiped off the blemish the Balkan Wars had placed on [Ottoman] people's forehead" ("Temizlenen Leke," 1915: 4).

The perception of the enemy in Turkish poems highlights the Allies as a pitiless industrial machine. The size of the Allied army, and the presence of troops from several nations are underlined at all times. In many instances, the names of each country of the Allies were spelt out individually; British, the French and the Russians were considered as the main perpetrators of this unjust and bloody war. Blaming the West in their inherent character of maximizing their own benefits was the common theme of poems, letters and memoirs. Overall, the Anatolian Turk was fighting against the lowest of all enemies: a horde of "infidels," "pirates," "savages," "monsters," and "cannibals." So much so that it is not surprising that early examples of Gallipoli poetry were dominated by a strong sense

of hatred for the invaders. Many poems depicted the Allied forces, especially the British, as unrighteous oppressors.

In June 1915, official invitations signed by the War Ministry and the Sultan were sent to a number of prominent names in Ottoman literary circles asking them to participate in a trip to Gallipoli. Their mission was to produce works that would help to arouse patriotism both within the troops as well as among the public.[19] They were specifically instructed to avoid praise for any high rank officials and focus, instead, on the soldiers and write as much as possible on the multi-nationality of the Ottoman Empire to keep the harmony and Muslim brotherhood particularly among Arab troops. The group is known in Turkish literary history as "*Heyet-i Edebi*" which can be translated as the Literary Committee and it included writers, journalists as well as two painters and a musician. Invited 30 attended 19, the committee left Istanbul on 11 July 1915 by train at Sirkeci station and returned to the capital on 23 July 1915. Upon their return, what followed was an outburst of patriotic literary production in the manner outlined by the War Ministry.[20]

The majority of these works were poems on the qualities of an ideal Ottoman soldier such as heroism, sacrifice, loyalty, devotion but most importantly faith. Martyrdom was treated with particular focus as the ultimate honour bestowed upon those fallen for their land. The success of the naval defence as the revenge of the Balkan defeat was highlighted at all times and the readers were assured that the loyal soldiers of the Ottoman army were fully aware that they were fighting for "*Darü'l-hilâfe ve saltanat kapılarını muhafaza*:" "for the defence of the gates of the Caliphate and the Sultanate."

İbrahim Aladdin [Gövsa,][21] the youngest of the poets in the government-funded delegation of literary figures sent to the front, portrays the enemy as intruders that should be pushed down the cliffs in Gallipoli:[22]

> There's a pain fortune has left in hearts,
> To their fate we left mothers, daughters in our land
> To see the destiny of the star of the Turk
> We'll soon be telling fortunes in the sand.
>
> Then we'll twist their bodies
> Of those English cry-babies
> We'll scare them off, those infidel flies
> And make honey at Cape of Bees.[23]
> (2009: 12-20)[24]

Relating the words of a Turkish soldier, the poem reflects the confidence of the Turkish soldier in victory. However, Gövsa also implies the doubts these soldiers might have at the time as the campaign was still going on. Having left his family behind and the memory of the Balkan Wars still afresh, the soldier is still placing his hope in destiny which can be observed in the use of the words "fortune," "fate," and "destiny" all in the same stanza. Yet, he is not in an escapist mood; he is still keen to fight and draw the enemy off his homeland.

A pioneer in the pan-Turkic ideas, Ziya Gökalp's poems are more straightforward than Gövsa's works. Simply entitled "Çanakkale," Gökalp's renowned poem opens with an accusative tone despising the English, the Russian, and the French as "both civil and

monstrous" (2007: 3). The poem draws a picture in which God asks the Turk to free the lands and seas from the Russian and the English (*ibid.* 17-20). For Gökalp, the story of how the Turks became the victorious in this struggle of empires starts in Gallipoli. He believes that the English fled and the Russians gave up hope as an outcome of the naval victory in March (*ibid.* 36-40). But the important result of the victory that the poem underlines is reflected in the possibility of Turkish nationhood and the idea of freedom instead of a prosperous Ottoman state:

> Turan is a dream no more,
> It has come true today.
> Turk will know one lore,
> A merry-making for the day.
>
> Çanakkale, you have shown
> Victory to four states so malignant;
> A hundred nations, slaves to the Tsar
> You have made them independent.[25]
> (*ibid.* 44-52).

The idea that Çanakkale was *the* representation of independence was a common theme. It was thought that the resistance the Turk displayed in Gallipoli was the beginning of a new era for the Ottoman Turks who had undeservedly been suffering for years. Influenced by the pan-Turkic concept of bringing all ethnic Turks together, the independence Gökalp's focuses on takes place on a wider context in the poem. There were many other poems, however, that focused on the white Turks in Asia Minor, or Anatolia as it is often referred to in Turkish. Written by Sergeant Ali [Çağlar] of İvrindi, one of the few Turkish soldier poets with undereducated commoners' background, "Çanakkale Destanı" is one of those examples implying the impossibility of success of the Allied forces:

> Three fig trees in Gallipoli plained,
> The bayonet is deep inside, my heart aches.
> Don't think that the Turk can be chained,
> Blood spilled, blood raged in Çanakkale.[26]
> (2013: 21-4).

As in the case of Ali of İvrindi's "Çanakkale Destanı," the image of the sturdy Turk defending his homeland is particularly special to soldier poets who took part in the campaign. In this respect, Ali of İvrindi's work is one of the few Gallipoli poems reflecting how simple Turkish soldiers saw the campaign. Another poem with the same title by Private Mustafa [Ömeroğlu] of Boyabat asks a similar rhetorical question after a lengthy depiction of the Turks in action: "Will the Turks ever give Çanakkale? / Is there a soul in the world / who would ever take our Istanbul?" (2007: 61-3).[27] Just as Ali of İvrindi, Mustafa of Boyabat, a private from the hinterlands of Anatolia, also presents the determination of Turks, rather than Ottomans, as well as the trust in his ethnic background. The high hopes and highlighted ethnicity reflected in solider poems had solid grounds; the Allied forces were unable to advance and each passing day meant

depression and desperation for the Anzacs and British. Spirits were high among the Turks and poetry of the time implies that this was achieved by a sense of determination of the Turkish soldier, not with the help of other religion or ethnic specific communities or minorities nor by Turkic kinsmen of the Caspian. In the coming years, it would be clearer to the Turk that putting faith in Ottomanism, Islamism, or pan-Turkic ideals would not be of much help during the Turkish Independence War. In this respect, it is safe to assume that soldier poems such as these were among the first examples of the beginning of this perception based on Turkish unity and nationalism.

Although he had never seen service in Gallipoli, Ahmet Nedim [Servet Tör]'s "Namaz" ("*Salat*") can also be regarded as one of the early examples showing this apprehension. At the time, Tör was among the Istanbul intelligentsia publishing in order to keep public morale high (Şahin, 2013: 204). Having heard about the deeds of Turkish soldiers, he composed "Namaz," a story of a man who encounters a soldier performing salat amid the whizzing bullets. The speaker in the poem waits for the soldier to finish his prayer to talk to him. But when the soldier completes his prayer, he says that he is in a hurry to take over sentry duty from his comrades and kindly turns down the speaker's wish as well as the tobacco he is offered and dashes away into the battlefield:

> What was his name? Where was he from? I couldn't ask,
> He was a Turk alright, his language told me,
> What does it matter if he was Mehmet or Ahmet,
> All gallant soldiers there were already as pluck as he.
>
> All god-fearing, all kind, all nimble, all brave,
> Spite for the enemy is what they all crave.
>
> Hail to you, oh, sons from Bursa, Ankara, Konya
> Who find honour in death for homeland and heed
> That a drop of scarlet blood you shed
> Makes the soul of a whole nation bleed.
>
> And now, whenever I see a crowd of soldiers
> I think of that soldier in repose at his prayers.
> ([Servet Tör], 2009: 94-105)[28]

Nedim's poem is notable as an indicator of how the idea of imperial brotherhood was beginning to be supplanted by a notion of nationhood. Instead of relying on Muslim subjects of the Empire, Nedim believes that the hope is only to be found in the ethnic Turks of Ankara, Bursa, Konya, in short, Asia Minor.

The poem above is indeed a sign that shows how the Turkish Independence War was initiated and won the modern Turkey her independence free from the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Sévres, 1920. The man behind the Turkish resistance was Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk], who later became the founder and the first president of the Republic of Turkey. When Asia Minor was under siege on all fronts and the Turks were forced to retreat to the hinterlands of the Anatolian peninsula on all sides in 1919, Atatürk had often underlined in his speeches the trust he had in the ethnic Turks of Anatolia and the spirit of these men shared in Gallipoli. At the time, Atatürk was a Brigadier and inspector to

the 9th Imperial Army and he strongly believed that liberty was in the heart and soul of the Anatolian Turks and began campaigning for a government ruled by the people in Asia Minor.

Just as the story of Turkish nationhood is rooted in the hardiness exhibited in Gallipoli, Atatürk's fame as a tactical genius and a leader who could boldly use initiatives also became known in the battlefields of Gallipoli. Atatürk was a Colonel when he was appointed to command the reserve forces of the 5th Imperial Army, 57th Division in Gallipoli. On his first day in the battlefields he came across a group of Turkish soldiers fleeing from the enemy on his way to a position close to Quinn's Post. Upon learning that they were running away because they had used up all the ammunition they were allotted, he famously said "You may not have ammunition but you do have bayonets" and ordered the soldiers to fix bayonets and get down on the ground. This move led the rushing Anzac soldiers also to lie flat assuming that an artillery attack was imminent. Atatürk believes that this was the moment when the battle was won (Eşref, 2009: 22-3). On a similar note, it was also Colonel Mustafa Kemal who gave the following famous order prior to an attack on the Allied positions in the following days of the campaign: "I am not ordering you to charge; I am ordering you to die. During this time, other troops may come and replace us" (Atay, 1961: 87-8). British official history mentions Ataturk at the Gallipoli, as the "Man of Destiny" and his role and inspiration as imperishable (Aspinall-Oglander, 1929-1932: 468). In many of the texts, Mustafa Kemal is mentioned as playing an integral role in several of the battles as in "Anafartalar" in August.[29] It was also Mustafa Kemal who led the troops to victory a couple of times and prevented the invading forces from gaining ground in several key battles in Gallipoli.[30] In some of the historical accounts, he is presented as a "fanatical commander conducting his troops with passion" (Steel and Hart, 1994: 402). Michael Hickey summarizes the role of Ataturk as "a hitherto obscure Turkish lieutenant-colonel had just won one of the decisive battles of modern history, although he did not know it at the time" (1995: 119). In a way, it was a misfortune for the Allied troops to face Atatürk's tactical supremacy combined with an army "…defending their homeland against the infidel invader… [which] gave them an edge in their determination (Steel and Hart, 1994: 72).

The Turkish had fight for another four years for their independence after the Great War. By the time the ever-continuing wars were over and the republican rule was established, it was inevitable for poets to associate Mustafa Kemal Atatürk the commander and the politician who fervently defended the idea of Turkish nationhood. The first poem ever written that mentions Atatürk as the ultimate representation of Turkish freedom is Mehmet Emin Yurdakul's "Ordunun Destanı." Yurdakul was one of the members of the literary delegation mentioned earlier. Having met Mustafa Kemal in Gallipoli as a delegate in the battlefields, he shows his appreciation of the Colonel as the saviour of the Turkish land and representation of Turkishness in the poem (Yurdakul, 2007: 1-3). The poem is a powerful expression of how this "land of great deeds" was bestowed to the Turks and Turks alone (*ibid.* 17). Having paid the liberty with the blood of countless martyrs, Yurdakul emphasises that these lands have come back to life as "Turkish lands" promised by the idea of *Turan*, the utopian union of Turkic people (*ibid.* 16; 20). Yurdakul initially hopes that Turan would be an ideal way-out for the Turks in

Asia Minor, yet he proposes at the end that Gallipoli is the place of birth of a free Turkish nation:

> Yet this place is the proof of reputation,
> Heroism, honour of a self-sacrificing nation;
> And the place where every sound you hear
> Is a song of liberty singing of us into the future.
> (*ibid.* 29-32)

Yurdakul's poem is one of the early examples of Turkish poetry promoting Turkish nationalism with the emphasis he puts on "a self-sacrificing nation," "us," and "liberty" altogether. The tone in Yurdakul's poem was shared by a considerable number of poems especially after 1923 when Turkey officially chose to be a liberal, secular republic. In order to contribute to the promotion of the new Turkish identity, poets drew much from the Gallipoli campaign in the early years of the Republic as they regarded it as the starting point of the story of modern Turkey. Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel, one of the prominent poets of the Turkish renaissance, was one of those intellectuals who believed that the Turkish nation would not exist if it had not been for the victory in Gallipoli:

> Be proud Çanakkale, be proud till the end of time,
> Never an enemy had a day in your clime;
> You are where a great nation started to fight
> A hundred other nations besieging for a smite.
>
> Be proud Çanakkale, for you are the place
> Where for the first time Mustafa Kemal
> Stood with a hundred nations face to face.
> (Çamlıbel, 2007: 1-4; 19-20)[31]

In many works like Çamlıbel's, Mustafa Kemal's encounter with the Allied forces was a symbolic confrontation. Culminated with the bravery of Turkish troops, his presence in Gallipoli as the founder of the republic is a strong motive in Turkish literature that sparkled and paved the way for many more nationalistic pieces.

Conclusion

Gallipoli evokes distinctly diverse responses. For Churchill, it was the place of "terrible 'if's" (James, 2016: 353). For the Anzacs, Gallipoli translates as a sorrowful memory of the bravery of Australians and New Zealanders, a memory still commemorated on 25 April—the first day of the landings—every year. For the Turks, Gallipoli connotes a glorious victory signifying the headstrong character of the Turkish people. Just as this remote, narrow piece of land had left an ineffaceable mark in collective memory of the Antipodeans, the success of the Turkish soldier is celebrated on 18 March—the day of the naval victory—as the Victory Day in Turkey today. While these commemorations along with countless books, articles, novels, plays, films, documentaries are enough to qualify Gallipoli as a substantially significant phenomenon in the nation making process

of Australia, New Zealand and Turkey, the poetry dedicated to the campaign is also quite telling in terms of the impact Gallipoli experience had on the process that built the national identity of these people. Either for Gellert, Harrington, Patterson or for Gövsa, Çamlıbel, Yurdakul and countless many others, Gallipoli represented the dawn of an awareness towards nationhood.

Soon after the campaign ended, the impact could already be seen starting from the first commemorations of the Gallipoli Campaign. In Australia, the national media covered nothing but the selfless efforts of Australian boys in Gallipoli on 25 April 1916, the first anniversary of the landings while the war was still fought in Europe. These commemorations soon won Gallipoli a never-ending popularity in the common memory of Australia (Robertson, 1990: 245-7). Forged with the efforts of C.E.W. Bean, the official historian for the AIF who was with the Anzacs from the beginning until the end of the campaign,[32] the Australians were able to shake off the imperial influence for "a national sense of sturdy self-sufficiency" (Fewster, 1983: 20). Following the reputation of Gallipoli-related works and news reports as well as issues entirely dedicated to the heroism and determination of the Turkish soldiers in Gallipoli such as *Yeni Mecmua Nüsha-i Fevkaladesi,* the Gallipoli story also played an indispensable role in the nation making process of modern Turkey (Köroğlu, 2010: 225; 229-32).[33] In Erickson's words "Çanakkale is the same to Turks as Gettysburg, the Somme, Verdun, or Leningrad to Americans, British, French, and Russians, respectively" (2001: 76).

The Great War was much more than the central military and political event of its time. It was also the great imaginative event. It altered the ways in which men and women thought not only about war but about the world, and about national identity and its expressions. In this regard, literature could become an imaginary mirror in which the nation reflects itself and where people experience themselves as members of such a union. If nationalism is a narrative, which attempts to include the present as it constructs a legitimate past and as it projects a future for which the present is constructed, then, literature functions as a means for "orchestrating that ideological consensus" in the creation of collective identities, an assumption that holds true especially about the Gallipoli experience. Texts played a prominent role in the making of national subjects and literature functioned as a machinery that served to consolidate the Turkish and ANZAC nation-states. On the centenary of the event, it becomes evident that this shared Gallipoli memory created a specific the legacy of the past with a strong tone of reconciliation and international diplomacy. The encounter is no longer a deadly conflict between two but a long-lasting alliance and mate-ship involving later and future generations. The former enemy/new friend here is generally depicted as the Australians or New Zealanders rather than any other nationality, and a focus on the human aspects of the Campaign almost always underlines peace and brotherhood. This narrative is persistent in almost all current literary and artistic works on Gallipoli. In his Introduction to *The Faber Book of War Poetry,* Baker sets off by stating that poetry shapes a nation's identity. He gives a list of examples such as the Greek states and Imperial Rome who had their poems and poets singing highly of their successes, France with her *Song of Roland,* Portugal with her song *Lusiads*, and England with Shakespeare's Henry V as the prime national hero strengthening English patriotism (Baker, 1996: xxiv-xxv). However, the question whether poetry can really be instrumental in configuring a nation would be a

spurious one, also implied in Baker's list. What poetry can do, however, is to impel masses, future generations, artistic and social tendencies to ensure the continuation of certain values, ideas, and concepts. This is what Gallipoli has achieved for Australians, New Zealanders, and Turks. As it has been exemplified with numerous poems in our study, the Gallipoli Campaign has played a major role in the mindset that conceived the idea of nationhood in these countries although the campaign itself has so far been regarded as a secondary front during the course of the First World War.

Notes

1. See Tunçoku (2000: 137-176) for a questionnaire given to 27 Gallipoli veterans from Australia and New Zealand justifying the positive attitude of the Anzacs towards the Turks.

2. "Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore, rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours. You, the mothers, who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well" (İğdemir, 1978: 39-40).

3. See Macleod (2004) 1-14 for more on similar arguments.

4. As seen in Liman von Sanders's telegram in late December 1915, Turks knew about the evacuation from the newspapers published in Egypt. For Laffin, this is one of the signs that shows that the secrecy of the evacuation was actually compromised from the beginning (1989: 175).

5. This extract from Andrew Fisher's address was a part of an election speech given on 31 July 1914, in Victoria. Fisher was the opposition leader for Australian Labour Party (ALP) at the time and he would become the Prime Minister in a month.

6. "It is sweet and proper to die for one's homeland."

7. Several versions of this poem have also been attributed to the Australians in other anonymous local collections.

8. It is still unclear whether the acronym was invented by General Birdwood or Sergeant Keith Little, a signaller from New Zealand who felt the need to shorten the name for ease of telegram communications (Hamilton, 2003: 43).

9. See the diary of Kenneth Best (a British chaplain at Gallipoli) for a similar account which underlines that there were "no clear orders" from the high command (dated 5 June 1915) (2011: 141).

10. After the May 19 attack, hundreds of corpses were lying in the no-man's-land under the sun and beginning to decompose out of the reach of either side. Commander of the Anzac forces, General Birdwood, asked for a supervised truce to bury the dead and General Liman von Sanders agreed. The truce took place on May 24, when soldiers from both sides buried the bodies in large mass graves under the supervision of Colonel Aubrey Herbert from the Allied side and Colonel Ohrili Kemal Bey from the Turkish side.

11. Fenwick was among the first New Zealanders to land on Gallipoli on April 25th 1915. He kept a diary which vividly records the terrible conditions the men endured and his growing disillusionment at what he considered to be the direct consequences of the decisions of the commanders.

12. From the diary of Sergeant Lawrence, 2nd Field Company Engineers, AIF.

13. The figures of diseased and lost soldiers are as follows: 26.094 Australians; 7571 New Zealanders: total number of Anzacs lost is reported to be 33.665 (Karatay, 1987: 41).

14. Australian Light Horse Brigade.

15. Australian English: a trustworthy friend or comrade.

16. In the immediate pre-war period, the Minister of the Navy Cemal Pasha made an offer to France for a possible alliance, but was rejected due to French concerns over their agreement with Russia. Shortly after, Talat Pasha proposed an alliance to Russia, yet, was rebuffed. Finally, the Committee of Union of Progress (CUP) leaders, the Turkish government at the time, decided to approach Germany, and, the Minister of War, Enver Pasha met Hans von Wangenheim, the German ambassador in Istanbul, on 22 July 1914. Throughout July, secret negotiations were held between German and Ottoman officials, and, an alliance was finally signed in August 1914.

17. It was almost unanimous among the Ottoman cadre that Germany's victory was a sure thing; Muslims could not miss this opportunity to become free of European economic and political intrusion; the Islamic world was ready to act with the orders of its Caliph to revolt; it was the last chance to capture the lost territories from the Balkans. For the Young Turks, First World War was a "war of independence." It was from this elitist perspective that popular sentiments of Ottoman subjects were mobilized and people were called to arms. The newly emerging Turkish nationalist movement under the Committee of Union of Progress government immediately embraced Pan-Ottomanism and immersed in the aggressive propaganda of Pan-Islamism by November 1914. This gained momentum with the proclamation of Jihad on 11 November 1914.

18. *Çanakkale* is the name of the largest settlement around the Dardanelles as well as the province including the Gallipoli peninsula today. As there were very few settlements, the area where the campaign was carried out was also referred to as "the *Çanakkale* district" in 1915.

19. After receiving special trainings, the photographers were also assigned and worked closely with infantry headquarters. Sigmund Weingberg, Makis Herdel, Necati Bey and Arakisyan Efendi were among those who were sent to Gallipoli to film and photograph in the trenches of the Peninsula.

20. For a detailed account of propaganda via literature, see Erol Koroglu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey during World War I* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007). Also, Trudi Tate's *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Penrith: Manchester UP, 1998) provides an expansive approach and historical analysis including the literary criticism dealing with fiction and non-fiction works including motifs such as witness of war, warfare, civilian war neuroses, and propaganda.

21. Brackets in Turkish names indicate the surnames adopted by poets after the Surname Act of 1934. Before 1934, Turkish names were accompanied by progenitorial (father's or grandfather's) names. In the case of soldier poets, they were referred to with their hometowns in addition to their adopted family names if any.

22. All translations in this study were made by the authors.

23. Many locations did not have names prior to the campaign. *Arıburnu*, however, was an exception. *Arıburnu*, which literally translates as "Cape of Bees" or "Bee cape," is known to the English-speaking world as the Anzac cove, named after the landings in April 1915.

24. Gönülde talihin açtığı sızı,
Kadere bıraktık anayı, kızı.
Felekte nasılmış Türk'ün yıldızı
Remlatıp kumlukta fal yapacağız.

Kıvırıp o cansız bileklerini
Kaçırıp İngiliz bebeklerini
Ürkütüp kâfirin sineklerini
Şu Arıburnu'nda bal yapacağız.

(Gövsa, 1989: 12-20)
25. Artık Turan hayal değil
Hakikate döndü bugün
Türk bilecek yalnız bir dil
Bizim için bu bir düğün

Çanakkale, dört devlete
Galebeyi sen çevirdin!
Çar kölesi yüz millete
İstiklali sen getirdin!
(Gökalp, 2007: 44-52)
26. Gelibolu önü üç ağaç incir
Süngü derin işler yüreğim sancır
Sanmayın vurulur Türk'e bu zincir
Kan aktı,kan köpürdü Çanakkale'de
([Çağlar], 2013: 21-24).
27. "Çanakkale'yi hiç verir mi Türkler / İstanbul'umuzu alacak bir er / Var mıdır dünyada nerede o asker?" ([Ömeroğlu], 2007: 61-63).
28. Adı nydi, nereli idi? Soramadım kendisine,
Fakat onun Türk olduğu lisanından belliydi,
Adı Mehmet, ya Ahmet'miş anlamaya hâcet ne?
Oradaki yiğitlerin hepsi de bir halliydi.

Hepsi dindar, hepsi nazik, hepsi tosun, hepsi mert
Hepsinde de düşman kini bir onulmaz acı dert.

Selam size ey Bursa'nın, Ankara'nın Konya'nın
Vatan için ölümleri şeref bilen avladı!
Emin olun, sizden akan bir damlacık al kanın
Elemiyle bir milletin ruhu kanadı.

Şimdi hâlâ, nerde görsem kalabalık bir asker
Hatırıma gelir hemen namaz kılan o nefer.
([Servet Tör], 2009: 94-105)
29. *Anafartalar Muharabeleri* (Battles of Anafartalar) are known as the Suvla Bay landings in English. The Suvla Bay operation was an amphibious landing made at Suvla on the Aegean coast of Gallipoli peninsula in the Ottoman Empire as part of the August Offensive, the final British attempt to break the deadlock of the Battle of Gallipoli.
30. The encounters in Chunuk Bair (*Conk Bayırı*) and Gaba Tepe (*Kaba Tepe*).
31. Öğün, ey Çanakkale, cihan durdukça öğün!
Ömründe göstermedin bin düşmana bir düğün,
Sen bir büyük milletin savaşa girdiği gün,
Başına yüz milletin birden üştüğü yersin!
…
Öğün, ey Çanakkale, sen Mustafa Kemal'in,
Yüz milletle yüzyüze ilk görüştüğü yersin.
(Çamlıbel, 2007: 1-4; 19-20)
32. Charles Bean were among the team that wrote *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–18;* and the first volume, covering the formation of the AIF and the landing at Anzac Cove

was published in 1921. It should be noted that it was Bean himself who was the driving force behind the establishment of Australian War Memorial, the first national archive and museum of Australia.

33. As a new periodical financed by the CUP *Yeni Mecmua* aimed to promote Turkish nationalism. The most significant issue was published in 1918 in commemoration of the 3rd anniversary of the Naval Victory at Gallipoli. The special issue brought together a number of works, ranging from military accounts, historical essays and interviews to short stories, poems and plays. Even the Ottoman Sultan contributed to this issue with a poem.

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"Knowing you will understand": The Usage of Poetry as a Historical Source about the Experience of the First World War

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ABSTRACT

For the last century, historians of the conflict have not systematically used the poetry of the First World War as a source. Whether reduced to a canon established *a posteriori* or excluded from literary periodisation altogether, this corpus needs to be considered from a transdisciplinary perspective and be used as a document about the experience of war itself, and not just about the conflict's remembrance. The present article aims to present the French and British landscape of research about the poetry of the Great War and to establish a theoretical framework combining literary history, anthropology, literary criticism, and linguistics, which will allow for the usage of poetry as a historical source. Finally, the article will discuss two digital humanities projects which draw upon the Centenary to contribute to the establishment of a relation between History and Poetics in the context of the sources available to the cultural historian looking at how individuals internalised a culture shared by all those who experienced the war and at how the poetic gesture shaped the experience of war itself.

Keywords: Poetry, English, French, Culture, History

In April 1915, Roland Aubrey Leighton, in France with the 7th Worcestershire Regiment, sent Vera Brittain the following poem:

> Violets from Plug Street Wood,
> Sweet, I send you oversea.
> (It is strange they should be blue,
> Blue, when his soaked blood was red,
> For they grew around his head:
> It is strange they should be blue.

> Think what they have meant to me -
> Life and hope and Love and You
> (and you did not see them grow
> Where his mangled body lay
> Hiding horrors from the day;
> Sweetest, it was better so.)

> Violets from oversea,
> To your dear, far, forgetting land
> These I send in memory
> Knowing you will understand

The final verse represents not only Roland's belief that the feelings he and Vera had for each other were enough to breach the distance between the fighting front and the home front and between civilian and military experiences of the conflict, but may also be perceived as a metalinguistic statement of poetry's capacity of communicating the ineffable character of war. This vision has been echoed elsewhere. In 1916, Collin Ross, a German soldier at the front, claimed that the story of the war would someday be told by a poet. According to Modris Eksteins:

> Without saying so outright, Ross was suggesting that, despite the contributions of historians, only the poet-artist would in the end be able to cut through the shibboleths of the war experience to capture a higher meaning. And if ever there was an event that cried out for sublime interpretation, it was the horrific war in which Ross found himself in 1916. Ross was evoking a grand Western tradition, going back to at least Aristotle, that venerated the artist as a seer, a man of grace who could perceive and express truths that remained hidden from mere mortals. Ultimately these truths could be captured only through superior intuitive and imaginative effort, not through normal observation and analysis. (see Winter et al., 2000: 331)

The English war poetry canon has been widely discussed, both in terms of its placement within Anglophone literary periodisation and of the role it plays in the remembrance politics of the conflict. This canon, however, is restricted to a handful of poets who do not represent the totality of the wartime practice of poetry writing. Moreover, the crystallisation of such a corpus and the narrative accompanying it, often centred around the notion of "pity" put forward by Wilfred Owen on his preface and around the idea of irony brought about by a standard trajectory going from enthusiasm to disenchantment through irony (Fussel, 1975), has earned the suspicion of scholars specialising not in war literature but in the conduct and the experience of the conflict: the "actual killing", as Samuel Hynes puts it (1997). This has artificially broadened the distance between History (capital H) and literary history, and the gap between both disciplines has evolved into mutual distrust and lack of constructive dialogue. On the other side of the English Channel, French poetry of the First World War has the particularity of being excluded from both literary periodisation and from the corpus of legitimate historical sources. Regardless of its treatment or lack thereof within literary history or literary criticism, the trend to silence poems as legitimate sources about the experience of war permeates transnational cultural and military histories. Whether

focused on a well-established canon or excluded from literary periodisation altogether, poetry still has not made its way into the corpus of sources available to the cultural historian of the Great War. Even when First World War historians do look at poetry, they either do it in order to point out the biased nature of the canonisation process in the English-speaking world or perceive poems as sites of memory (Winter, 1995) rather than 'sites of History'. The distinction implies that poetry is regarded by some cultural historians as a legitimate source to shed light on the way the conflict has been interpreted diachronically instead of on how contemporaries bestowed meaning upon their experience, even though these spheres are actually intertwined. Poems are seen as capable of shaping remembrance rather than knowledge about the conflict, and poetry endures a process of "exoticisation" when compared to either official sources or memoirs and novels and is placed below any of these within a hierarchy of historical sources. This very diverse corpus has not benefited from historiographical developments which place memory within History (Le Goff, 1988) and shared cultural values - expressed through these poems - within the core of the experience of war itself (Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, 2000) in either Britain or France.

   Furthermore, according to Jay Winter, "in Britain, France, and Germany, many writers used verse to keep the voices of the fallen alive, by speaking for them, to them, about them" (1995: 204). Poetry is therefore a *locus* for dealing with the absent dead[1], a figural and versified set of points of reference to aid in the process of grief and remembrance. The widespread use of figurative language in poetry can ensure a symbolic and imaginary presence for the absent dead, whether missing, unidentified, or geographically distant. One of the hypotheses for a larger presence of poetry in collective remembrance in British and Commonwealth memory is hence the fact that those countries' cemeteries and memorials are located in a different country or in a different continent, creating the need for a symbolical presence which poetry and its figurative language are well-equipped to create. This is paired with a British tradition of verse and with the patriotic identification of poetry as the one art in which English surpasses all other languages and in which Britain defeats its enemies. Poetry sets the tone for remembrance in Britain, and there have been recent attempts to include poetry in the French collective memory of the First World War, such as the reading of Guillaume Apollinaire's "*Si je mourais là-bas*" at the funeral of the last surviving poilu in 2008, but the French landscape is still overbearingly dominated by prose. The possibility of concentrating images in a reduced space and of using versified form and metre to create effects of symmetry allow for an expression of the oxymoronic character of the war and its memory. According to Santanu Das (2013), poetry has represented but also constructed the image of the soldier as both damaged and resistant. This illustrates the dialectical construction in Britain of the national narrative of pity and the canon of war poetry which has entered the public domain instead of a more nuanced image of the conflict. While the lack of an equivalent canon in France gives cultural and military historians the possibility of using heuristic comparison in order to interrogate this relation between canonicity and collective national narrative, it has also been responsible for excluding the poetry produced during the war from literary periodisation and prevented it from being treated as a single corpus with relatively homogeneous distinctive traits.

In Britain, the current research landscape seems to offer a reversal of John H. Johnston's assertion that

> These poets form a natural group by virtue of the fact that they were the first to deal with the kind of war peculiar to modern civilization; they were the first to attempt some assessment of the physical and spiritual effects of that kind of war. Their verse, consequently, has both a historical and a critical interest. The historical aspects of World War I poetry—that is, the general relationships between the conditions of twentieth-century warfare and the type of poetry those conditions inspired—are by now fairly obvious. No special effort, however, has yet been made to examine the literary and critical implications of that poetry: the relationships between tradition and innovation, between theory and practice, between attitude and technique, between form and materials. (Johnston, 1964: ix-x)

One should question the notion of "natural group" applied to ten poets whose inclusion in the book is itself justified tautologically as "poetry that is most likely to be granted, according to its varying quality some place in literature" (Johnston, 1964: ix). Moreover, a quick glance at Johnston's bibliographical references makes it clear that by "historical aspects" he actually means literary history, as most of the works cited are actually diachronic reflections by literary scholars. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that at the occasion of the conflict's 50th anniversary little was being said about the war poets' impact on the literature of the 20th century. Fifty years later, literary critics have changed the way war poetry is perceived and are now going beyond not only a restricted corpus like Johnston's, but also beyond some of his insights. All the while, most historians have not revisited the "historical aspects of World War I poetry" in light of recent developments on the way we study the experience of the conflict. The current academic landscape in terms of First World War poetry and its focus on literary criticism and on the poetry as a site of memory is also a partial inversion of the celebrated quotation by Wilfred Owen: "I am not concerned with poetry, my subject is war" (Owen, 2013: 535). Poems written by Owen and his peers are now perceived as concerned mostly with poetry and with remembrance. In reaction to initial attempts by the poets themselves to present their work as an immediate access to the truth about the experience of the conflict, war poetry is now recognised as the object of study of literature specialists and schoolchildren, and generally not of historians who have relentlessly tried to remediate the "high jacking" of the war by a restricted canon. Furthermore, the construction of a mythical trajectory from patriotic enthusiasm to ironic disillusionment followed by poets of a certain class (Spear, 1979), today known as the old paradigm (Vandiver, 2010), has led to the questioning by historians of the representativity of the poetic canon and its utility as a historical source. The historical criticism of the canon and of the myth created around Owen's and Sassoon's experience of war, though valid, has become a refusal of poetry as a source in general. The idea of a new language created to express the sense of disillusionment experienced by poets confronted with the realities of industrial warfare has therefore been continuously questioned, with historians resisting poetry as a potentially simplistic source. In their efforts, they have seemed to forget that, just as in physics the study of the way light changes direction when moving from one medium to the other reveals a lot about the different materials and their interaction, so can a study of the poetry of war shed new light not only on that poetry and its placement in time, but

also on the war itself and on the interaction between it and artistic creation. This article's main purpose is not to return to the treatment poetry was granted before this critical return and thus rehabilitate the canon, but to offer a theoretical justification for the study of that refraction by historians whose subject is war and who may or may not be concerned with poetry either, thus leading to a deeper questioning of that canon.

Without disregarding the role poetry plays in collective memory and the processes involved in canon building, this article aims to present epistemological hypotheses for the usage of poetry as a historical source about the experience of the First World War, providing potential answers to the question of why poems can and should be used as primary sources for a cultural history of the First World War. It will present theories arising from the Social Sciences, from History, and from Literary Criticism, aiming to construct a theoretical framework capable of defending the usage of First World War poetry as a source by cultural and military historians. Subsequently, it will compare two digital humanities projects, The First World War Poetry Digital Archive based at the University of Oxford, and the *Poésie Grande Guerre 1914-2018* database, under construction at the *Université Paris Nanterre*, in order to show that the lack of a French canon can serve as a laboratory for historians and help raise new questions about the canonicity of British war poetry, enabling poetry as s source for a transnational military and cultural history. This enterprise places itself within the framework of the cultural history of the Great War, a paradigm inaugurated in the late 1990's, which argues that all people involved in the conflict shared a culture, understood as a symbolic repertoire that informed their experience (Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, 2000). Furthermore, cultural historians defend a transnational approach of the conflict and the diversification of the types of sources used by historians. Studying the war as a cultural phenomenon implies not only approaching the conflict from the individual's point of view, in a continuation of developments in military history in the 1970's brought about by John Keegan's seminal work *The Face of Battle* (Keegan, 1976), but also using sources other than official documents. This usage should not, however, reduce poems to purely transparent documents, and poems should not be fully appropriated by historians aiming to simply look through them to find a narrative of historical truth. In order to fully live up to their potential for historical revisionism, poems written during or about the First World War must be considered in their materiality, as a social and economic wartime practice, as discourse, and as artistic creation. In other words, the construction of the poetry of the Great War as a source by military and cultural historians demands an active and open dialogue with its literary counterparts.

1. A brief *Tour d'horizon*

While the reader may be familiar with the presence of the poetry of the First World War in British remembrance and secondary education, the situation in France is quite different and deserves to be briefly outlined. The only poets with combat experience still read are those who had been writing before the conflict broke out or who have had significant literary importance after the fighting ceased, as members of the surrealist movement or as resistant poets after the 1940 armistice. Their inclusion is usually based on the formal innovation they offered, with which they had often experimented before the war,

especially during 1913 when the *avant-gardes* had a very impactful year, with Guillaume Apollinaire publishing "*Alcools*" and his anti-Futurist manifesto and Blaise Cendrars's "*La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France*". Even when it is known that the poet fought (and sometimes died) in 1914-1918, teachers and students seldom establish a link between war experience and poetic writing. This is part of a larger context of French schoolchildren being taught a formal approach to poetry, where they are expected to memorise and recite poems, and from a programme organised thematically rather than chronologically. The programme thus divides the four years of lower-secondary (*collège*) French poetry teaching: initiation to poetry, language games, lyrical poetry, and poetry in the world and in the century. It is noteworthy that First World War poets are suggested as case studies for all themes, but for the first three the approach necessarily focuses on forms they experimented with before or after the war. On the latter theme, the poets are read in terms of their political engagement during the Second World War and their experience of the previous conflict is treated as merely anecdotal, if at all.

University level education also disregards the context of the war in the production of the poetic works. The *Dictionnaire de poésie de Baudelaire à nos jours* (Jarrety, 2001) seldom mentions the poet's war experience, ignoring particularities of that experience and disregarding the impact of combat on poetic creativity even when acknowledging the conflict as a context of production. The war years are seen as both an end and a beginning, but never as a literary period in its own right. 1914 marks the end of a very productive period for the Parisian *avant-garde* and the shattering of the pan-European modernist dream. The post-war years mark the beginning of the surrealist period, and André Breton's silence about his war experience sets the tone for most of the surrealists' poems. The importance of surrealism in French 20th century poetry and an association of pacifism (which set the tone for important poems in the late war years and in the early 1920's) with either communist or collaborationist politics during the Second World War have led to a refusal of the poetic memory of the Great War.

Furthermore, the poetry written between 1914 and 1918 seems to have been excluded both from literary periodisation and from the memory of the conflict itself. The seminal work *Témoins*, by literary critic and *ancien combattant* Jean Norton Cru, was published in 1928 and aimed at classifying the literary works according to their documental quality. Though Norton Cru advances one of the central arguments of the present article in recognising that the literature written by those who fought in the First World War would be a determinant primary source for future historians (something historians themselves only put in practice after the shift from military and social to cultural history [J. Becker, 2006]), he completely excludes poetry from his typology. In a framework where only autobiographical novels and memoirs are considered documents, poetry is a non-source. Cru perceives artistic imagination as an obstacle in his search for a positivistic and objective 'truth' about the experience of the war, and while he disapproves of civilians' accounts of the conflict he also deems some soldiers' works too 'literary' to be taken into consideration. Norton Cru's quest in search of a true testimony of the war which can be used as a source is a product of an essentialist view of the *poilu* (French soldier) that equates the whole reality of war to his own reduced experience of it. Jean Norton Cru's work and his focus on prose have notwithstanding influenced French scholarship,

especially literary historians, who have dedicated several works to the relation between writers' experience of the conflict and the novels they have written to transmit it.

Nonetheless, one of the most important archival collections in France dedicated to the First World War tells a much more nuanced story of this exclusion and shows an early valorisation of poetry as a document. Though the objective approach offered by the *Bibliothèque Musée de la Guerre* (later the *Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine* and currently *La Contemporaine*), where poems are archived with no bibliographical support to elucidate the poet's experience of war, for example, is no longer possible after literary history and criticism has argued against the consumption of poetry as a purely transparent means to access the true war and historians have resisted the usage of poetry as a source, the early collection of poetry as documents and potential sources shows that it is possible for poetry to be treated and, more importantly, constructed as a source by military historians. Originated from a collection dating from 1914, when Louise and Henri Leblanc, an industrial Parisian couple, started to acquire documents pertaining to the on-going conflict, *La Contemporaine* today houses over 850 published poetry volumes. Nearly half of these were acquired before the Leblanc donated their collection to the French government in 1918, demonstrating the preoccupation with poetry of contemporaries who were quite aware that the event they were living through and/or witnessing would pass into the realm of History and that sources needed to be amassed for the future generations. Furthermore, the type of poetry selected indicates that this consciousness was independent of aesthetic criteria, and that the Leblanc and those who continued their work operated with a definition of poetry not based on literary quality, economic success, or formal innovation. As a result, nearly half of the volumes forming the collection are not present in the *Anthologie des Écrivains Morts à la Guerre* or in Jean Vic's *La literature de Guerre*, nor are they related to the war in the catalogue of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*.[2] The collection offers insight into the great diversity of the poetry produced during the war, as well as into the relationship people with their own war experience valued poetry as a source worthy of being preserved for future historians.

Recently, cultural historians have revisited Norton Cru's work (Smith, 2007; Prochasson and Rasmussen, 2004) and tried to apply his belief in literary sources without his positivistic quest for a singular truth, though still preferring testimonies in prose in detriment of poems. Other developments have attempted to include 1914-1918 as a specific period in French literary history. The most prominent of these is Michelle Touret's chapter in a broader work about literary periodisation in the 20th century (Touret and Dugast-Portes, 2001). Touret claims the war years have all the characteristics of a defined literary period, being a homogeneous and clearly different from the pre-war and the post-war years, and constituting a moment whose analysis demands the comprehension of singular data and of a specific perspective. Touret not only enables scholars to research and teach war poetry as a set event in French literature, but also posits a diachronic view of the poetry of the Great War, analogous to the British scholarship on the matter. Her focus, however, is on how literary history excludes a whole period, rather than on how a restricted canon can inform both literary and collective memory, as in studies from across the English Channel.

A group of historians and literary critics who subscribe to the idea of a culture shared by all those who experienced the conflict has nonetheless tried to conciliate History and Poetics over the past twenty years. Carine Trevisan (2001) has used poems as primary sources for her work on the narrative of mourning, especially texts written by women who expressed in verse their quest to retrieve the bodies of their sons and husbands. Nicolas Beaupré (2006) posits that literature is the gateway for historians wishing to penetrate soldier's mental universes and establishes a connection between the usage of literary sources and historiography based on the notion of a culture of war. Beaupré also introduces some of the present article's argument in his 2013 article *La Guerre comme expérience du temps et le temps comme expérience de guerre*, in which he demonstrates a particular perception of time for the war years and claims that poetry is the most adequate source for historians to investigate the way individuals internalised this specific temporality. Beaupré argues that, more than any other source, poems allow for a plural consciousness of time, which can be, in the same poem, perceived and represented as cyclical and slow through a form that is cyclical itself, and as an element of the distance between experience and expectation.

Though Beaupré is, to our knowledge, the first French historian to advocate explicitly for poetry as a source, albeit specific to the perception of time, and a major influence for this article, the strongest claim for a potential connection between historical research and poetic creation in France is Laurence Campa's 2010 book *Poètes de la Grande Guerre*. Campa offers the first French definition of war poet: those who saw combat and who were so profoundly artistic that this experience becomes a writing issue. She also claims poets give the war and the collective destiny its highest and most perfect form of artistic expression, establishing poetry not only as a viable but as an indispensable primary source. Campa unites her literary perspective and the questions being asked by cultural historians of the Great War, and though her work focuses exclusively on texts written by 'professional poets' and not on the poetic activity arisen from the conflict in general, her transdisciplinary effort should be considered ground-breaking for the usage of poetry as a primary source.

This general vision of the research landscape about the poetry of the First World War has no pretention of being comprehensive, and leaves out works straying from the genealogy of the central arguments put forward by the present article. Nonetheless, it is enough evidence of the lack of a systematic usage of poetry as a historical source both in France and in English-speaking countries, regardless of the different contexts in which this overlook takes place (the lack of canon and the restricted canonicity based on a single war narrative, respectively). Though further investigation can and should be conducted on the way other belligerent countries mobilise their war poetry, we can affirm that it has been neglected as a source, either by being defined exclusively as a component of the collective memory of the war or by being excluded from both History and literary history. Despite cultural historians' opening towards new sources, there has not been a systematic, general and consistent approach of the poetry of the Great War used as a source neither in Britain nor in France.

2. Poetry as a source: An epistemological framework

Using the 'blank canvas' which is the silenced French poetry of the First World War as a starting point, we would like to present theoretical foundations for the usage of poetry as a primary source within the context of cultural history. This will allow for an interrogation of the way the war poetry genre has been constructed in Britain and for a critical reversal of the perspective, enabling a revisionist cultural history which includes poetry as a source. Consideration of the culture of the Great War as a cultural pattern, in the terms proposed by Clifford Geertz, can place poetry and the culture of war in the broader context of the individual internalisation and signification of culture in general. Geertz's definition of culture as a historically transmitted framework of meanings embedded in symbols which convey this symbolic repertoire and is "expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (Geertz, 1973: 89) is in accordance with what cultural historians have called the culture of war. Cultural patterns are therefore systems of meaning through which one gives form to one's life. Poetry can be interpreted as one of the symbolic forms that allow the communication, perpetuation and understanding of culture, not only in relation to the First World War and the rhetorical destruction and reconstruction it entailed, as Sherry demonstrates (2003), but also in general terms. Furthermore, Geertz argues that symbolic information sources are not only models of "reality", representing it, but also models for "reality", shaping experience all the while shaping themselves. Regarding war poems as cultural patterns, which are at the same time models of and models for experience, is one of the epistemological foundations for scholars using these poems as primary sources, for the anthropological acceptance of this double aspect allows to place the poetic gesture within the core of the individual experience of the conflict and its culture. Geertzian anthropology justifies using poetry as a document about war experience and thus its usage as a historical source because it deems poetry not only a potentially accurate model of the experience of the conflict, but also the poetic gesture as one capable of changing that experience itself and therefore worthy of study as a practice as well as a discourse.

Concepts mobilised by experts in the field of Gender Studies can also justify the importance of looking at poems as primary sources about the experience of war, especially as an element that actively constitutes that experience. Joan Scott (1991) claims that the written transmission of knowledge about an experience is key against the essentialisation of both individuals and the experience itself. Furthermore, Scott's vision converges towards Geertz's when she claims the individual does not precede the experience, and they construct each other mutually, echoing the anthropologist's theory of model of/for reality. If experience ceases to be the legitimation for knowledge, becoming rather the object of knowledge and scientific investigation, then any source is welcome which places the individual within the experience instead of naturalising this experience as a legitimating factor, and reading for the literary ceases to be contrary to historical methodology. It is noteworthy that Joan Scott's theory of experience has already been used to justify the usage of literary sources in the study of the First World War: Leonard Smith (2007) argues that testimony is what creates the idea of the "true *poilu*" and vice-versa in Jean Norton Cru's typology of sources. This importance

bestowed upon the consideration of the stories one tells and of the way they are told as a fundamental component in the construction of identities and therefore as a legitimate object of study is echoed by Margaret R. Somers, who reconfigures the study of identity through the concept of narrative. The interpretation of narrative as being ontological rather than representative and the recognition of any discourse which places the individual within the world around him as a story told allows the historian to consider poems as narratives.

Literary criticism and literary history also equip the historian with methodological tools that enable the usage of poetry as a primary source. The subjective character of poetry, though detached from traditional lyric in the early 20th century, constitutes an attempt to bestow meaning upon the poet's individual experience of warfare and to produce on the reader sensations analogous to the poet's physical perception of his or her experience. Poetry's subjectivity ceases to be a barrier for the historian willing to write a historiography based on representations, on the reframing of meaning, and on the reappropriation of the symbols associated with a given event. Thus, in the context of cultural history, poetry should be considered an important source allowing to gain access to the symbolic realm of war experience: not just a legitimate source but a singular one. Considering how recent cultural history of the Great War is in comparison to military and social history of the same conflict as well as the abundance of official sources for the 20th century which give little insight into individual perceptions, and taking into account how hermetic to scientific comprehension the individual experience of conflict can be (Audoin-Rouzeau, 2008 ; Keegan, 1976), poetry bears what Todorov (1997) calls "the truth of unveiling" and should therefore be explored in depth not only for its literary value but also for its particular kind of documentary value. Nonetheless, Todorov evokes the specificities of this kind of truth, warning that it is not subject to ordinary processes of verification and that it is intersubjective rather than referential. Consequently, using poetry as a source is necessarily accompanied by an epistemological reflection about what defines History as a science, how historical knowledge is produced, and what interactions do historians establish with their sources.

This methodological analysis must also include an interrogation of the frontiers between particular and general interpretations of experience, and of the role micro-history plays within cultural history. According to Jerôme Thélot (2013), writing a poem is an act of resistance of an "I" against the world, because, contrary to prose writers who often want the story to appear as telling itself, poets want their work on and with the language to be seen and recognised as a speech act. This unapologetic presence of the poetic "I" is consequential for cultural historians examining mechanisms through which individuals relate to the symbolic framework specific to the war experience. Moreover, Thélot argues that the poetic work is essentially prosodic, and when each poet constructs their own language, which aids them in materialising sensory and emotional perceptions into speech, this act changes the very nature of language. Consequently, the poem is itself a witness and a document regarding its own construction, and a primary source of unmatched potential when it comes to elucidating the processes through which individuals assign meaning to their war experience and materialise it into words. Hence, each individual poem is a metonym of the culture of war itself, elaborating an original range of possible images within a symbolic framework specific to the conflict.

The particularities of the poetic language, such as the primacy of the significant, the exploration of formal and acoustic realities to enable multiple *strata* of meaning echoing the verticality of the poem itself, create a polysemy that is crucial in the context of a paroxysmal and pivotal event such as the First World War. Historians should take into account the trope's capacity of not only representing reality but also redirecting speech towards it (Jenny, 1990) and thus recreating it, as it gives access to both symbolic perceptions and to the way in which these perceptions become speech. While cultural historians of the Great War argue for an increased consideration of the materiality of documents as a source itself, independent and complementary to the document's content (Becker, 2005), the interpretation of poetic sources should actually be tri-dimensional and consider materiality and content, but also form as capable of producing meaning.

Linguistics may also offer theoretical contributions to the defence of poetry as a primary source. According to Laurent Jenny (1990), enunciation is an event because it cannot be reduced to either its conditions or to the subjectivity of the speaker. Poems, as linguistic statements, are organised around the placement of the poet's "I" within a specific time and space, and therefore the interpretation of a poem can reflect this time and space, but not be limited to it. The use of poetry as a historical source goes beyond the unveiling of personal experience, which can be more or less generalised, and must account for the act of choosing to enunciate in poetic form. In other words, historians must place the poetic gesture and the poetic speech, in all its singularity, within the history of the conflict, as, according to Oswald Ducrot (1980), every linguistic statement is a testimony to the conditions in which this statement was made. Each poetic gesture must be seen as a foundation for the possibility of communication, as an attempt to transcend the ineffable and to communicate the experience of war. This implies the comparison between poetic and non-poetic sources and between poems written during or about the war and those written by the same poets in different contexts, and the heuristic value of this comparison makes it a paramount aspect of the usage of poetry as a primary source. The implications of this presupposition for corpus selection and its relation to canon establishment should be the object of historical critical thinking, or *critique du témoignage* (Bloch, 1950), in all research using poetry as a primary source. An interesting attempt to create a convergence between history and linguistics with regards to the poetry of the First World War is the 2016 article "*Témoigner en poésie. Le cas de Marc de Larreguy*". According to Marion Carel and Dinah Ribard, the foundation for the acceptance of testimonial sources (an identity between the subject uttering the speech and the biographical subject who actually experienced the events being narrated) is not a linguistic necessity, but rather a construction the text operates and which should be interpreted in terms of meta-poetics. This approach, which considers what the text says about itself and how it establishes itself as a war poem and places both the enunciating actor and the poet within wartime social structures, is the foundation of the anthropological semiotics involved in using poetry as a source for a cultural history of the Great War. The example of Leighton's poem illustrates that, as the poem both establishes the possibility of a communication in knowing the reader will understand and accomplishes that communication itself. Apollinaire's poem "*Fête*" similarly establishes the poet's identity as a soldier and therefore poetry as a source, all the while constructing that identity for Apollinaire himself, who, three years before painting the picture of a poet

holding his gun in a forest and dreaming about the romance and literature killed by the war, had written a letter claiming that he was no longer a poet, only a soldier.

Finally, a defence of poetry as a historical source must also consider the limits of the poetic text. Though it is clear that poems, even when dated, will seldom express chronological and factual realities of the war, given the subjective and figural nature of poetry itself, there are other shortcomings to consider. One of them is the implication that the singularity of speech in a poem can also mean a singularity of circumstance in its production, and a prosopographical study must be undertaken to identify who are the people who chose to communicate their experience in the form of a poem and how their profile relates to general army demography. Though this may reveal a restricted character of the war experiences communicated, this kind of study is crucial if historians are to go beyond the voices of the established poetic canon of the Great War and have a more comprehensive, albeit not generalizable, view of the poets' experience of the conflict.

3. Poetry as a source in the digital era

Over the last decade, two digital humanities projects are making considerable advancements towards interdisciplinarity and towards the usage of poems as primary sources. The First World War Poetry Digital Archive[3] was launched by the University of Oxford on November 11, 2008, marking the 90th anniversary of the Armistice. It collects works from ten of the major poets of the 1914-1918 period: Edmund Blunden, Vera Brittain, Robert Graves, Ivor Gurney, David Jones, Roland Leighton, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon and Edward Thomas. From this roster, one deduces that the definition of war poetry used to constitute the corpus of the archive relates to the physical presence at the fighting front and to a public demand for sources built upon pre-established notions of what the canon is. The archive also includes digitised photographs and objects that help elucidate the context of the war, educational resources, and the products of a public engagement effort to digitise private collections relating to the war. Special features allow the user to place the poets' writings within a timeline of the war and to suggest thematic pathways for the exploration of the archive. Despite the remarkable efforts of digitisation operated by the War Poetry Digital Archive, the organisation of the collection, which should itself be interpreted as a discourse about the usage of poetry as a source, indicates that the critical approach of the pre-established canon is not one of the project's preoccupations. Despite the importance of the digitisation enterprise, this archive seems more oriented to the general public who already identifies war poetry with the established canon, or towards historians establishing biographies of the poets, but it does not interrogate the construction of the canon by diversifying the archive's roster or by enabling the establishment of relations between the poets. The new theoretical framework we have tried to establish in the previous section of this paper is hardly applicable to the collection, as it is an illustration of the essentialist view of individual experience criticised by Scott. The restricted selection of poets who are only sporadically linked with other poets and the different search engines which separate poems and "other items" (correspondence, photographs, diaries) make it difficult for the dialectical relation (model of/for) between poetry and experience to be established. Though this experience is now remotely accessible thanks to the Archive's remarkable

digitisation efforts, the separation between poems and "documents" offers little novelty and does not allow for an immediate view of how the individual places itself within the wartime culture through the act of poetry writing.

On the other hand, this theoretical framework has been foundational for another, more recent project combining History, Poetic and Literary Studies and the digital humanities in an effort to use poems as sources about the Great War is the project *Poésie Grande Guerre*,[4] an online relational database under construction at the *Université Paris Nanterre – Université Paris Lumières*. Contrary to the First World War Poetry Digital Archive, which concentrates on documents illustrating individual war experiences, the *Poésie Grande Guerre* database consists of variables of three orders: individuals (prosopography of published poets), military situation (including regiments and time-place precisions), and productions (information of published works). Each of these attributes receives an identifier which is then attached to the other two categories, indicating the project is oriented by the belief that the study of poetry must take into account mutual interactions between the author`s biography, his or her position with wartime social structure, and the final literary production. Though not offering as many digitised documents as its British counterpart, this database will establish a list of all published French poets having written during or about the war, whether civilian or in uniform, and thus establish a national definition of war poetry, albeit excluding non-published authors. Furthermore, the possibility to search using other variables, such as Battle or front sector by year, allows the historian to establish relations between production and experience or between different poets who may have integrated the same social circles or whose experiences of war coincided. The definition of poetry orienting the archive is an "indigenous" one, based on meta-poetics and on the way poets define their own work as war poetry, such as formal conventions or paratextuality and architextuality. In other words, any text presenting itself as poetry (in the many ways one can do that) or having been presented as poetry by contemporaries in either archives or anthologies is included in *Poésie Grande Guerre*. This definition, based on self-identification rather than on canonicity, contributes to scholarship which considers the broad spectrum of wartime poetry in all its diversity of intertextual inspiration, formal innovation, and publication support. It goes to show that poetry writing was a diffused wartime practice spanning across different ranks and military experiences, and that though poetry was seen as a highly intellectual reaction to war when read from the point of view of the *avant-gardes* or of the formal innovations related to irony (Fussell, 1975) or modernism (Sherry, 2003), it was also a more visceral and culturally diverse response to the conflict (perhaps even a natural instinct as the interaction between poetry and folk songs during the war shows), related directly to the experience of warfare without necessarily requiring the mediation of sophisticated formal or tonal innovation. This direct link ensures poetry can be used as a source without being considered a shallow and transparent document.

In conclusion, though the usage of poetry as a primary source is becoming more frequent amongst cultural historians of the Great War, and the theoretical framework presented should initiate the discussions leading to a systematic usage of this source, the digital humanities offer a solid platform to diffuse this shift in the way historians interact with poetic sources, enabling the establishment of a new canon stretching beyond the names retained by Literary History. Furthermore, online resources permit the

identification of trends and relations between the experience and the poetical production, as well as between poets themselves. These resources also allow for international and comparative researches that corroborate the existence of a wartime culture which the conflict spread across national borders. Heuristically, thinking about war poetry in the terms of web-semantics, as one must when constructing or utilising platforms such as those discussed above, entails a reflection about concepts specific to the conflict or to poetry and their interoperability with other digital humanities projects, leading to a potential redefinition of war poetry itself. There is a need for poetry to be used systematically and coherently as a source, and the existence of digital humanities projects initiating from that premise confirms that the current research landscape and the recent and approaching Centenary commemorations are the perfect conditions for the long-due understanding Leighton believed in over one hundred years ago.

Notes

1. The concept of "absent dead" has been drawn to our attention by Hanna Smyth's DPhil research at the University of Oxford – Globalising and Localising the Great War Research Network, and we would like to thank her for allowing us to use it in the present article. The typology of the absent dead, including the missing, unidentified, and geographically distant is also issued from Hanna Smyth's research and 2019 unpublished thesis.

2. We would like to thank Data BNF, a partner of the *Poésie Grande Guerre* project, for sending us a spreadsheet with all of the items of their catalogue related to the war. This has not only enriched the project's census of Great War poetry in France, but has also enabled the projects members to interrogate the relation between the literary field, the editorial market, the veteran's construction of their own literary identity in the immediate aftermath of the war, and the avant-garde poets who have earned their place on the roster of the great names in French literature.

3. We would like to thank Dr. Stuart Lee, from the University of Oxford and creator of the First World War Poetry Digital Archive, for being kind enough to answer questions about the project.

4. We would like to thank Prof. Dr. Laurence Campa, from the *Centre des Sciences des Littératures en Langue Française – Université Paris Nanterre*, who coordinates the project, as well as the rest of the *Poésie Grande Guerre* team for allowing us to discuss the database while it is still under construction. It is evident that, given the ongoing character of the project, some of the details we have discussed are still evolving and are subject to change, and may not be retained for the final version of the database.

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"Prefer not, eh?":
Re-Scribing the Lives of the Great War Poets in Contemporary British Historical Fiction

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ABSTRACT

Although the First World War has become history by now, the memory of the war continues to be repeatedly fictionalised: retrospectively inspired narratives are often regarded as more genuine and far-reaching than historical or documentary accounts in their rendition of the past. Yet, memory is creatively selective, reflecting a highly-conflicted process of sifting and discerning what should be remembered, neglected or amplified from the stream of war experience. In his book about Pat Barker, Mark Rawlinson argues that "historical fiction has been transformed in the post-war period by the way writers have exploited the porous and unstable demarcation between fiction and no fiction, stories and history" (14). Jill Dawson's *The Great Lover* (2009), Geoff Akers's *Beating for the Light: The Story of Isaac Rosenberg* (2006) and Robert Edric's *In Zodiac Light* (2008) have not become best sellers like Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy; yet, they too represent the predominant commemorative drift in contemporary British fiction about the Great War. Without doubt, these three authors have followed in Barker's steps in their purpose of holding a mirror to real people and real events in the past and of deciphering the deleted text of 'the war to end all wars.' However, while Barker chose to write about the often-anthologised Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, Dawson, Akers and Edric base their narratives on the writings, and lives, of Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg and Ivor Gurney respectively.

My discussion of these three novels will explore the various ways in which the past can be accessed and interpreted from the present and represented in fiction. The authors' decisions as to what historical instances to unravel do not just reveal the relation that contemporary British fiction entertains with the Great War and with history, but also how the past erupts in the present to interrogate it. Taking three salient features of Hutcheon's "historiographic metafiction" (1988)—intertextuality, parody and paratextuality—as my theoretical points of departure, I will explore the dominant frameworks and cultural conditions (that is the propagation of either patriotic or protest readings) within which the Great War has been

narrated in the novels and the new approaches, opportunities and ethical implications of using historical and literary sources to re-scribe a previously non-existent version of the lives of the iconic Great War Poets.

1. Introduction

With the death of Claude Stanley Choules, the last known veteran of the First World War, on the 5th May 2011 in Perth, Australia, the age of the witnesses of the Great War, seemed to have given way to the era of the *war scriveners*. The passing of those who had, in Joan Scott's words, "the authority of experience" (1991: 780), not only marked the end of memory and the beginning of history (Kurschinski et al., 2015: 1), but essentially placed the burden of writing about the Great War on either historians or novelists. Many of the *war scriveners* have no personal connection to the war, yet they have experienced (and continue to experience) its lasting cultural and historical impact. I use the term "scrivener" in allusion to Bartleby, the enigmatic protagonist of Melville's novella. Bartleby, "[the] scribe who has stopped writing" (Agamben, 1999: 253), functions as an autobiographical reflection of the author's struggle with writer's block and, in a stricter sense, as a metaphor of the failure of words to communicate meaning, of the unbridgeable gap between language and reality.[1] The phrase "I would prefer not to" hints both at the possibility of writing and of remaining silent. This ambiguity towards the possibility of translating reality into words acquires particular urgency in the context of war representation. Those who have attempted to represent the Great War have been placed in a similar representational dilemma and felt, like Melville's copyist, a mistrust in language as the adequate expression of the war's horrific essence.

In *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* (2011), Kate McLoughlin argues that "the representation of war is inherently anxiogenic" precisely because "even if it resists representation, conflict demands it" (6).[2] While Melville's Bartleby remains silent or bears witness only through his baffling passivity, war scriveners cannot stop telling war stories. Yet, because of the temporal and physical distance of the war, the peculiarities of memory and the interference of what Lyotard calls "metanarratives," both historical and fictional writers are caught in a continuous struggle to accommodate the experience of the Great War somewhere between the dominant frameworks and cultural conditions within which the war experience has been narrated and their present experience. These "metanarratives," or "grand narratives," of the Great War function as rigid and fossilised accounts of the conflict, frequently oscillating between either 'patriotic' or 'protest' readings, aimed at encompassing and explaining individual and diverse war stories within a totalizing—and legitimising—framework.[3]

The anxiety about the adequacy and appropriateness of language to represent the Great War points to two questions that are essential when scriveners enter the past: the question of "authenticity" (McLoughlin, 2011: 1219) and the ethical issue implicit in the call. Authenticity emerges as an imperative for war writing. Yet, even if historians rely

on *history*, memoirs and autobiographies to recuperate the actual experience, there is always a struggle about the meaning of "what really happened," and about the meaning of memory itself.

The second "anxiogenic" issue in connection to war representation (McLoughlin, 2011: 6) is the ethics of writing about violence and death. The ethical issues involved in the representation of war are multifaceted, sometimes standing on the nebulous path between idealisation and disillusionment, sometimes oscillating between the need not to invade individual privacy and the urge to explore aspects of people's traumatic experiences that might be of interest to the readership. Being allowed to somehow 'fill in' the gaps in their reconstruction of the Great War, historical and fictional writers believe they have the duty to try to be as 'fair' as possible to it. Yet, they do not have any certainty in their commitment. The truth is not given as a whole; it is to be achieved in fragments, when possible. The contingency of the war experience robs scriveners inexorably of the assurance of veracity they are inclined to project on readers.

Due to this concern about the authenticity and ethics of war writings—and to some scepticism towards the monolithic authority of metanarratives—the understanding of the Great War in terms of a universal consensus on either 'patriotic' or 'protest' interpretations of the conflict, has given way to the need to stress "the role of ordinary people in making their own history" (Burke, 2001: 20). The inclusion of multiple and varying voices in the reconstruction of the past, "is not, or should not be," in Lynd's words, a "mere description of hitherto invisible poor and oppressed people: it should challenge mainstream versions of the past" (XI). This idea of "history from below" or of "people's history" has allowed for the development of new interpretative frameworks and for the publication of many war narratives that are not just history and not just memory, but stories that attempt a departure from both. In this context, literature represents, in Graham Galer's words, "a valid means, perhaps even more than history, of approaching the 'truth' of the past" (2008: 30). Unlike the purely documentary or historical texts, fiction gains power through its aesthetic qualities, providing a particular account of the truth, one that grants access to the experience of others, without claiming it to be true or misleading readers into believing in an arbitrary historical truth.

However, the recognition that the representation of the past involves the convergence of literature and history as narrative forms has problematised the understanding of the Great War.[4] Since the 1990s, the most prominent and enduring subgenre of Great War fiction has been the historical novel which, from the hand of writers like Pat Barker and Sebastian Faulks, has not only "unshackled itself from its earlier image as a somehow lowbrow cousin to serious writing" (Bradford, 2008: 83-84) but has triggered a series of enlightening and appealing re-readings of the conflict.[5] This persistent hold of the Great War subject on contemporary literature, which some scholars call "the second 'war-books boom'" (Ann-Marie Einhaus, 2013: 13), has also raised a more reflective awareness of the boundaries between history and literature and of how the Great War is represented today.[6] Such representations, subjective and unavoidable as they are, shape our contemporary understanding and response to the events.

The focus of my discussion is the historical fiction written by Jill Dawson (*The Great Lover*, 2009), Geoff Akers (*Beating for the Light: The Story of Isaac Rosenberg*, 2006) and Robert Edric (*In Zodiac Light*, 2008). Although these three authors have not reached

the popularity of Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy, they too have fictionalised the memory of the Great War by producing retrospectively inspired narratives. In fact, they share a strong connection in terms of this overlap between the fictional world of imagination and the actual world of history. Not only do they provide valuable insights into the understanding of one of the most devastating and transformative conflicts of the twentieth century, they also rely on what Barbara Korte calls "sedimented images of the Great War" (2001: 122)—poems, memoirs, novels, films and historical evidence—and turn to real people and real events to craft their stories.

While Barker chose to write about the often-anthologised Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, Dawson, Akers, and Edric base their narratives on the writings, and lives, of Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg and Ivor Gurney respectively. The novels cover the war chronologically: Dawson creates a picture of Brooke's pre-war life in Grantchester, Akers follows Rosenberg to the battlefields of France and Edric deals with Gurney's traumatic wounds after the conflict. Despite the different temporal and geographical settings, the authors under study address the dual process of fiction being read as history and of history being read as fiction and, at the same time, the "anxiogenic issues" mentioned above, that is to say, the authenticity and ethics of 'appropriating' the Great War for the purpose of representing it.

This paper asks in what ways, and using what strategies, Dawson, Akers and Edric are able to establish representational spaces for approaching and reconsidering the lives of the poets Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg and Ivor Gurney in the context of Great War. My contention is that the three novels can be read in the light of what Linda Hutcheon calls 'historiographic metafiction' (1988). Hutcheon argues that the tension between the 'fictitious' and the 'realistic' or 'historical' is typically characteristic of postmodernist novels, "which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (Hutcheon, 2004: 5). The novels by Dawson, Akers and Edric are at the centre of this tension because they are both history and fiction, and because, in Hutcheon's words, "to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological" (Hutcheon, 2004: 110).

My critical engagement with Hutcheon's theory is grounded in the way the three authors position themselves in relation to the 'protest' and 'heroic' narratives within which the Great War has been narrated, and in their use (and abuse) of historical and literary sources as intertextual effects to re-scribe a previously non-existent version of the poets' lives. Therefore, I will attempt to analyse Dawson, Akers and Edric's novels in the light of three outstanding features of Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction: intertextuality, parody and paratextuality.

Overall, I contend that, by not treating the Great War as unrepresentable, the texts under study constructively manage the anxiety involved in war writing and allow for their own re-imagining and interpretation of the conflict and of the people involved in it to be a part of history. These texts go beyond the limits of the documentary or the historical to ethically engage with the issue of how these three Great War Poets can be accessed and interpreted from the present, making choices as to what instances to highlight and what interpretation to place upon them and uncovering new stances or perceptions that might otherwise go unnoticed. The historiographic metafictional quality of the three novels

might prove to be liberating for the writers as they can verbalise, in Hutcheon's words, "smaller and multiple narratives which seek no universalizing stabilization or legitimation" (2002: 24).

2. Facts, Fictions and Myths

While disappointment and disillusion set the criteria for what constituted war literature immediately after the Great War, the enormous bulk of propagandistic literature written during the war years cannot be ignored. These 'patriotic' grand narratives aimed at endorsing the idea of war as adventure and noble sacrifice, but also employed a manly rhetoric of character and heroic transcendence, with its ideals and eloquence, as a way of encouraging allegiance both of soldiers and civilians while the conflict lasted.[7] No doubt, however, that the main motivation for the endorsement of these propagandistic efforts was patriotic fervour, strengthened by the admiration for the literature written by young poets like Rupert Brooke or Julian Grenfell. Rupert Brooke's "War Sonnets"—particularly "The Soldier" and "The Dead"—appealed to society in general, despite political and social differences. As Tylee suggests, Brooke's early death in Greece at the beginning of the Great War paved the way for "his idealisation as both mythical Greek hero and national Christian martyr" (1990: 78) and for the creation of "the genre of the idealised and, to an extent, untouchable national soldier-poet" whose success expressed "the glamour of war for the War Generation, summed up in the imperialist religion of self-sacrifice 'For God, King and Country'" (1990: 77). The obituary published in *The Times* by Winston Churchill a few days after Brooke's death already started to press the ideal of the hero, as Miller writes, "transcendent in life and in death through his ability to 'do justice to the nobility of our youth in arms' by expressing their 'thoughts of self-surrender'" (2010: 143). The myth played on the image of Brooke as a 'sanctified figure' (Miller, 2010: 144), turning him into the most romanticised of the early soldier poets and the ultimate archetype of the 'patriotic' narratives.

The 'protest' narratives that came when the war ended, on the other hand, attempted to portray life in the trenches without any trace of patriotic sentiment, casting aside the exciting images of war that propaganda aroused and emphasising the disappointment and isolation that many soldiers experienced. Cynicism and anger inexorably replaced the jingoism of propagandistic literature. Moreover, the clear gap between past and present, between combatant and civilian, between the older generations and the youth that fought the war, reopened the debate around the representation of war, which now seemed to revolve around the ethos of Owen's *Dulce Et Decorum Est* and "the pity of War" (Preface IX).

The literature of 'protest' came to destabilise the dominant heroic discourse and operated as a counter-text that took many forms, including private letters, journalistic accounts, plays, diaries, memoirs, novels, paintings and films.[8] However, the contention that the writers spoke directly from the trenches, directly from the experience itself owes much to the poetry written by the trench poets, among them Richard Aldington, Edmund Blunden, Charles Sorley, Ivor Gurney, Edward Thomas, Herbert Read, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen.

Unlike the other more acclaimed poets who were officers, Ivor Gurney and Isaac Rosenberg were enlisted soldiers, with worse food, worse conditions and worse pay. These much greater deprivations were compelling factors in their lives in the trenches and in their point of view as writers. Ivor Gurney's wartime poems were published in two collections, *Severn and the Somme* (1917) and *War's Embers* (1919). A selection of Gurney's later work, written after he got mentally ill, was edited by Blunden and published as *Poems* in 1954. He survived the war, but a physical, mental and emotional crisis ended in his attempted suicide in 1918. In 1922, he was sent to the City of London mental hospital where he died in 1937.[9] The fact that Rosenberg was bullied because of his Jewishness during the three years he was at the front did not alter his decision to pursue poetry or his strong grip on reality. He recorded everything he saw and sent poems off to journals. He died in the battle of Arras on 1 April 1918, yet his collected poems, together with some prose pieces and extracts from his letters were not published until 1937.[8] Both Rosenberg and Gurney's depictions of war invariably include mud, gas, rats, decaying corpses and shell shock, which have become embodiments for the 'protest' narratives of the Great War.[10]

3. Contemporary British War Fiction as Historiographic Metafiction

While the flood of war literature published during and immediately after the Great War found it difficult to rise above either the 'patriotic' or the 'protest' narratives, contemporary war fiction entertains a different relation with the past, counteracting one-dimensional readings and simplifications and constituting the arena for conflicting views and claims. In other words, the novels by Dawson, Akers and Edric demonstrate that stories outside the hegemony of the grand narratives of the Great War do exist, and also that 'patriotic' and 'protest' readings of the conflict cannot be described as entirely oppositional, as they tend to transgress their representational borders to converge and evoke similar, or even overlapping, responses to the conflict.

The three novels open a dialogue between the past and the present, based on the idea that the Great War cannot be objectively represented, that it can only be filtered through the narrative strategies, imagination and ideologies of the writers. Dawson, Akers and Edric only conceive the past in an indirect, subjective and selective manner which involves a dialogue with history in order to build a new historical understanding. However, that the three novels retain, at their core, an element of subjective judgement does not mean that the grand narratives are not powerful or that their position of dominance is not sustained. Because of having to face absent memories within the historical past they were researching, Dawson, Akers and Edric have been exposed to the mandates of what Ricoeur calls "forms of the manipulation or instrumentalization of memory" (2004: 69), as current politics and centenary commemorations often aim at turning the Great War experience into "a usable past" (Kurschinski et al., 2015: 5).[11]

From a historiographic point of view, however, the most notable aspect of the three novels is that they sit uncomfortably with the grand narratives of the Great War. This 'uneasiness' is associated with at least three discernible features that recur in the novels under study. Firstly, there is a heavy reliance on intertextuality. As Hutcheon suggests, "[the past] can only be known from its texts, its traces" (1989: 4). For readers trying to

understand the Great War, access to the past is inevitably textual; thus, past recreations like those of Dawson, Akers and Edric are almost necessarily intertextual and should be interpreted in the light of the war poets' textual artefacts by means of quotations, allusions or pastiche. Intertextuality allows the three authors both to destabilise the meaning conveyed in their texts and to expose the male-dominant discourse of the Great War era.[12]

Secondly, the novels utilise parody as an essential constitutive element of their structure. On a literal level, parody involves the application of a series of downplaying techniques (jokes, satire, mockery and sarcasm) to imitate and ridicule an original work, its subject, author, or style. In historiographic metafiction, parody works in a subtler way to guarantee that the literary and documentary texts that are referred to by the novels are critically reread and reassessed, allowing for the possibility of seeing these texts, their authors and ideology in a different light. In this regard, Linda Hutcheon affirms that "parody is not to destroy the past; in fact, to parody is both to enshrine the past and to question it" (1989: 6). The utilisation of parody in the novels involves the 'deconstruction' of historical characters and events by telling the yet silent stories that have been excluded from the dominant discourse of the soldier poets and by including a growing range of people and social groups as historical agents (particularly women, workers and civilians). This way, Dawson, Akers and Edric not only manage to fit these characters and stories into the needs of the present time but to subvert "history's privileged status as the purveyor of truth" (Hutcheon, 1989: 10).

Thirdly, the novels incorporate external documents or paratexts. Hutcheon claims that in the postmodern novel, paratextuality is characterized by the use of "footnotes, epigraphs, prefaces, and epilogues; sometimes they are parachuted directly into the fictive discourse" (2002: 88). The three authors under study make use of several paratextual elements: photographs of the war poets, poems, preludes, authors' notes, among others, which seem to disrupt the linear narrative—that is, the readers' attempt to create "a coherent totalising fictive narrative" (Hutcheon, 2002: 81). Paratexts are not part of a main narrative, in fact they occupy an intermediary position between the reader and the text, but pave the way for a certain mode of reading and interpreting as they provide readers with a 'procedure' or a 'system of rules' on how to do it.

By incorporating intertext, parody and paratext of literary and historical or documentary writing into the novels, Dawson, Akers and Edric highlight what Hutcheon calls the "doubled narrative of the past in the present" (2002: 80), a duality that is essential to the understanding of the lives of the Great War poets and of the Great War in its ever-present traumatic impact.

3.1. Disputing the Myth of Rupert Brooke as National Hero

Although Jill Dawson seems to be aware of the significance of the Brookian myth within popular culture, she appears to endorse some historians' view that it "was essentially sentimental and false" (Jones, 2015: xi) and that it failed to grasp the true Brooke. In claiming that "each of the biographies [she has read] was different depending on the skill and subjectivity of the writer" and that "[she does not] believe in the idea of a definitive self" (Dawson qtd in Pellegrino, "Dead Poet's Society"), she supports Hutcheon's contention that meaning does not lie solely in historical facts, but rather in the way in

which historical events have been represented (2004: 122). Dawson strives to find the "truth about Rupert Brooke" (Scutts, "The True Story of Rupert Brooke"), to "rescue [him] from that myth-making but also trying to include the myth" (Kean, "Battle of the Heart").[13]

Set from 1909 until 1914, *The Great Lover* (2009) depicts the most turbulent of Rupert Brooke's twenty-seven years, including his stay as a student at the Orchard, a boarding house outside Cambridge, the death of his father and his experience as a schoolmaster at Rugby School, the tours advocating for workers' rights and his trip to the South Seas via Canada and the United States. Dawson essentially focuses on Brooke's chaotic life of sexual confusion, nervous breakdowns and unsuccessful relationships with both men and women. Among these relationships is a particularly short-lived but sweet affair with the fictional young maid Nell Golightly. Dawson relies on a variety of interdisciplinary sources and intertexts—"many of Rupert's actual letters and phrases from his own writings, and […] first-hand accounts and recorded words of others" (Dawson, 2009: 303)—to simultaneously reinforce and challenge the authority of the poet's eyewitness perspective into her retrospective narrative. Yet, the character of Nell is entirely imagined and, as Frances Spalding claims, "is threaded into the story in a way that enhances the reader's understanding of Brooke's dilemmas" ("The Great Lover").

The fictional creation of Nell Golightly though, is not the only element *in The Great Lover* that clearly operates as a parody of the hazy, romantic myth enveloping the life of the poet: Fact and fiction are set against each other dialogically from the very beginning. To the fictional letter written by Brooke's alleged Tahitian daughter, the elderly Arlice Rapoto, to Nell Golightly (Dawson, 2009: 1-2), Dawson opposes the original obituary published by Winston Churchill in *The Times* (2009: 3-4). The writer seems to want her readers to know that she will escape the imposition of the conventional patriotic-heroic reading—or, to put it another way—the she will not be so interested in what happened in the past, but in how the past has been textually mediated in the present. Dawson is aware that the disappearance of the collective memory of the Great War makes readers increasingly reliant on history's textuality. For her, this textual dependence seems to be an opportunity rather than a limitation.

In reply to Arlice Rapoto's request about finding her "father's living voice" (Dawson, 2009: 10), Nell expresses her distrust in biographies and newspapers, "a biography is written by a person and a person does not always understand another as well as they might think" (Dawson, 2009: 8), and suggests that the truth about Brooke is much more interesting than the biographical myths that have followed him: "[biographies] set too much store by facts and not enough about feelings" and "they spend so much time going on about the person's death" (Dawson, 2009: 8). By foregrounding the metafictional over the biographical nature of her narrative, Dawson self-consciously reminds readers that while events like Brooke's death did take place in the past, "we name and constitute those events as historical facts by selection and narrative positioning" in order to render them meaningful (Hutcheon, 2004: 97).

That is the reason why Dawson ignores Brooke's enlistment in the Royal Navy and his death on a troopship bound for Gallipoli, the events that led to his immortalisation as national hero in 1915.[14] Instead, she 'self-reflectively' chooses to fictionalise the poet's pre-war years, reliving his sedentary lifestyle at the Orchard, "bathing every evening,

breakfast on the lawn or on his bedroom, young men and women always calling up to the window or throwing a pebble to wake him; and a pencil and a book in his hand" (Dawson, 2009: 79-80). Whilst the setting seems idyllic—Brooke himself is made to describe the Grantchester vicarage as "Arcadia" (28)—the social and political turmoil of pre-war England is brewing "in the discussions of female suffrage, Fabianism, fighting and artistic freedom" (Harvey, "Beyond the Myth").

Dawson overlooks the supposed reliability of Brooke's 'heroic' grand narrative and focuses on his life in pre-war Cambridgeshire probably to disrupt this depiction of the Edwardian world as a *belle époque* and emphasise the continuities between the pre-war tensions and the war itself. To do so, she recreates Brooke's acquaintance with a host of notable Edwardian and Georgian figures (Augustus John, Edward Marsh) and with the culturally and politically-minded Bloomsbury group, who stand on the periphery of the action, but who embody pacifist ideas and certain themes of their later humanistic and aesthetic response to the Great War.[15] As Laura Barrett suggests, in this merging of history and fiction "reality, truth, and finally history are determined by [the author's] perspective" (2000: 802).

The same applies to the author's rendition of Brooke. The heroic, god-like portrait of "the handsomest young man in England," as Yeats called him, is then cast aside by a more grounded, quotidian depiction. Brooke's provocative comments and spicy hilarity, his Fabian pacifism—see, for instance, the poet's opinion of English government and society (Dawson, 2009: 151)—and his longing for a more democratic approach to the arts seem to dispute the received perception of the poet as an ardent patriot and reveal a more complex and intelligent figure than is often supposed. Dawson tends to imply that perhaps Brooke would have had a different reaction to the war had he survived to see how the conflict progressed and society's attitudes changed.

Apart from intertextuality, which the author uses to build on the authority of previous war writing and to challenge the traditionally authoritative male-dominant perspective, Dawson employs parody in her depiction of Brooke:

> Of course I made Rupert up, too, and he is 'my' Rupert Brooke, a figure from my imagination, fused from his poetry, his letters, his travel writings and essays, photographs, guesswork, the things I know about his life blended with my own dreams of him, and impressions. (2009: 303)

According to Hutcheon, parody works through "a double process of installing and ironizing, [it] signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference" (Hutcheon, 2002: 89). By bringing to the fore the poet's 'alleged' homosexuality, his mental breakdown at Lulworth in 1913 and by lending credibility to the South Seas period and to the romance with Taatamata, with whom he was reputed to have a daughter, Dawson turns the spotlight on the duality between Brooke's historical agency as public persona and his problematically entwined private self. Through its ironic overtones and undertones, parody allows Dawson both to subvert and to preserve the character of Brooke, favouring "a representation of Brooke that is rounded, human and humane" (Harvey, "Beyond the myth").

This decision to depict Brooke as a human being, rather than as "the super patriot of 1914" (Jones, 2015: 2), is further reinforced by the view that the poet was a "reluctant bisexual" (Kean, "Battle of the Heart"). From an original letter written to Lytton Strachey, providing minute detail about the episode in which he lost his virginity with his school friend Denham Russell-SmitH, Dawson 'presupposes' that Brooke preferred women to men: "[Denham] was lustful, immoral, affectionate and delightful… But I was never in the slightest degree in love with him" (Dawson, 2009: 88). In fact, the writer suggests that when she read the letter "[she] felt [she] could take [her] lead from that and show [Brooke's] feelings torn between the idealist women he [could not] have and the motherly one he [could]" (Dawson qtd in Kean, "Battle of the Heart"). By parodying the current interest in Brooke's homosexuality, the novel problematises the poet's gender identity and leaves it in ambiguity. Dawson imitates Brooke's narrative voice and adopts it for her own purpose, which in this case is to suggest that Brooke was a "closet heterosexual" (Kean, "Battle of the Heart").

Moreover, the fact that the novel is entitled "the great lover" might lead readers to assume it was inspired by the poem of the same name, or by the multiple stories of Brooke's homosexual and heterosexual entanglements, but in fact Dawson's initial inspiration came from a paratextual element mentioned in the "Acknowledgements" section: "a postcard of the maids who worked [at the Orchard House] in Rupert Brooke's time" (2009: 303), which Dawson bought while on a visit there. In effect, the postcard featured two of the maids; one of them evolved into Nell in Dawson's imagination. The text of the poem is also included at the end of the novel as a paratextual addition to draw an ultimate parallel between the real and the fictional Brooke (Dawson, 2009: 299). Brooke's emphasis on the life drive in the poem mirrors the spirit of the novel and works to offset death, or better said, to prematurely mitigate the effect that the Great War would have on the lives of people.

However, one of the most interesting ways to challenge the monologic discourse of history and open it to multivocality is through the narrative perspective of the novel which is interwoven by the stories told by the seventeen-year-old working-class Nell Golightly and the young poet himself. The narrative of the novel takes a form which can be put in opposition to the linearity of history as the two narrators include deviations, historical material and reported stories of other people embedded in their stories. This way, Dawson attempts to debunk the mythical cult of Brooke in favour of a more realistic version of his experiences. Readers are not only left with Brooke's first-person account; the poet and his circle of friends and acquaintances are also described by the "good" and "sensible" Nell, who is presented as a "well brought up and well-schooled" girl, "blessed with a few more Brains than most" (Dawson, 2009: 13). As an orphan from the Fens, who takes the job as a maid to support her younger siblings after their apiarist father dies, Nell has the ability "to face, very easily, the ugly facts of things" (Dawson, 2009: 14). For readers, Nell's storytelling becomes more trustworthy than the facts themselves, leaving the distinction between fact and fiction uncertain.

This double narrative point of view also gives readers two very different perspectives on the events and a clear portrayal of two strikingly different sensibilities and contrasting worlds. Through Nell's voice, Dawson portrays the rigidly fixed class system in Edwardian times and how pitilessly the working classes were exploited to provide for the

leisure and the education of the privileged. Nell's narrative interrupting that of Brooke's makes dialogism and fragmentation possible in the novel because she brings different interpretations to the events, exposing the limits of history written only from the perspective of men.

It should also be noted that most of Dawson's fictionalised passages have their basis in historical fact and the author includes an extensive paratextual bibliography at the back of the novel to show readers where her ideas came from. By placing these paratextual "historical markers" to purposely install and destabilise such structures as causal connection, narrative continuity, and most importantly, opening and closure, Dawson acknowledges that she has participated in the challenging work of re-scribing the life of Brooke, and implies that the confrontation of various war narratives, mythical or historical, is part of the process of memory re-construction.

3.2. Re-assessing Isaac Rosenberg's 'Protest' Narrative

Compared to the other two writers analysed here, Geoff Akers is perhaps the most loyal to the 'protest' narratives as he keeps most of the tropes and themes inherited from the canonical war writers. In doing so, he tends to contradict the views of more recent historians and literary critics who find themselves against what Douglas Jerrold regards as "this obsession of futility" (1930: 18) in favour of re-establishing historical truth, of restoring the authenticity of facts and documentary writings in the face of myth.[16] Yet, if readers look closely, they will realize that Akers' reliance on the well-known also entails its imaginative rereading, as he uses the explicit power of fiction to weave new thoughts into the 'protest' narrative and somehow ruptures it from within.

Beating for Light (2006) follows Isaac Rosenberg, one of the less popular, yet more thought-provoking poets of the First World War, through the whole of his short-termed life. Starting from Rosenberg's impoverished childhood in the filthy streets of a Jewish ghetto in London's East End, Akers revisits his brief schooling and work as an engraver's apprentice, as well as his funded attendance to Slade Art School, an opportunity "he deeply yearned for" but which "had eluded him" in the past (Akers, 2006: 58-59). Readers are then taken to South Africa, where Rosenberg travels in 1913 to visit his sister, improve his poor health and make a living as a portrait painter: He had been eager "to escape London's claustrophobic atmosphere and bitter disappointments—its cold winds and unrelenting poverty" (108).

The second part of the novel starts with Rosenberg's enlistment as a private soldier in the Kings Own Royal Lancasters. Although the poet detests war and the idea of killing, he is unable to find work elsewhere: "Army pay is at least… regular" (133). From this point onwards Akers "return(s) us," in Sharon Ouditt's words, "to familiar terrain" (301-02): The author gives a glimpse into "the winding, muddy trenches" (204), "the petroleum-tainted tea" (193) "the stench of rotting flesh and the bloated flies and rats" (11), and "the crass incompetence of politicians and generals, as well as their indifference to loss of life" (259). The novel reveals shell-shocked Rosenberg's final moments on the morning of 1st April 1918 during the German spring offensive: "Isaac knew very well what would happen and welcomed the prospect. Living was a burden he no longer felt able to endure" (301-02). The suggestion that the poet loses an internal battle for survival

reinforces what Akers earlier describes as "[Rosenberg's] self-conceived role as victim" (56).

Although Akers replays the most significant mythical motifs of the 'protest' narrative, he also departs from them in several ways. The writer's preoccupation to go beyond the documentary and "get inside Rosenberg's mind" (Akers, "Beating for Light:" 2009) denotes an interest both in learning about the poet from the inside out, and in making readers look at him from a different angle. The writer therefore relies on excerpts from Rosenberg's poetry, diaries and letters, which act as paratextual notes at the beginning of each chapter to, as David Herman suggests, "afford resources for interpretation, allowing readers to channel and delimit their inferential activities by situating texts within generic (or TEXT-TYPE) categories, historical epochs, authors' oeuvres, sociopolitical controversies, and so on" (2009: 190). Akers utilises paratext to guide readers chronologically through Rosenberg's emotional and physical journey to war and to turn them, in Hutcheon's words, "into […] aware collaborator[s], not […] passive consumer[s]" (2002: 84-85).

There is also the parodic recreation of real-life friends' opinions of the poet, for instance those of the Whitechapel writer Joseph Leftwich, who would later become one of Isaac's closest pals: "[Rosenberg] seems to be hardly capable of friendship. He is very self-absorbed and there is no lightness in him. […] Yet he talks interestingly of poetry" (Akers, 2009: 46). As in Dawson's novel, parody enables Akers to interrogate the discourse of traditional history, on the one hand, and it also offers new grounds for the writer to highlight 'hidden' aspects of Rosenberg's personality, revealing once more that there is no absolute truth or objectivity in the representation of the past.

Akers also adds abundant intertext that tends to illuminate the poet's self-restrained and introverted personality: some epistolary exchanges about poetry between Rosenberg and his distant, never-satisfied patron, Edward Marsh (2009: 5-14)—ironically, Marsh is also a recurring presence in Dawson's novel—and some fictional re-imaginings of the poet's constant "stuttering and hesitations" (59) and of his varied and unsuccessful attempts to gain the love of Sonia Cohen (58-62). This combination of more obvious and subtler intertext simultaneously honours and complicates Rosenberg's canonical status as a 'protest' poet. Akers revises Rosenberg's poetry and letters because they play an important role in the remembrance of the Great War, yet he uses these texts in ways that emphasise the possibility of retelling, to borrow Lynd's words, "*that* [other] past" or offering "other paradigms" (2014: 139).

The theme of class and racial discrimination, a long-disregarded aspect of the Great War, is recurrent in the novel. In telling the story 'from below,' from the perspective of a working-class soldier, Akers visibilises "the Tommy" and brings the experience of the "other ranks" into collective memory. The novel recounts both Rosenberg's daily life as a working-class boy in the East End of London—"his frequent ill health and harsh life experience in the poor Jewish community in London made him realize that life was a battle not only in wartime" (Kuzmanović, 2016: 74)—and his experience within the fighting troops, from fierce battles to moments of rest behind the line. He could not afford the privileges of the officer writers, therefore, "he had virtually no privacy or opportunity to write" and "poems were often scribbled on the backs of envelopes while his mates were asleep or temporarily distracted" (cf. Akers, 2009).

Akers also brings attention to the poet's Jewishness, which turns him into an outcast and deeply tests his endurance in the trenches: "He'd expected a degree of anti-Semitism, but was taken aback by the vehemence of the reaction" (Akers, 2006: 147).[17] Because of his incompetence as a soldier, his untidiness and absent-mindedness, he is never able to satisfy his superiors and he is constantly in trouble (2006: 257). It is in these circumstances, however, that he is able to produce his finest work: he was "reluctantly aware that his best poetry had been fashioned in adversity" (123).

To pursue this inside-out narrative perspective, Akers relies on the third-person omniscient point of view, which allows him not only to have access to the minds of all the characters but also to confront history by foregrounding what has sometimes been deliberately ignored such as the voices of marginalised characters—the poet's family, friends and lovers—and, more importantly, the poet's humanity as well as his inner doubts and fears. The concealment of the omniscient narrator's identity seems to suggest that other narrative forms—history, for example—are often received by readers without any information of who authored them.

Even if the narrative structure adopted by Akers accentuates the horrors of the Great War, it also fashions a peculiar engagement between war and peace: the story is divided into the "pre-war" and the "war" times and some of the war chapters are framed by peace sections. These framing sections sharply contrast with the strain of the warfront experience and are meant to depict more unambiguously the atrocities of the war by amplifying the impact of death and violence in the war scenes. Akers creates extremely effective visions of the slaughter. So much so that sometimes his exhibition of the carnage magnifies the reality of war to nauseating extremes: "when he looks again, the man's head is gone. Bizarrely, the body remains upright for a moment, its arms waving in the air as if searching for the missing part, before toppling over" (Akers, 2006: 14). The depiction of violence in the novel seems to function as a parody, not of history-writing itself, but rather of the conventions of 'protest' narratives. In the hands of Akers, 'protest' narratives are imitated not only in their intentions but in their intertextuality also. In this regard, the novel's "parody [of war violence] is a form of ironic rupture with the past" (Hutcheon, 1989: 5).

In 1955, Geoffrey Gorer identified what he called "The Pornography of Death." Drawing a comparable dynamic to that traced in sex by Foucault, Gorer notes that this excess of morbid representation is a form of pornography. Akers combines both sex and death: the images of the carnage in the trenches are alternated with those of explicit sexual content. Rosenberg's passionate encounter with Annetta Raphael while he is home on leave is an interesting example: "he could feel her feet gently playing with his erection. Nuzzling into her warm flesh, he willingly surrendered himself to the rapture of the moment as she pressed and rubbed him with fresh urgency" (279). The writer uses the human body as a mode of expression for lust in the peace sections, thus parodying the decadence, corruption and mutilation of the body in times of war. The paradox is that, in "Dead Man's Dump" (Akers, 2006: 1-4), the poem that paratextually precedes the novel and probably the most graphic in its description of death, the distinctions between living and dead bodies are broken down: their resemblance in death emphasizes their resemblance in life, thus questioning the ultimate purpose of war. It is from this poem that Akers borrows his title: "the blood-dazed intelligence beating for light" (line 74).

What is even more paradoxical, and tragic, is that because cruel suffering goes unnoticed and unpunished, the souls of the dead cannot find peace either.

Like Dawson, Akers clearly sees the distinction between his freedom as a novelist and his duty, in writing about history, to be as 'fair' as possible to it. At the end of the novel there is an "Author's note," which functions as a paratextual addition to the novel, in which readers are able to trace "the four excellent biographies of Isaac Rosenberg" Akers uses to bring Rosenberg to life (Akers, 2006: 311). Although Akers imagines aspects of Rosenberg's life that have not been recorded, the writer seems to be aware of what his ethical limits are and is quite 'rigorous' not to contradict or ignore what is on historical record.

3.3. Re-imagining Ivor Gurney's Life in the Age of Trauma

Except for the flashbacks and nightmares, Robert Edric's *In Zodiac Light* (2008) does not "physically" return to the horrors of the battlefield. The novel is set in the City of London mental hospital, in Dartford, where Ivor Gurney is committed in 1922, and focuses on a small segment of the poet's early institutionalisation: the spring of 1923, when his mental state was still not so desperate to friends and family. Edric tackles the "war's lingering psychological fallout" (Howe, "Elegy for Gurney") and shows the effects, both for trauma survivors and later generations, of a past that refuses to withdraw from the present and continues to haunt them. The novel endorses Fussell's claim that "the war detaches itself from its normal location and chronology and its accepted set of causes and effects to become Great in another sense—all-encompassing, all-pervading, both internal and external at once, the essential condition of consciousness in the twentieth century" (Fussell, 2013: 348). The traumatic nature of the war causes the past to exist as a very real present in Edric's novel.

The writer's selection of metafictional narrative techniques and strategies allows for the novel to become "self-conscious, self-contradictory and self-undermining" (Hutcheon, 2002: 1) and for readers to be immersed in a pervasive atmosphere of hopelessness. The historical past is seen as a fading light, being gradually obscured and displaced so as to point to its less concrete existence. Even the historical grounds and wards of Dartford Asylum are all too vaguely portrayed as if to draw attention to the illusory quality of the traumatic reality in the post-First World War world.

Edric also inserts historical events and personages into the novel, blending them with fictional characters to challenge the truth-value of the historical facts and to create alternative versions of them. Marion Scott and F.W Harvey are both real historical figures that emerge as "substitutes for [Gurney's] own family" in the novel (Edric, 2008: 121). Gurney met Scott at the Royal College of Music before the war and she became his professional guardian afterwards, collating his work and pleading with the doctors to help him continue it. She is parodied "as the tireless 'Mother Hen,' forever clacking around her charge" (Howe, "Elegy for Gurney"). So much so that, at a certain point, Gurney is made to call her "an insister" (Edric, 2008: 299). The poet F.W. Harvey was a Gloucestershire childhood friend, to whom "To His Love" was addressed. Edric suggests some of the implicitly erotic complexity of their relationship, yet the nature of their

interactions remains elusive and unclear, probably because Gurney's sexual life was a mystery to biographers as well.[18]

The story is told by the fictional Irvine, a well-meaning but reserved young psychiatrist in charge of Gurney's care. Together with a few of the poet's friends (his roommate and conscientious objector Oliver Lyle, the nurse Alison West, and the already mentioned Marion Scott and his fellow poet F W Harvey), Irvine trusts that, despite the mental breakdown, Gurney's creative power will remain unchallenged: "'He's a musician and a poet. I've read his poems. Listen to others, they'll want you to believe he's some sort of genius'" (Edric, 2008: 53-4). Comparison with Barker's *Regeneration* is inevitable, yet Edric's vision is more pessimistic: Gurney's regeneration is much less plausible than Sassoon's, mainly because Irvine's progressive therapy's is wryly censured by the villains in the story: his medical colleagues and the institution's orderlies. More preoccupied with advancing his career than with helping Gurney work out his war traumas, Osborne, the asylum's director, mocks the poet's talent and calls him "our budding Tchaikovsky" (Edric, 2008: 165). Similarly, Osborne's brutal assistant and morphine-addict, Cox, boycotts the inmates' treatment and abuses the men under his control. Being a war veteran himself, he seems to resent "all he had lost upon his return to civilian life" (Edric, 2008: 16).[19]

Like Gurney, Irvine is also struggling with the past: he has lost a brother on the Western Front; his parents have also died, and he feels insecure by the belief that he was never their favourite son. As Ruth Scurr suggests, the decision to approach Gurney "through the eyes of a sympathetic but culturally limited psychiatrist," is not only a clear example of doing history from the bottom up but also "a clever way of sidestepping the complex problems that await his biographers" ("A Poet Dwelling in the Shadows"). The most obvious use of silence within the novel has to do with Gurney's mind. Irvine avoids 'filling in the gaps' left by Gurney's inscrutable personality and, except for some occasions in which he comments on the poet's actions and exchanges, he is a non-intrusive first-person narrator, who objectively describes, as an observer following Gurney, what he sees and hears:

> On occasion, Gurney would pause in whatever he was doing, stand upright, his face raised, his eyes tightly close and he would murmur or hum to himself, perhaps composing something new or remembering an earlier composition; or perhaps simply remembering an earlier time when he had undertaken similar work elsewhere. I wished I could have spoken to him then, asked him what he as remembering. But I knew that if I had interrupted him, he would have said nothing, or at best made some excuse, keeping these necessary, sustaining secrets to himself. (Edric, 2008: 159)

Edric explores Irvine's world through the recollections of his childhood and of his father's passion for bee-keeping. Yet Gurney's soul remains inaccessible. As Howe states, the character of "Gurney works largely through absence." He is left secluded by the depth of his individual loss and tormented mind and there is "the overwhelming impression […] of a novel mourning the absence of its own hero" ("Elegy for Gurney").

There is, however, a great deal of intertextuality during Gurney's conversations with Irvine, particularly as his memories drift incoherently to the surface of consciousness in

response to Irvine's questions. These exchanges go through the fragmented facts of Gurney's life after war—"You were discharged from Napsbury in October—18, and committed to Barnwood House in the same month—22" (Edric, 2008: 178) and then through the poet's traumatic war memories—"'All I'd see would be that falling man' […]. 'That poor bloody bugger falling out of the sky like one of Lucifer's bad angels'" (198). Edric quotes very little of Gurney's poems, yet he draws up a pastiche attempting to re-create his poetic voice: "As he said this, his voice slowed and deepened slightly, and I heard an echo of several of his poems, as though he might even perhaps have been reading from one of them" (2008: 98).

Although the novel revolves around two main occurrences—the concert arranged by Scott in the asylum to play Gurney's works and the tragedy that ensues from Lyle's suicide—*In Zodiac Light* is mostly about the characters carrying the burden of war trauma, personifying this post-traumatic world as an alienating force. Yet, they all keep a wall of silence around their feelings; communication is cut off. Silence is recurrently put forward as a valid means of surviving the suffering inflicted by the war. Except for the scar Irvine shows to nurse Alison West, his war experience remains an unspeakable memory: "'And round here'—I patted my side—'I've got a constellation of small white stars, twenty-seven to be precise, pinpricks. Sometimes they look like a hand, and sometimes—and not entirely inappropriately—they look like a gun, a pistol'" (Edric, 2008: 84).

Readers only access the war indirectly; the traces and marks left by the war remain physically present. As Howe suggests, "scars, bruises and disfigurements are the metaphorical stock-in trade of a novel about war's enduring effect on both the individual and the collective consciousness" ("Elegy for Gurney"). It seems the characters have gone beyond the pity and turned into numbness; they are detached from the demands of the flesh and the soul, beyond suffering and pain. Gurney himself is accused of lack of pity before the burning of the beehives: "So what if I had no pity left? So what? There was no shame in that, not after everything I'd been through and seen. No shame at all" (Edric, 2008: 368).

In Zodiac Light revisits the traditional tale of the soldier's return,[20] yet Edric contradicts the ideas of atonement and peace that had often been associated with the homecoming tale in 'patriotic' narratives and places war trauma as the dominant literary construction. However, the novel goes beyond the use of trauma as subject matter or as part of characterisation by weaving it into the very fabric of the text. To describe this anesthetized world, numbed by the atrocities that it has witnessed and perpetuated, Edric turns to a "glacial, dispassionate prose that eschews histrionics" (Thomson, "Prisoners of Waterland"). This unadorned prose also allows Edric to depict the sphere of the natural, which is submersed, even defined, by the perturbation that permeates and extends beyond the characters. Edric's searching interest seems to be, in Will Cohu's words, the depiction of "the unity of people and landscape" and of "ghosts pressing on present lives" ("A Writer's life"). The episode of the beached whale in the Thames estuary that Irvine and the inmates go to see at the beginning of the novel not only reveals that "Edric is a virtuoso of atmospheric settings" (Howe, "Elegy for Gurney"), but stands as a straightforward symbol of society's impotence before extreme pain and loss: "There was neither tail nor mouth visible to indicate which end was which. A mud-covered protuberance that might

have been the remains of a fin had already been eaten away by the birds" (Edric, 2008: 21).

There are other, sometimes (too) obvious, symbols that illustrate life in the aftermath of war: a dragonfly trapped in a glass jar (Edric, 2008: 64) and "a speckled bird, a crow, being attacked and killed by others" (104). The symbolism of the beehives, however, also a recurring trope in Dawson's *The Great Lover*, constitutes the allegoric core of the novel. In the orchard of the asylum are "two dozen hives in a state of disrepair amid rank grass and overgrown brambles, most of the structures empty and abandoned, and the remainder half-filled with feeble colonies struggling to survive" (Edric, 2008: 27). When Irvine gathers a working party of inmates to work on the "resurrection of the colony" (142), there are clear connotations of damage, reparation and rebirth. Some of the hives have "collapsed beyond retrieval" (131), others "can be salvaged and repaired" (130) and maybe "allowed to survive, to struggle through the spring" (130) Yet, just as the title of the novel refers to "a very faint cone of light in the sky," the promised rebirth associated with the new day seems increasingly uncertain.[21]

Edric's novel has been criticised for "giv[ing] in too readily to the demands of fiction" (Howe, "Elegy for Gurney) and for changing some fundamental facts of Gurney's story, for instance, that Gurney completely lost his musical talent in the asylum: "half the staves [he shows to Irvine] were empty, and the remainder were filled with tailing lines of words and notes which ran off the right-hand sides of the sheets" (Edric, 2008: 300). Music scholars refute this idea, pointing out the brilliant freshness of Gurney's later musical work. Moreover, the novel suggests that Gurney could not possibly have written poetry at that time, while it has been historically proven that some of his best poems were written in Dartford between 1923 and 1926.

Although Edric uses paratext to identify the text as historical discourse (through the reference to Gurney's poetry in the title and the dictionary entry with a scientific explanation of "zodiacal light" on the first page), he undermines that association with a disclaimer: "This book is a work of fiction and, except in the case of historical fact, any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, is purely coincidental." Yet, it might be argued that the writer's most significant accomplishments are, firstly, to have found a fictional form that allows for the voicing and working through of Great War trauma and, secondly, to have represented the mythical post-war scenario and self-consciously adapted it to the aesthetic needs and interrogations of his time.

4. Conclusions

Dawson, Akers and Edric's retrospective approach to the lives of Brooke, Rosenberg and Gurney should be viewed in relation to "other forms of engagement"—such as their literary, formal and ideological decisions—that mediate the authors' quest for understanding the past (Phillips, 2001: 12) and which are used to fill in the gaps and occupy the vacancies that memory threatens to break apart. The three novels exhibit a strong sense of their retrospective position and ask significant questions about their relationship to the past, particularly about the use of historical and literary sources to re-scribe a previously non-existent version of the poets' lives. Dawson, Akers and Edric's novels reflect on what the past means in the present, what aims they pursue by returning

to the Great War, whether the past can be adequately represented in fiction and if various war narratives can consistently coexist.

To attempt an answer to these questions, they rely on some of the literary techniques of Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction, including intertextuality, parody, and paratextuality, and experiment with history in order to challenge the authenticity of objective facts and disrupt the boundaries between fiction and reality.

However, the consequences of this access to the past vary among the three writers. This draws different conclusions as to how this reconnection between past and present and between history and fiction is possible. While Edric's metafictional impulse informs the construction of his novel all throughout, giving his readers the chance to evaluate the implications of the experience of truth creation, the nature of Dawson's and Akers' relation with the past is less a matter of narrative experimentation than a concern with their duty to be fair to the historical events themselves.

In varying degrees, however, the three novels under study involve the manipulation of historical sources, the incorporation of other people as historical agents, the acceptance of the challenge of re-scribing memory in the post-traumatic age, and a reliance on the strong presence of the real poets as fictional characters. Dawson, Akers and Edric use historiographic metafiction to go beyond what they perceive as limits of the documentary or historical and to assert both their role as agents of memory and their own interpretation of events, not as one among many competing narratives, but as an accurate reconsideration of the past. The three novels have, therefore, accepted the ethical and representational challenge of portraying the lives of Brooke, Rosenberg and Gurney in the context of the Great War, making them available again as a poignant experience for readers.

Notes

1. In *Bartleby & Co*., Enrique Vila-Matas considers this "literary silence" to be a "syndrome" which he names after Bartleby himself. He reviews what he calls the "literature of the NO" to address the reasons why many writers decide not to continue writing.

2. For more on the ethical problems of writing about the war, see also Paul Fussell (1981: 189-194), Samuel Hynes (1992: 423-425), and Mark Rawlinson (2000: 9).

3. Lyotard defines "postmodernism" by its "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Lyotard XXIV), as these, of course, involve the risk of neglecting not only the diversity of voices and perspectives, but the uniqueness of the writer's insights and points of view.

4. Several critical approaches have developed in the wake of postmodernism. Among the theorists in this area are Hayden White (1973; 1974) and Lawrence Sterne (1988). They raise questions about the boundaries between history and literature, employing the term "meta-history," and maintaining that historians do use their imagination and rely on the narrative strategies of literary writers as they employ "plots" or "emplotments."

5.   See Pat Barker's Great War trilogy (*Regeneration*, 1991; *The Eye in the Door*, 1993; and *The Ghost Road*, 1995) and Sebastian Faulk's *Birdsong* (1993).

6.   The terms "war books," "war-books boom" and "war-books controversy" have been borrowed from Cyril Fall's *War Books* (1930) and Douglas Jerrold "The Lie about the War" (1930). They refer to a new phenomenon of publication of war novels and memoirs taking place during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The war books were survival accounts mostly written by the canonical "war poets" or with their work at their foundation. The canonical "war poets" came from middle-class and upper-middle-class backgrounds; many had been to public schools and served as officers at the front. They wrote the story of the Great War that came to be known as the 'truth.' The "war-books controversy" was a counter-reaction that argued that the "war books" falsified the true image of the First World War. Falls criticizes the limited number of experiences they portray, claiming that 'the soldier is represented as a depressed and mournful spectre helplessly wandering about until death brought his miseries to an end' (1930: XI). Similarly, Jerrold argues that "this obsession of futility" gave a false picture of the war; even when these books presented a relatively truthful picture of it, they distorted the core motivation of the conflict (Jerrold 18). Although Jerrold and Falls were the first to make visible and question this 'protest' narrative of the Great War, the idea that the Great War destroyed the representation of the soldier and war itself as heroic remained the standard version, the 'sacred national text', until today (Motion, 2003: XI).

7.   When the Great War started, popular writers like H.G. Wells and Arnold Bennett hurried into writing pro-war literature without encouragement, but older writers of renown like Hardy, Kipling, Doyle, Galsworthy, Barrie and Chesterton were specifically recruited by the War Propaganda Bureau to promote Britain's interests at war. Buitenhuis describes in detail a secret meeting taking place in the afternoon of 2 September 1914 at Wellington House (Buckingham Gate) between C.F.G. Masterman, the chief of Britain's war propaganda bureau, and a number of prominent British writers "to discuss ways and means by which they could contribute to the Allied war effort" (Introduction XV).

8.   Some of the names used to refer to the myth of war represented in the literature of 'protest' are: "liberal experience of war" (Leed, *No Man's Land* 25), "the great casualty myth" (Terraine, *The Smoke and the Fire* 35), the "Myth of the War" (Hynes, *A War Imagined* IX), "modern memory" (Jay Winter, *Sites of Mourning* 2), and the "loss, anger and futility myth" (Galer, 2008: 180).

9.   The Georgian poet Gordon Bottomley selected and edited the first posthumous collection of Rosenberg's work, *Poems by Isaac Rosenberg* (1922) and collaborated with the critic D.W. Harding on the preparation of the *Collected Works* in 1937. See Bottomley, G and D Harding's *The Collected Works of Isaac Rosenberg* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937).

10.   "Shell-shock" is one of the greatest metaphors of the 'protest' myth. The term was coined during the Great War to refer to war trauma. It was believed at the time that the condition resulted from trauma caused by shock waves from shells. Yet the history of combat stress reactions and the different labels assigned to them—"soldier's heart," "battle fatigue," "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder" and "Gulf War syndrome," among others—have shown that they refer to psychological disorders resulting from the stress of battle. They have in fact transcended their particular time and place to frame the perceptions, judgements and attitudes of those who suffered war.

11.   In January 2015, the U.K.'s Conservative education secretary, Michael Gove, proved that there is still "a continuing battle over the war's meaning" when he attacked the "'left-wing myths,' taught in British schools, that the war was a 'misbegotten shambles'" (Gove qtd in Joanna Scutts, "The True Story of Rupert Brooke").

12. Bakhtin's concept of "dialogism," from which the postmodernist concept of intertextuality was derived, had a similar purpose. See Tzvetan Todorov's *Mikhail Bakhtin: The*

Dialogical Principle (1981: 63).

13. In an interview given to Danuta Kean for *The Independent*, Dawson expresses her awareness of the different positions taken by those writing about Brooke's life: "biographers' interpretations of Brooke began with patriotic pride, moved on to discrediting his status as a War Poet (he died before seeing action) and more recently have reflected popular culture's obsession with sex" ("Battle of the Heart").

14. Despite his initial ambivalence to the war, Brooke got a commission in the Royal Navy in 1914. While preparing in Egypt for the invasion of Gallipoli, he was bitten by a mosquito and developed a blood infection. His health rapidly deteriorated and he died aboard a French hospital ship on 23 April 1915.

15. The Bloomsbury group began to meet about 1906 and included, among others, John Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Virginia and Leonard Woolf, Vanessa and Clive Bell, Duncan Grant, E.M. Forster, and Roger Fry. While they regarded themselves fundamentally as "a group of friends" (Woolf, 1964: 23), they shared a common "body of practice and a distinguishable ethos" that allowed for their growth and development as a "social and cultural group" (Williams, 1980: 40). Any serious analysis of the 'protest' interpretations of the conflict during and after the First World War must consider Bloomsbury as a significant influence, not only in its potential to undermine the ideals proposed by 'heroic' narratives but in the development of pacifist alternatives to the group's conviction that war only brought the destruction of art and intellect.

16. See footnote 6. In more recent years, new scholarship (Onions, 1990; Bracco, 1993; Dawson, 1994; Winter, 1995, 2006; Sheffield, 2002; Bond, 2008 and McLoughlin [2011] 2014, among several others), has challenged and sought to disprove the version handed down by the war poets. Some of the overlapping issues addressed by these scholars include the quest to redefine heroism, assuming that the concept itself still has meaning, the emphasis on an underlying unity rather than the discontinuity between pre-war and post-war experience, the conflictive relationship between literature and history in the representation of war, the idea that war has always been understood in the light of the "big words" and the theme of bereavement and mourning in the assessment of the past.

17. See letter written to Sydney Schiff in October 1915: "my being a Jew makes it bad among these wretches" (Akers, 2006: 141).

18. Gurney's friend, Arthur Benjamin, himself a homosexual, believed that Gurney was also homosexual, whereas Gurney never recognised it. Gurney's attitude towards sexuality may be compared to that of Owen, Sassoon or Graves: "Young men like Ivor Gurney and so many others were reared to believe that homosexual love was wrong, a sin that could only bring shame upon a man and his family" (Blevins, 2008: 75). He had no choice, then, but to seek some expression for his feelings through letters and verse.

19. In his review of the novel for *The Independent*, William Palmer suggests that "the constant insolence voiced by orderlies to doctors and nurses is quite unbelievable" and that "in the rigid hierarchy of hospitals at that time such insubordination would [not] have been tolerated" ("In Zodiac Light").

20. Several of Edric's most recent books are concerned with "war's inglorious aftermath." As Sara Howe claims, "*In Desolate Heaven* (1997), *Peacetime* (2002) and *The Kingdom of Ashes* (2007) are populated with men and women bewildered and resentful at having been inadvertently left alive" (2008).

21. The title of Edric's novel was borrowed from Gurney's "In Flaxley Wood" (1921): "I walked midsummer in Flaxley Wood,/And waited through the daylong night;/ Attendant of a world not come, And cast by dark in zodiac light".

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Traumatic Re-enactments:
Portraits of Veterans in Contemporary British and Canadian First World War Fiction

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the portrait of the First World War veterans in selected British and Canadian novels published at the turn of the twenty-first century. The authors use various means to depict the phenomenon of trauma: from flashbacks disrupting the present, through survivor guilt, nightmares and suicide, to aporia and the collapse of representation. The comparative approach used in the article highlights national differences, yet also shows that the discourse of futility and trauma provides a trasnational framework to convey the suffering of the First World War. As a result, although resulting in social castration and disempowerment, trauma serves here as a vehicle for a critique of the disastrous aftermath of the 1914-1918 conflict and the erasures of collective memory. Re-enacting traumatic plots, the British and Canadian novels under consideration explore little known facets of the 1914-1918 conflict, while simultaneously addressing some of our most pressing anxieties about the present, such as social marginalization, otherness, and lonely death.

Keywords: veterans, First World War Fiction, Britain, Canada, trauma

In the recent decades the First World War has become an increasingly important literary theme in Britain and Canada, a "cultural touchstone" to which we compare later military engagements, and a catalyst for exploring (post)modern identities (Ouditt, 2005: 246). At its centenary, the Great War continues to inspire new political, social and cultural interpretations, which expose its haunting absurdity, liminality, and ambivalence (see Sokołowska-Paryż and Löschnigg, 2014).[1] The purpose of this article is an analysis of the portraits of First World War veterans in selected British and Canadian novels published at the turn of the twenty-first century: Louisa Young's *The Heroes' Welcome* (2014), Helen Dunmore's *The Lie* (2014), Jane Urquhart's *The Underpainter* (1997), Allan Donaldson's *Maclean* (2005) and Frances Itani's *Tell* (2014). The five texts under

scrutiny engage with aspects of post-war reality which have not, perhaps, been sufficiently examined. Faced with rigid standards of manliness, as well as doctrines of industrial efficiency and adaptability, the First World War veterans were frequently considered "inferior men" (Montgomery, 2017: 48). While in Britain they had to rely on charity, the Canadian government created a system of pensions, but was determined to save public money whenever possible[2]. The article aims therefore to demonstrate how the veterans' experiences, often ignored in the past, become the object of fascination today, and thus "provide an inroad into how national identities and social memories are shaped" (Montgomery, 2017: 10).

Depicting the difficult reintegration of traumatized men, the five novels under consideration question or reinforce popular master narratives of remembrance. In the British context, collective memory of the First World War has been marked by the *futility myth*, the tropes and despair and disillusionment, shaped, to a large degree, by the poets-combatants (see Hynes, 1990: 407-463). In the post-war years, literature engendered images of "radical emptiness—as a chasm, or an abyss, or an edge—[…], all expressing a fracture in time and space that separated the present from the past" (Hynes, 1990: xi). The conflict was conceptualized as a bloody catastrophe, caused by ill-considered tactics of frontal attacks on enemy lines, which led to the death of thousands of men. In popular memory, the suffering of the shell-shocked infantry officer, haunted by images of his comrades climbing 'over the top' to be mowed down by machine guns, is sacrosanct (Wilson, 2014: 43; 49). As Ross J. Wilson suggests, in spite of the efforts made by historians to demonstrate that the war was a huge success of the British army, which provided opportunities for loyalty and camaraderie within the ranks, the "rats, gas, mud and blood" image persists in literature, films and television programmes (2014: 42; see also Todman, 2005: xii).

By contrast, in Canadian memory, the Great War has been represented as a foundational myth; the sacrifice of sixty thousand Canadian soldiers proved that Canada was not only a dominion at the service of the British Empire, but an independent nation. The war was also to help transcend ethnic, social and religious differences among the Canadian people within a homogenous Anglo-Canadian culture (Vance, 1997: 260-261). However, apart from these emancipatory and assimilationist overtones, central to Canada's memory of the Great War was also the parallel between Canadian soldiers and Jesus Christ; the combatants, fighting in a sacred crusade in defence of Christianity and Western civilization, formed a community of sacrifice, which had the power to atone for the sins of the world (Vance, 1997: 40-41). In this context, it was difficult to accept that the Great War crusaders had become broken men, unable to provide for themselves and their families (Vance, 1997: 53)

Referring to the British and Canadian historical contexts, the five texts under analysis depict veterans suffering from war-related psychological disorders and thus echo the phenomenon of shell shock, its cultural perception and contestation. Soldiers and veterans with wounds of the minds were stigmatized during and after the First World War and their symptoms, such as memory disorders, tremor, paralysis, mutism, panic attacks, were often seen as evidence of moral weakness.[3] It is important to remember, however, that, as Jay Winter suggests, in the Great War shell shock was not what we refer to as trauma nowadays, but rather "a category taken at the time to be analogous to surgical

shock, a life-threatening condition" (2015: 317). Our contemporary understanding of trauma has been shaped by Holocaust studies, the Vietnam War and feminist movements of the 1970s (Luckhurst, 2008: 59-76). Key to the analyses of trauma today is the concept of aporia, promoted by the deconstructive approach of Cathy Caruth. In this perspective, trauma is an event that

> is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. […] Its very unassimilated nature—the way it is precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on. (1996: 4)

Trauma involves therefore a delay in seeing, an incompletion in knowing, and a haunting residue. The unassimilated event possesses its victim, yet remains beyond verbalization. Consequently, it is not so much the moment of psychic injury, but the survival of it, that becomes traumatic (Caruth, 1995: 7-10). This aporetic paradigm is challenged by trauma therapists, among others Judith Lewis-Herman (1992) and Dori Laub (1992a), who insist on the necessity of testimony and verbalization. In this perspective, memory work can help the victim to depart from the traumatic moment and to reintegrate the traumatized self. This controversy is mirrored in contemporary fiction, which has "developed a repertoire of plots that explore both traumatic disruption and the possibility of release into narrative" (Luckhurst, 2008: 80).[4] In the historical novels below, memory of the First World War is filtered through the contemporary trauma discourse; they employ various literary technique to illustrate psychological breakdown and the traumatic aftermaths of industrialized warfare, oscillating between attempts to explicate trauma and the impossibility of its representation.

In her novel *Tell*, published in 2014, set between 1919 and 1921 in the fictional town of Deseronto (Ontario), Canadian author Frances Itani portrays a veteran who lost half of his face in an explosion in France, and suffers from mutism and partial paralysis. In many ways, *Tell* is a classic trauma narrative, as Itani employs here several interruptive, non-linear techniques to illustrate the disruption of the returned soldier's memory and identity (Coates, 2016: 52). Kenan has not left his house since he came back to Canada in the winter of 1918. "[H]aving brought the battelefield home with him" (Itani, 2014: 10), he considers it safer to stay indoors and isolates himself from his wife and the Deseronto community. Unable to re-enter the structures of his previous existence, he spends his days alone, imprisoned in his memories of war. The war comes back to him in terrible nightmares, in which, together with his comrades, he is exposed to extreme danger. Paralysing flashbacks also interrupt his daily routine and cause him to shake uncontrollably:

> Those imaginings—what he saw in his mind, what he dreamed and felt and tasted and smelled—were not imaginings at all. They were real, *had* been real the entire time he was overseas. He had never put any of this into words and did not want memories to start tumbling out now. Better to hold the lid on what was behind his eyes. Memory saw with two eyes, no matter if one eye was blind or not. (Itani, 2014: 135)

The protagonist's strange behaviour is a form of *acting out*, which Domnick LaCapra (2001: 142-143) identifies as a compulsive tendency to repeat the traumatizing events; instead of directly confronting the past, Kenan's psyche re-enacts the brutal scenes of death in violent intrusions, which are destructive to the self. His behaviour oscillates between numbing, the absence of feelings, and vigilance, hyperalertness to stimuli, which scholars identify as polar symptoms of trauma (Herman, 1992: 49). The reader does not learn about the source of Kenan's trauma until midway through the novel, thus sharing the protagonist's feelings of loss and uncertainty. The memory that haunts Kenan with a particular intensity is that of the barrage during which he was wounded, and his friend Bill, who calls to him for help in his nightmares, was annihilated. Because of its sudden and overwhelming character, the veteran is unable to assimilate the terror of massive, premature and absurd dying. Kenan cannot remember, for in order to survive, his psyche severed emotions from awareness of what was happening by dissociating itself from reality (see Lifton, 1996: 169-175).

Nevertheless, *Tell* also illustrates the process of *working through* trauma, which functions as a countervailing force to acting out, and might help the survivor to distinguish between present and past, and thus disengage from trauma (LaCapra, 2001: 58). As indicated in its title, the *telling* of trauma plays a most important function in Itani's novel. Silence might seem to protect the traumatized person, however, although muted and deeply hidden, the traumatic events continue to have a destructive impact on their life (Laub, 1992a: 58). This is illustrated in *Tell* by the story of Am and Maggie, who have never spoken about the tragic death of their children, which occurred years ago, but still disrupts their existence. According to Dori Laub, trauma survivors must "tell their stories in order to survive. There is, in each survivor, an imperative need to *tell* and thus to come to *know* one's story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself. One has to know one's buried truth in order to be able to live one's life" (1992b: 78-79). Kenan is anxious to speak, yet is paralysed by fear. Only at the end of the novel, when talking to Am, who confesses his tragic story to him, does he become able to verbalize his memories of the fatal barrage.[5]

This exchange of traumatic memories is intriguing in Itani's novel. On the one hand, it creates an ethically disturbing parallel between the death of soldiers in war and the accidental demise of children in peacetime. On the other hand, Itani explores the concept of *asymmetries as similarities* (see Rothberg, 2011: 528) by juxtaposing stories that are not identical to each other but similar, yet in being entirely different. While I am sceptical whether each of these experiences can be better understood by being confronted with the other, the juxtaposition highlights the necessity to *tell* in order to heal from trauma. Shell shock is therefore placed in a specific historical context, but also a more universal light, within the range of other traumatic encounters with death. Ultimately, having told his story, Kenan is able to see that he is loved and needed by his family and friends; this sense of empowerment allows him to break his isolation and re-gain control over his life.

In *The Heroes' Welcome* (2014), set in-between 1919 and 1927, British author Louisa Young employs more disruptive techniques that mirror the effects of trauma on the veteran's psyche. One of the protagonists of the novel, Peter Locke, is unable to reintegrate his life and to reassume the duties of a husband and father. He remains imprisoned in the past and relives ceaselessly the horrors of the front. He can find solace

only in alcohol and drugs. It is also an escapist tactic, which allows him to evade his responsibilities, for Peter's intimate life is damaged by his war experience, too. His wife, Julia, a conventional, upper middle-class lady, irritates him because of her expectation that he should automatically re-enter his pre-war existence. Significantly, in the *The Heroes' Welcome*, the traumatic knowledge that the protagonist has acquired at the front interferes with the present, renders the future impossible, and prevents him from coming back home from war:

> Constant, lethal danger of death, at all times. They had breathed it, swam in it, drunk it, eaten it, been it—ferocious, insidious, perpetual danger; drowning in the constant threat—an extraordinary way to live! Immersed in danger, soaked through, inseparable. How can a man ever rinse that out of his psyche? Were we not leached and warped by that toxic bath? Our chemistry changed, our joints rusted and corroded, our hearts scorched? (Young, 2014: 246).

This lived, corporeal knowledge proves "disjunctive" and makes reintegration impossible (Leed, 1979: 75). Having become an other to himself, the protagonist perceives his wife and son as strangers, incapable of understanding his suffering. He is unable to work and isolates himself by avoiding the company of people who knew him, as a refined gentleman, before the war. In fact, Peter feels responsible for the loss of men who died under his command during the battles of Loos and the Somme. He suffers from survivor guilt, an aspect of war trauma, which Robert J. Lifton defines in terms of self-blame for participation in unjust slaughter and the combatant's identification with the dead (1996: 115-179). Peter either wishes he had died with his men, or comes to the conclusion that he did not deserve to die with them. He believes that he deserves to be punished for his incompetent decisions and the betrayal of those who were under his care.

Peter's condition improves during his wife's pregnancy, yet the intense experience of her labour triggers the flow of traumatic memories. It is as if the distress of the present was conflated with the traumatic experience of the past. During Julia's labour, Peter is overwhelmed by the hallucination that he has brought a comrade to a casualty clearing station at the front. He confuses the doctor with the MO, the assisting female friends with nurses, and his wife with an injured soldier:

> He just sat there, and smoked. He wasn't going to leave the poor fellow alone. *Is is Purefoy? Ainsworth? Who is it?*

> They were doing some kind of emergency surgery. Evidently it went well, though it seemed to take some time. After a while—a long time—*hours?*—the soldier's crying out and gasping and weeping stopped. The women stepped away from the bed. The angle of the doctor's shoulders changed—there was a kind of rolling back, an assumed uprightness. He turned, carrying something: *It'll be whatever they just amputated*. It was wrapped in cloth, and looked like some kind of small limb—half an arm, perhaps. Lower leg. *Poor bastard*. (Young, 2014: 187-188).

When the doctor wants to hand the new-born infant to him, Peter believes he tries to give him the soldier's amputated limb. Only when he hears that it is his daughter, he "snaps back" to the present (Young, 2014: 188). Whether this representation of traumatic

memory is psychologically correct is irrelevant, for the combination of direct speech and free indirect speech creates a most powerful effect on the reader. The birth of his daughter gives Peter hope for the future. Tragically, Julia dies of a haemorrhage at night, while Peter is uncertain whether the blood all over him belongs to her or his dead comrades. He also has strong suspicions that he has killed his wife himself.

Subsequently, considering himself accountable for the horrors of the past and the present, Peter abandons his children to the care of his friends and isolates himself in a country cottage. However, in the last part of the novel, set eight years later, in 1927, Young illustrates, somewhat abruptly, Peter's partial recovery. With the help of his former comrade Riley Purefoy, Peter eventually comes back home. Together, they travel to Ypres to pay tribute to the departed at Menin Gate; the novel closes with a promise of peace and redemption. Like Itani's *Tell*, *The Heroes' Welcome* is a harmonizing narrative, which, by illustrating the process of healing from trauma, provides the reader with a spiritual uplift (LaCapra, 2001: 13).[6]

By contrast, Canadian author Allan Donaldson and British writer Helen Dunmore insist on the deathly power of war that continues to exclude the veteran from the world of the living many years after the conflict. In *Maclean,* a short, ironic and little-known novel from 2005, Allan Donaldson draws a portrait of a despaired and disillusioned First World War veteran in a small New Brunswick town in the 1940s. For the protagonist, the war is a caesura that separates the pre-war world of hope, opportunities and youth from the post-war realities of frustration and ageing, "that fork in the road of time where [he] could make the turn towards the li[fe] [he] ought to have had" (Donaldson, 2005: 95). Rather than with glory and heroism, his memories of war are filled with mutilated bodies and absurd deaths resulting from the irrational decisions of incompetent staff. The horrible battles he took part in are only mentioned as "brisk skirmishes" in the histories of the war, and remain beyond his comprehension (Donaldson, 2005: 56). In Maclean's memories, some of the Canadian soldiers were brutal, mean-spirited and dishonest, which clashes with the glorification of Canadian volunteers in the collective imagination. He could not believe his lack when he was gassed and, deemed "no longer healthy enough to be killed" (Donaldson, 2005: 99), was sent back home. Yet, after he returned to Canada, Spanish Influenza ravished the community, killing the girl he might have married. With "more and more boys dragging home with their wounds, outer and inner, from the trenches" (Donaldson, 2005: 80), the borderline between the hell of military front and the peace of home front is increasingly blurred.

A quarter of a century after the war, the veteran is still haunted by unwanted memories of the past. Donaldson smoothly integrates his protagonist's traumatic memories in long descriptive passages, sometimes separated from the rest of the text by a pause. The flashbacks come unexpectedly every time when "Someone, something, sneaking past the sentries he had posted, had thrown wide the gates of memory" (Donaldson, 2005: 98). A powerful example is Maclean's reaction to the deafening noise of a passing train that he has almost collided with on a shaking bridge. Although he knows that he is safe, his body reacts, shivering, and brings back the memory of a young boy in panic during his first barrage:

"Jesus. Jesus," the boy beside him kept shouting. "Make them stop. Make them stop."

"Keep down, you god-damned fool! Keep down!"

He looked up, at the water falling through the sluice gates silently, at the traffic going back and forth on the other bridge silently, at the people leaning calmly on the rails talking to each other, as if they were in another world form him here bent over the edge of the truss, terrified, shivering, the wheels pounding relentlessly beside him, shaking the bridge under his feet.

The earth shook. The earth shook and erupted and stank of explosive, and the almost naked body of a man, spilling blood and guts, its legs blown to tatters, came tumbling end over end down over the parados. (Donaldson, 2005: 110)

Another interesting aspect of the novel is Donaldson's use of similes that refer to the world of war to depict Canadian every-day life, e.g. a man in mourning looks "like a man with a mortal wound"; the sky shimmers with northern lights "like the flickering of a distant barrage" (Donaldson, 2005: 117; 141). As Kali Tal suggests, "Traumatic experience catalyzes a transformation of meaning in the signs individuals use to represent their experiences" (1996: 16). The accumulation of similes referencing front life in *Maclean* serves the translation of trauma into textual means, but also renders the metamorphosis of the protagonist under the influence of war, which clearly affects the way he perceives and frames his existence.

In Donaldson's novel, Maclean and other veterans drift on the margins of respectable society, addicted to alcohol, getting involved in street fights, and stealing from one another. With his damaged lungs and the economic depression, the protagonist can barely survive on his meagre pension. Because of his irregular life style, he has been shunned by his family, who, blame him for his inability to adapt. He has the bitter feeling that "There isn't any decent life" available for the likes of him (Donaldson, 2015: 97). Maclean shows anger and resentment towards the ones who stayed at home and were thus saved from the destructive effects of war trauma: "Old vets, like himself, on street corners coming to see that in the years they had been away the ones who had stayed home, the smart ones, light-footed, had been making money and getting ahead, and they, the heroes, the stupid ones, were never going to catch up" (Donaldson, 2005: 86). Donaldson thus illustrates the veterans' "demotion from 'heroes' to eminently superfluous men used up by an industrialized war" (Leed, 1979: 196). His protagonist's disillusionment involves a feeling of *proletarianization*, experienced by many veterans after the First World War (see Leed, 1979: 75-6). This loss of dignity makes him "unfit for active service in the world" (Donaldson, 2005: 92). After his childhood sweetheart is killed by influenza, he gets involved with a war widow, a simple but decent woman. However, unemployment, destitution, loss of opportunities precipitate him into "dank despair" (Donaldson, 2005: 91) and ruin the relationship.

The final scene in the novel replays ironically the lines from Laurence Binyon's "For the Fallen": the intoxicated veteran walks to the Great War cenotaph, conversing with the soldiers at the top, while a stranger, looking at him from an upstairs window, "draws down the blind" (Donaldson, 2005: 161-162). Donaldson thus exposes the hypocrisy of

commemoration rituals, such as Remembrance Day in Canada, which promise immortality to the First World War fallen, while the living are relegated to oblivion. Although Maclean cannot forget the death of the men who were "his pals" and whose names are engraved on the monument, he cannot relate to the cenotaph. The living memory of war enacted daily by his traumatized mind is incompatible with this grandiose and impersonal structure. The novel's ending raises important questions about the relation between trauma and collective remembrance, as well as the social neglect of veterans in the aftermath of wars.

In *The Lie* (2014), Helen Dunmore relies on temporal disruption to illustrate war's tragic aftermath, yet she also uses Gothic means to represent the power of traumatic memory. Daniel, the protagonist of the novel, is literally haunted by the ghosts of soldiers dead in the war, particularly the spirit of his beloved friend, Frederick. In spite of the difference in class—Daniel was a farmer's son, Frederic belonged to the upper middle class—the two Cornish boys became close friends before the war and their relationship flourished when they were reunited in the war zone, with homoerotic overtones. As in *Tell* by Itani, the sources of trauma are gradually revealed to the reader, who thus witnesses the protagonist's memory work. Daniel's first-person-narrative, filled with ellipses and flashbacks, stages the play of victim/victimizer with an ambivalence characteristic of the Gothic convention. The eponymous lie has a double meaning in the novel, fusing the distress suffered by the soldier after his return home with his limit experience at the front. Daniel hides from the community that Mary Pascoe, the old woman who invited him to live with her after he came back, is dead and that he buried her in the garden. At the same time, he cannot remember the circumstances of Frederick's death at the front; he fights to keep these memories at bay, which can only aggravate his trauma (see Laub, 1992: 85-6). When neighbours question him about Mary Pascoe's whereabouts, he panics because he knows he might be punished for hiding her demise, but also because of the tormenting secret of Frederick's death.

The symptoms displayed by Daniel illustrate the pervasiveness of trauma and demonstrate vividly that the brutalization suffered by the soldier in the war zone was traumatic in itself and makes a return to ordinary life impossible. The protagonist has terrifying visions of violence, against innocent children and animals, in which the brutality he perpetrated and witnessed at the front permeates the calm Cornish countryside. He suffers from nightmares and hallucinations, as the ghosts of Frederick visits him at night and in daytime. On the one hand, he dreads these apparitions, on the other hand he longs for them, because they bring his beloved friend back. Significantly, however, it is not only Frederick who haunts Daniel, but also other men dead in war:

> Men are rising lazily out of their beds. They stretch their limbs, and the soil falls off them. The uniforms are unmarked. Their faces are round, and tanned with living in the open air. They stare about them. […] They don't know this place. I want them to go back. I want the earth to cover them. I want them to be blown to bits again if it only stops them coming on. (Dunmore, 2014: 259).

In *The Lie* Dunmore therefore engages with the theme of the return of the dead, reminiscent of Abel Gance's famous 1919 film *J'accuse*[7], to demonstrate the

impossibility of surviving mass death, of transcending the cruelties and brutal separations witnessed by the survivor in the frontlines. Daniel remains viscerally connected to the mass of corpses buried haphazardly in No Man's Land. His visions, disrupting the present, point to a number of transgressions embodied by the traumatized veteran, who remains in the world of war/death, although he has returned to the world of peace/the living. He is a figure of abjection, questioning ontological boundaries between the living and the dead, and blurring the sanitized borderline between the horrors of war and the realities of peacetime. The recurring Gothic images of *the underground*, (un)burying corpses or being buried alive during explosions, also point to the power of the dead over the living and the problematic aspects of unfinished mourning, rendered impossible by the brutalities of front-life.

For the protagonist of *The Lie*, "The traumatic event, although real, took place outside the parameters of 'normal' reality, such as causality, sequence, place and time. The trauma is thus an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after" (Laub 1992a: 69). Fragments of the past are ceaselessly restaged in the novel until, eventually, a flash of traumatic memory in the presence of Felicia, Frederick's sister, allows the reader to discover, together with the protagonist, what really happened at the front:

> I see it then. The squat bundle of his kit, by the end of the bed. That's what the smell was. Everything that's been near that mud smells of death. [...] Raw mud, old gas, cordite, shit, rotting flesh. [...] I sink to my knees and cover my head with my arms and rock myself to stop the trembling. I think that I cry out. [...]
>
> 'Can you get up now?' she asks me.
>
> *Can you get up now? Can you move your arms? Your legs?*
>
> The stretcher party came for me, but not for Frederick. There was no sign of him anywhere. Only blown, sticky mud over everything. A shudder takes hold of me again, as if I'm a child being shaken by a grown man. (Dunmore, 2014: 154-156)

During a trench raid, Frederick was seriously wounded and, after Daniel left him unconscious in a shell-crate to look for help, his body was annihilated in an explosion. Daniel blames himself for his friend's death; he is convinced that he should not have abandoned him and should have died with him. The distrust or even open hostility the veteran shows to his neighbours after he returns home signals that trauma might result in social alienation, particularly when the victim believes fundamental human bonds were violated during the catastrophe (Herman, 1992: 54).

In Daniel's view, he remains an outsider, haunting the margins of the community; the dead are more real to him than the living. Using Gothic means, Dunmore highlights "one of the greatest points of the abject: that of being fully whole while not fully there or acknowledged as belonging, being, or a being" (Fitzsimmons and Reynaud, 2014: 195). The protagonist is unable to connect with Felicia and her daughter, or to start a new life in London. When a group of neighbours comes to his house, he believes that they are

pursuing him to punish him for Mary Pascoe's death. Therefore he runs to avoid being caught and eventually jumps from a cliff. The Gothic indeterminacy of the narrative makes it uncertain whether all of this is real or imagined by Daniel's traumatized mind. The suggested reunion with Frederick in suicide reaffirms that the veteran belongs to the world of the dead, separated forever from the living.

In *The Underpainter* (1997), winner of the Governor General's Literary Award, Canadian writer Jane Urquhart also depicts the suicidal death of two survivors of the First World War, George Kearns and Augusta Moffatt. Interestingly, the narrator is a self-centred American abstract painter, Austin Fraser, an outsider who was never really affected by the war. The reader learns about the Canadian couple's war experience from Austin's re-narrativization of Augusta's long 1937 monologue. For George, an art lover and china painter from a modest family in Ontario, it is the annihilation of European culture that was a particular source of trauma. He lost his bearings during the battle of Passchendale, when in a ruined house he found a piece of broken china, a symbol of the apocalypse. Augusta in turn was a nurse at the Number One Canadian Hospital in Étaples, exhausted by the ceaseless work and deeply traumatized by the injuries of the soldiers, as well as her inability to relieve their pain. After a bombardment and the loss of her dearest friend Maggie, she developed a complex dissociative disorder. Eventually, George and Augusta met at a hospital for shell-shock victims.

Almost two decades after the war, both the protagonists of *The Underpainter* still suffer from flashbacks and nightmares. Apparently, they have reconstructed their lives, but their existence is founded on a wound which cannot be healed (Laub, 1992a: 73). While George refuses to talk about the war, desperate to move beyond the trauma of the past, Augusta tries to neutralize the memories that haunt her by using morphine. Her world suddenly collapses in 1937, when Austin brings George's first sweetheart to Davenport. She then questions her relationship with her lover and the sense of survival itself: "What were any of us to do with the rest of our lives anyway? After all that. We were only in our early twenties and our lives were finished. And yet here we are, George and me, right in the middle of the aftermath. What makes it just continue and continue?" (Urquhart, 1998: 34). The *imperative to live*, inherent in survival, is thus questioned in the novel, as life beyond trauma proves unbearable (see Caruth, 2013: 6-7). Subsequently, the female protagonist confesses to Austin what happened to her and George during the war. However, in *The Underpainter,* the telling of trauma is catastrophic. As Laub emphasizes, "The act of telling might itself become severely traumatizing, if the price of speaking is *re-living*; not relief, but further retraumatization" (1992a: 67). In his egotism, Austin remains too impassive and unwilling a listener to empathically restrain the flow of memories and maintain emotional boundaries, when the process of testimony becomes too intense (Laub, 1992a: 71). As a result Augusta commits suicide; upon discovering her body, George also kills himself.

Nevertheless, what is of central importance in *The Underpainter* is metafiction, and more specifically *ekphrasis*, the literary representations of, and comments on, visual works of art. It is Austin, the painter and the novel's narrator, who is the hero of the story; Augusta and George function only in the background of his narrative. The Canadian setting of their lives, as well as their stories, provide an inspiration for the artist, and the creative process is crucial in Urquhart's text. In his series of abstract paintings, Austin

creates a realistic representation, which he then covers with several layers of paint, thus erasing the initial image. The technique of pentimento he employs results in an abstract collage, a palimpsest, which, however, remains undecipherable. The *Erasure* series thus metaphorically illustrates the tension between the witness's desperate efforts to construct a fragmented narrative of the traumatic past and the artist's representation of war trauma as aporia, a catastrophic rupture of meaning. The paintings and the narrative simultaneously enact and erase the traumatic past, Augusta and George thus becoming "self-erasing inscription[s] of history" (Caruth, 2013: 78). In a more general sense, *The Underpainter* therefore addresses the crisis in representation engendered by trauma, by illustrating "narrative *possibility* just as much as *impossibility*" (Luckhurst, 2008: 83).

Importantly, however, Urquhart also engages in a critique of trauma art, which "does not simply supplement the witness's account but manages, in the operation, to annihilate the witness" (Gordon, 2014: 107). War insiders might wish to protect their intimate experience or forget about it; in this sense, the artist, who grants superiority to artistic reconstruction over traumatic experience itself, is only an intruder in their damaged lives (Gordon, 2014: 86). Nevertheless, in *The Underpainter*, many years after his friends' tragic suicide, a depressed, ageing Austin cannot find any solace in his paintings, the same works of art that had won him enormous success. As a result, he tries to atone for his sins by re-narrating, among others, the First World War stories Augusta told him in the past. He then confesses the emotions he felt, or allowed himself to feel much later, in response to her narrative. When accompanied by empathy, art therefore helps create a bond with the trauma victim. As Sherill Grace contends, "Austin first listens to Augusta's story, then he relays the story to us; by telling us, he performs his role as secondary witness inside the text and constructs […] us as listening-readers with the potential to perform as secondary witnesses outside the text" (2014: 113). This complex process of mediation signals, however, that the witness's experience cannot be *fully* recovered. Austin's technique of erasure also mirrors the framing process in the novel, the shift from direct testimony to its literary representation. *The Underpainter* therefore raises the larger question of the ethical ambivalence of art—painting, writing—in relation to traumatic experience.

Taking into account the social marginalization of First World War veterans who suffered from wounds of the mind, the novels analyzed above give voice to silenced victims of the 1914-1918 conflict and, through their focus on traumatic memory, reclaim important aspects of the historical past. While Itani and Young stress healing and redemption, Donaldson, Dunmore and Urquhart highlight the tragic dimension of a war that never ends. The five novelists use various literary means to represent traumatic disruption—from realist description, through Gothic ambivalence, to sophisticated devices such as *ekphrasis* and the suspension of representation. The fictional reiteration of the death encounter, an experience that the soldiers are unable to grasp, suggests here "a form of memory that, in enacting what it could not recall, also passed on a historical event that this memory erased" (Caruth, 2013: 78). The novels under consideration thus oscillate between the re-enactment of history and its evasiveness and ineffability, engaging with a conception of the First World War as a "history constituted by the erasure of its own memory" (Caruth, 2013: 81)[8]. The historical background is particularly significant in Young's *The Heroes' Welcome* and Donaldson's *Maclean*, while in

Urquhart's *The Underpainter* the war provides a pretext for a more generic reflection on war trauma and the limits of its representation. Notwithstanding the differences in contexts and rhetoric, the figure of the traumatized veteran becomes a metaphor of utter devastation—social, economic, spiritual and ethical—caused by the First World War in different communities across the Atlantic Ocean.

A comparative analysis of recent British and Canadian First World War fiction reveals striking analogies. Young and Dunmore reinforce and transform the traditional British tropes of despair and disillusionment; they redefine the meanings of "apocalypse" in terms of survivor guilt (*The Heroes' Welcome*) and an abject crossing of the boundaries between life and death (*The Lie*). In an age of pacifism, however, the British tropes of futility and trauma seem to appeal to Canadian writers as well. The radical departure from the Canadian myth of war in Itani's, Donaldson's, and Urquhart's fiction questions the excess of meaning in the national story. In *Tell, Maclean*, and *The Underpainter*, the Great War is a "a mechanized factory of death" (Luckhurst, 2008: 51), a catastrophe that brings only anguish, ruin and despair.[9] Informed by twentieth century trauma studies, the five novels under consideration represent the war in ways more understandable to "generations shaped by the knowledge of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, as well as various politically and ethically questionable military conflicts (Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan)" (Sokołowska-Paryż, 2015: 98–99). Importantly, the continuity between British and Canadian fiction allows the reader/critic to see the aftermath of the First World War in a transnational perspective.

As Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone remind us, "Contests over the meaning of the past are also contests over the meaning of the present and over ways of taking the past forward" (2003: 1). A hundred years after the conflict, the First World War is the object of new political, social and ethical interpretations, which risk to be read as slightly anachronistic or a-historical. Factual accuracy is less important here, however, than the powerful aesthetic and ethic effects this fiction has on its readers. Our sympathy with the mentally wounded soldier mirrors late twentieth century reconceptualization of human rights as well as the current oversensitivity to the abuses of institutions of power. In this sense, recent First World War fiction might "reflect more about those engaged in the process of remembering than it does about the events of 1914 to 1918" (Wilson, 2014: 44). Although resulting in social castration and disempowerment, trauma also serves here as a vehicle for a critique of the disastrous aftermath of the First World War, and the veteran's shattered body/mind functions as a reminder of dangerous military operations. Re-enacting traumatic plots, the British and Canadian novels discussed in this article explore little known facets of the 1914-1918 conflict, and address some of our most pressing anxieties about the present, such as social marginalization, otherness, and lonely death. At the same time, they express and elicit profound empathy for the First World War veteran who thus becomes an iconic victim of our violent, catastrophic times.

Notes

1. See Branach-Kallas and Sadkowski (2018: 1-11) for an analysis of the multiple reasons for the "return" of the First World War as an important cultural source of inspiration at the centenary of the conflict.
2. See Cohen (2001) and Morton and Wright (1987) for a discussion of official policies towards returning soldiers in Britain and Canada.
3. It is estimated that 200,000 British men were discharged because of psychological injuries (Luckhurst, 2008: 50); 9,000 to 15,000 First World War Canadian soldiers were diagnosed with shell-shock (Montgomery, 2017: 34).
4. See Luckhurst (2008) for a discussion of contemporary cultural narratives that illustrate traumatic disruption and the possibility of narrativization.
5. For an extended analysis of Itani's *Tell*, see Branach-Kallas and Sadkowski (2018: 30-35).
6. For an extended analysis of Young's *The Heroes' Welcome*, see Branach-Kallas and Sadkowski (2018: 96-104; 124-134).
7. Winter (1996: 15-18) discusses Gance's film and the theme of the return of the dead in relation to the cultural consequences of the First World War.
8. This search for a post-modern aesthetics to convey the catastrophe of war can also be placed in continuity with the efforts of experimental artists in the wake of the conflict. See Winter (1996) for a discussion of the tension between more traditional ways of apprehending war trauma and modernist experimentation. While the former stressed a desire for healing and consolation, the latter provided ways of remembering that emphasized anger, despair, and ethical dissent (Winter, 1996: 5). In this light, the First World War can be interpreted as a turning point in the history of trauma aesthetics.
9. My intention is not to draw overgeneralized conclusions. The selected Canadian novels depart most radically from the initial myth of nation building. A number of recent Canadian novels still approach the war as "a site of cultural progression" (Gordon, 2014: 14) by "decrying the horrors of war while still making use of its productive cultural effects" (Gordon, 2014: 15). Most reaffirm distinctively Canadian values (Gordon, 2014: 15) and urge "us to reflect upon what it means today to be Canadians" in relation to the nation's military history (Grace, 2014: 16).

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A Different Perspective (?): Air Warfare in Derek Robinson's Post-Memory Aviation Fiction

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ABSTRACT

The canonical literary epitome of the Great War is, beyond doubt, the infantry soldier trapped in what Paul Fussell called the "troglodyte world" of the notorious trenches. There exists, however, a considerable number of literary accounts devoted to a different 'space'—and thus allegedly also a different experience—of the conflict. The autobiography by Manfred von Richthofen, and memoirs by Billy Bishop and Cecil Lewis contributed to the fame of the Great War pilots as 'knights of the air.' Post-memory literary depictions of air warfare tend to be more ideologically ambivalent. The focus of this paper will be Derek Robinson's novel *War Story* (1987), constituting in terms of the chosen historical time of its action the first part of his acclaimed Great War aviation trilogy, including also *Goshawk Squadron* and *Hornet's Sting*, to be analyzed within the wider context of the cultural representations of the Royal Flying Corps in 1914–1918. Derek Robinson served in the RAF after the Second World War. He is also the author of the revisionist *Invasion, 1940* and, thus, his literary 'return' to the Great War, within the context of air warfare, must raise important questions concerning the extent to which he perpetuates or challenges the prevailing myths of the first global conflict of the twentieth-century.

Keywords: the Great War, aerial combat, aviation fiction, Derek Robinson, war mythology, *Aces High*, *Journey's End*

In *Invasion, 1940: The Truth About the Battle of Britain and What Stopped Hitler*, Derek Robinson begins with a very apt remark that "war, and the origin of war, generates myths, because is usually a lengthy business and always complicated, and most people prefer simplicities" (2006: 11). In the words of Samuel Hynes, "myth" should be understood as "neither history or memory" but as "a compound war-story that gives meaning and coherence to the incoherences of war-in-its-details" (2000: 220). In his Second World War trilogy, including *Piece of Ca*ke (1983), *A Good Clean Fight* (1993), and *Damned Good Show* (2002), Robinson readily debunks the myth of "Our Finest Hour," mercilessly stripping his RAF protagonists from their mythopoetically-given 'glory' of those who 'alone' withstood the allegedly almighty Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain. In the

case of his Great War trilogy, however, one may well wonder whether *Goshawk Squadron* (1971), *War Story* (1987) and *Hornet's Sting* (1999) can be considered at all revisionist endeavors, reading more like a mere reconstruction of a culturally-dominant ideological schemata. The focus of this article will be an analysis of *War Story*, the action of which is set in 1916, the plot thus necessarily involving the Battle of the Somme. This is a novel that most vividly exemplifies how the conventions of the trench warfare literary narratives of disillusionment could effectually be adapted to a different realm of military experience. The argument is that Robinson's novel, as all his novels constituting both the RFC and the RAF trilogies, serve one ideological purpose, one which he made clear in the afterword to *Goshawk Squadron*: "War is not sport. War is not fair" (2005: 230).

        Lines of muddy and rat-festered trenches, separated by the desolate landscape of No Man's Land botched with shell-holes and littered with corpses, have come to constitute the mythopoeic space in the British cultural memory of the Great War, the range of iconic soldier-protagonists including the disillusioned volunteer, the shell-shocked, the coward, the deserter, the wounded. It all started in 1929, when, as Gary Sheffield writes, "the dam finally burst," the two "triggers" being the international success of Erich Maria Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* and the domestic popularity of R. C. Sherriff's drama *Journey's End* (2002: 7). The futility myth was born, i.e. the interpretation of the Great War as a senseless slaughter of a whole generation of the best of British youth on the battlefields of Flanders and France, a carnage mercilessly prolonged by insensitive politicians and military commanders, and callously supported by ignorant civilians. This version of the British experience of the Great War was effectively propagated in the inter-war period with the publication of memoirs such as *Goodbye to All That* by Robert Graves (1929), *Undertones of War* by Edmund Blunden (1928), *Blasting and Bombardiering* by Wyndham Lewis (1937) or *The Wet Flanders Plain* by Henry Williamson (1929), as well fiction including *The Death of a Hero* by Richard Aldington (1929) and *Grey Dawn - Red Night* by James Lansdale Hodson (1929). This predominantly literary (hi)story of the Great War was perpetuated after the Second World War, with the rising importance of the so-called trench poets such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Ivor Gurney or Isaac Rosenberg in national memory (see Sheffield, 2002: 18), as well as by means of fiction, the most notable post-memory examples being Susan Hill's *Strange Meeting* (1971), Jennifer Johnston's *How Many Miles to Babylon* (1974), Sebastian Faulks's *Birdsong* (1993), Robert Edric's *In Desolate Heaven* (1997), Ben Elton's *The First Casualty* (2005), Jodie Shields *The Crimson Portrait* (2006), or, last but not least, Pat Barker's *Regeneration (*1991), *The Eye in the Door* (1993), *The Ghost Road* (1995), *Another World* (1998), *Life Class* (2007), *Toby's Room* (2012).

        In the words of Samuel Hynes, "in the process of myth-making, [...] narratives both share in the creation and preserve it. Not all of them, to be sure: most narratives, of any war sit dustily on library shelves, unread partly because they are ill-written or dull, no doubt, but partly because they tell the wrong story, because they don't conform to the myth" (2000: 207). Derek Robinson's aviation fiction, fraught with ideological paradoxes, must be viewed in relation to its Great War literary predecessors, as there exists a literary blueprint for writing air warfare. The number of memoirs and fiction on the subject may be viewed as marginal in comparison to the quantity of personal and

literary narratives focusing on trench warfare, yet undoubtedly the conventions of aviation combat narratives were established by such classics as Manfred von Richthofen's 1917 autobiography *Der Rote Kampfflieger,* William A. Bishop's 1918 memoir *Winged Warfare,* Cecil Lewis's memoir *Sagittarius Rising* (1936), and the acclaimed novel by British V. M. Yeates entitled *Winged Victory* (1934), not to mention the "Biggles" series, authored by W. E. Johns, the first novel to appear in 1932. The reason why these works lost their cultural significance resides precisely in their ideological incompatibility with the futility myth. The key adjective used in defining the Great War is 'unprecedented,' in terms of its geographical scope and suffered casualties. It was, after all, the *first* global war, but also one during which there (gradually) developed an entirely new way of waging conflict, in and from the air, a warfare strikingly different from the military stalemate on ground. The term "ace" appeared, denoting a pilot with a given score of shot down enemy aircraft (Haythornthwaite, 1992: 381), and, unlike in the case of ground warfare, war in the air quickly produced 'heroes' of the skies like the internationally famous Max Immelmann, Oswald Boelcke, or the Red Baron (Manfred von Richthofen) and, on the side of the Allies, "the achievements of men such as Albert Ball, William Bishop, James McCudden and Edward Mannock created enduring legends that captivated the minds of a war-weary public" (Steel and Hart, 1997: 240). It would seem that rules of chivalry apparently applied within aerial combat during the Great War. In the "Preface" to the first edition of Richthofen's autobiography, C. G. Grey wrote: "He was buried with full honours by his old enemies of the RFC, as befitted a *gallant* gentleman who died for his Fatherland. […] There is none of the old RFC who would not cheerfully kill what is left of the 'circus,' and there is probably none who would not gladly shake hands with the survivors after peace is declared. They are worthy enemies and good fighters" (in Richthofen, 2005: 37, original emphasis).

Trench warfare is said to have changed soldiers into helpless victims of the "'impersonal' aggressors of chemicals and steel" (Leed, 1979: 106), thus rendering conventional martial ideals obsolete and inadequate: "for once the idea of heroic action is denied, the whole conception of the hero […] is called into question" (Hynes, 1990: 306). In consequence, "the anti-hero, the victim, the passive men—these became conventions of post-war English writing, [and] they had their literary beginnings […] in the war that […] denied them the power to be agents in their own lives and deaths" (306). The opposite was true of air warfare. Not only was "the intense kaleidoscopic nature of aerial combat […] dramatic and visually exciting," but, even more importantly, "men pitted their wits against other men face-to-face, like the chivalrous knights of old" (Steel and Hart, 1997: 240). Though it was a fact that pilots were as prone to combat fatigue as infantry soldiers, with "the ceaseless grind of photographic reconnaissance and artillery observation work," and "the odds of surviving a prolonged tour of duty in action [being] minimal" (Hart, 2001: 107), nevertheless, the lines from W. B. Yeats's poem "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" perfectly conveys the appeal of the skies: "Nor law, nor duty bade me fight, / Nor public men, nor cheering crowds, / A lonely impulse of delight / Drove to this tumult in the clouds" (Roberts 2012: 88). In the words of the Canadian ace William "Billy" Bishop, "it was not like killing a man so much as just bringing down a bird in sport," and "the moment my machine gun commenced to fire, I felt the old feeling

exultation, and this always remained with me throughout the whole of every fight I have had" (1978: 198).

In contrast to trench warfare narratives, the memoirs and fiction published in the inter-war period never succumbed to the mood of disillusionment. When V. M. Yeates's novel *Winged Victory* was published in 1934, it was generally interpreted "in the pacifist climate of the time [as] an excellent piece of anti-war propaganda," yet, as Hugh Cecil underscores, "Yeates's real aim was to record his experience in all its aspects. In doing so, he had drawn a picture […] far from the conventional 'valiant knights of the air' image, and that showed a wasteful war where fear of nervous collapse stalked every flier. Far from diminishing their heroism, however, this actually made their courage seem the greater" (Cecil, 1996: 84). When republished in 1993, Cecil Lewis's *Sagittarius Rising* included a new foreword by the author, somewhat apologetic, and yet defending the "picture of extreme youth in action" portrayed in his 1936 memoir. The fascination with flying would remain with Lewis throughout his entire life: "I did not imagine there would be another war for me to fight through or that twenty years later I would rejoin the RAF. Become an instructor and teach the next generation the skills that I myself had learned when I was young. […] nor did I dream I should have a son, teach him to fly myself and when all that time was over […] buy my own aeroplane […]" (Lewis, 2006: vi). There is no indication here of wasted years or the futility of war. Lewis's Great War experience had not only been worthwhile but also exhilarating.

What Derek Robinson set out to achieve in his Great War trilogy may be defined as a re(de)mythologization of air warfare. What I mean by this term is the author's strategy of stripping away the aura of chivalry from aerial combat by adopting the ideological formats of the futility myth as constructed in trench warfare narratives, and this is nowhere better to be seen than in *War Story*, published after *Goshawk Squadron*, yet serving as a prequel, set in 1916, with the RFC still in a fledgling phase, the battle of the Somme to prove its testing ground. *Goshawk Squadron*, the action of which is set in 1918, remains Robinson's most acclaimed novel, shortlisted for the Booker Prize. Published in 1971, it pre-dates the 1976 screening of the film *Aces High*, directed by Jack Gold. It is in the afterword to *Goshawk Squadron* that Robinson explicitly set his aims, namely to debunk the myth of the RFC as "the cavalry of the clouds," "knights of the air," "jousting circuses" and "duels in the sky," deliberately contrasting the enduring "images of glamour and chivalry" with "the truth […] that air war was just as brutal, squalid and wasteful as the slaughter in the trenches" (2005: 229). Yet, it is *War Story,* published in 1987, that most vividly lays bare Robinson's strategy of concomitant demythologization and remythologization. It not only reads like an English air warfare version of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front,* but also remains (too) strikingly similar to *Aces High*, after which it was published, and the script of which—and this should be duly noted—was based on the trench warfare drama classic *Journey's End* by R. C. Sherriff (1928). It must be added, as Gary Sheffield aptly notes, that "Sherriff, who remained proud of his service in the East Surrey Regiment until the end of his life, did not intend *Journey's End* to be an anti-war play. The producer of the first version, however, was a pacifist, and the resulting production (and indeed most subsequent ones) conveyed the message that the war was squalid and futile" (2002: 9-10). Finally, the echoes of Wilfred

Owen may likewise be found in Robinson's ostentatiously anti-war depiction of the strain of aerial combat.

Robinson described *War Story* as "fiction based on a framework of fact" (2001: 341). The otherness of realm of air warfare is all too visible in the discourse where instead of the all-too-familiar phrases such as the front-line, support, firing and communication trenches, saps and shell-holes, the morning and evening stand-to, wiring, digging and carrying parties, night patrols, raiding parties (see Fussell, 2000: 41-47), the reader is confronted with abbreviated designations and names of planes: the BE2c (the so-called 'Quirks'), the FE2d, the Pfalz, the Halberstadt, the Rumpler, the Albatross, the Fokker, the Aviatik, the Nieuport, or the Roland CII (the technical possibilities of all the planes being vital to understanding the evolution of air warfare strategies and tactics), and the duties of the pilots including artillery observation, photographic reconnaissance, offensive patrols, balloon-busting or trench-strafing (Robinson, 2001: 41, 169, 318). Robinson's description of the detrimental psychological impact of offensive patrols has an uncanny effect, almost echoing Owen's poem "Exposure," and thus proving that the 'realities' of air warfare could easily be conveyed through adaptations of existing literary patterns of representing trench warfare experience. Owen's lines, "Our brains ache, […] / Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent . . . / Low drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient . . . / Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous, / But nothing happens" (Day Lewis, 1965: 48)—are so different—and yet in their overall ideological message—also so similar to what Robinson evokes in the following passage: "Flying offensive patrols was a wearying ground. […] The great strain was the search, and it grew worse when there was nothing to find. The sky became achingly empty. Impossibly empty. Some pilots and observers lost faith in their own eyes. The less they found the more they worried. Where was the bastard? […] So they searched, and worried. A man would to be crazy not to worry" (2001: 170).

Robinson put much effort into pinpointing all aspects of the uniqueness of a pilot's experience in comparison to the infantry: "[…] RFC pilots did return from patrols to play cricket or tennis, or to go swimming. Indeed, the contrast between life in a squadron and life in trenches was startling. The latter was cramped and dirty, often wet, usually lousy. The airmen flew home to good meals and warm bed, to games, music and parties in the mess" (2001: 341). And yet, there is an obvious ironically-ideological intent in contrasting two uses of the swimming pool, the first being that for the recreation of officers (Robinson, 2001: 268, 275), the second being a makeshift grave for the casualties of the Somme Battle: "The existence of the pool had saved the CCS a lot of time and effort. […] four soldiers wearing rubber gloves and sterilized face-masks were carefully stacking bodies on top of the neat rows of bodies already in place. They were working carefully, not out of any sense of respect for the dead, but because it made best use of the space and the last thing they wanted was to have to dig another fucking great hole like this one" (2001: 334). In his "Author's Note" to *War Story*, Robinson asserts that included details such as "the dropping of message-bags by enemy aeroplanes" were historically "authentic" facts (2001: 341). As written into the novel, German pilots would fly over enemy lines in order to drop a bag containing, for example, "the scorched fragment of a British officer's tunic, two fire-blackened medal ribbons, a broken cockpit watch, half a shoe and the remains of a cheque book" (2001: 139). This was one of the (unofficial)

rules of gallant behavior obeyed by the belligerent sides of the conflict, yet it is telling that Robinson, in order to contest such evidence of chivalry, and to reframe air combat in accordance with the prerequisites of the futility myth, chose to include scenes evidently harking back to Erich Maria Remarque.

Remarque's protagonist Paul Bäumer describes the dehumanizing impact of combat upon young men who, in order to survive, descend into a beast-like state: "We have turned into dangerous animals. We are not fighting. We are defending ourselves from annihilation. [..] we are maddened with fury […] we can destroy and we can kill to save ourselves […] If your own father came across with those from the other side you wouldn't hesitate to hurl a hand-grenade straight at him!" (Remarque, 2005: 81–82). A scene like this effectively challenges the ethical legitimacy of associating war with honour, glory and willing sacrifice in the name of a noble cause. Robinson's reasons for including a lengthy description of ground-strafing serves a similar anti-war purpose. Two officer-pilots, Stubbs and Goss, fly over to the enemy side searching for "a nice little unit on the march, a couple of hundred men crossing a field or going up a lane, with their rifles slung and no heavy machine guns nearby. That would be perfect" (2001: 304). They spot German soldiers bathing a river, yet they do not attack: "They were not important enough to shoot; and besides, Goss felt squeamish about shooting naked men." Yet, they soon find an easy target, "a company of infantry, standing waiting to be killed." The soldiers stand no chance as the British plane descends upon them: "Stubbs swung his Lewis gun like a scythe and shot fifteen or twenty men before they moved" (2001: 305). One should note here the detached manner in which the scene is described, underscoring the pilots' lack of humane feelings. The ease with which they can instantly transform into heartless murderers is—and was intended to be—ethically disconcerting. Unluckily for Goss and Stubbs, however, a bullet hits the engine and their plane goes down. Equally unluckily for them, they survive the crash only to be surrounded by German soldiers who are not in the mood to take prisoners: "The bayonets went in with great vigour" (2002: 306). Added to this, Robinson includes an incident where one of the British pilots is shot down by a French Nieuport (2001: 184-186). This could well be considered a plausible scenario, as in every war there are always cases of casualties of friendly fire, yet it is the scenario that the author writes afterwards that is telling in terms of its ideological intent. Captain Frank Foster, who—as it turns out later—was homosexual and was in love with the shot-down Lieutenant James Yeo, decides to take revenge on the French: "Foster reached Selincourt and remembered nothing about the journey. […] The Nieuport came out of the east, as expected. It carried identification letters and numbers on its fuselage but he didn't look for them because he didn't care what they were. […] This was when the French began firing off rockets, to warn the pilot. Foster's observer killed him before he could look around to see what they meant. […] dead in the back, as Yeo had been shot. The Nieuport tumbled as if it had tripped over its own feet. Foster climbed away and watched it crashed and burn" (2001: 190). Foster's commanding officer is fully aware of what happened and yet takes no action. As another protagonist adds, when in 1914 the English accidentally shelled the French, their so-called 'allies' simply retaliated with "the same number of shells" (2001: 195). The message here is simple: the reality of war is such that rules of combat engagement are not adhered to and ethical principles are bypassed.

In all his aviation fiction, Robinson consistently "[makes] sure that his period and technical details [are] correct," so as to the more effectively deconstruct "war mythology" (Mackenzie, 2007: 101). The problem is that Robinson's protagonists are too familiar and his plot solutions too predictable, the most vivid example being *War Story*, its characters all too reminiscent of the protagonists in the film *Aces High* who, in turn, are pilot versions of infantry officers in R. C. Sherriff's drama *Journey's End.* Sherriff's squadron leader, Stanhope, drinks too much and is prone to sudden outbursts of temper, an obvious case of combat fatigue: "He's never had a rest. Other men come over and go home ill, and young Stanhope goes on sticking it, month in, month out" (Sherriff, 2000: 13). His equivalent in *Aces High* is Gresham (performed by Malcolm McDowell), likewise a war-weary heavy drinker. The film begins with a scene set in an English public school, where Gresham is to encourage young boys to volunteer for the RFC, the head of the school proclaiming that what the war is all about is "playing the game for the game's sake" (*Aces High*). Gresham knows all too well what service in the newly-born RFC means, pilots with inevitably inadequate training expected to be killed within fourteen days, and himself—always at risk when taking his plane up into the air. The character of Major Rufus Milne in Robinson's novel has likewise been too long at the front line. He managed to endure the strain insofar as he could force himself to forget all the life-threatening situations in which he had found himself: "His response to danger was to forget it as soon as it had passed. This policy had worked very well: he suffered no nightmares, no spells of depression, none of the crippling anxiety which he knew some other pilots suffered when they were getting ready to fly. For nearly two years, Milne had done his job day by day, sometimes boring, sometimes exciting, and reckoned himself lucky to have it." Yet, one day. without warning, the memories of all his missions started to come back: "To his surprise he found himself thinking about other matters. In particular, about this war and the number of times it nearly killed him" (2001: 46). In consequence, he commits suicide by deliberately colliding with a Rolland CII (2001: 123-124). He is replaced by Major Hugh Cleve-Cutler (2001: 129), Robinson's second version of the Stanhope and Gresham characters, as he must deal with a psychologically-troubled man under his command.

In Sherriff's play, it is the character of Hibbert who allows the play to be read as an anti-war manifesto. For Stanhope, Hibbert is an imposter, feigning illness in order to evade his duty: "Artful little swine! Neuralgia's a splendid idea. No proof as I can see. […] How long's he been out here? Three months, I suppose Now he's decided to go home and spend the rest of the war in comfortable nerve hospitals. […] I think he's going to wriggle off before the attack. […] No man of mine's going sick before the attack" (2000: 29). Hibbert's plea to Stanhope to relieve him of his duties could well be performed on stage as a passionate outcry against the war itself: "Ever since I came out here I've hated it and loathed it. Every sound up there makes me all—cold and sick. […] I'll never go up those steps again—into the line—with the men looking at me—and knowing—I'd rather die here" (2000: 57). Almost verbatim, the same scene appears in *Aces High*, with officer-pilot Crawford (performed by Simon Ward) refusing to fly, first on grounds of illness, then admitting he simply can take no more of the fear. The film develops Sherriff's character, including scenes clearly indicating the madness of Crawford—as when he runs around the field pretending to be flying. The film was made before Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was defined and its symptoms explicated. In Robinson's *War Story*, Frank

Foster is likewise depicted to be mad rather than—in today's terms—traumatized; his insanity made explicit by his concocted story of a girlfriend he never had, to whom he asked his fellow-pilots to write that he was killed, then telling them she killed herself. In the end, Foster blows his brains out in front of Oliver Paxton, yet another cliché figure.

In *Journey's End*, Raleigh is a replacement officer, a youth freshly out of public school, constantly annoying the experienced soldiers with his zeal to 'do his bit' in the war. He ends with a spine injury, unable to walk. His equivalent in *Aces High* is the character of Stephen Croft (performed by Peter Firth), idealistic and enthusiastic, always ready to participate in flight missions. Yet, as Michael Paris emphasizes, "demythologizing the air fighters was also the theme of [this] British [film] production," hence the purpose of a character like Croft "filled with ideas about the nobility about air fighters, and the chivalry of the air," and so obviously modelled on Sherriff's Raleigh, was to underscore that "the war in the air [was] as barbarous as that in the trenches" (1995: 46). Robinson's version of Raleigh and Croft is Lieutenant Oliver Paxton, ostracized by the squadron for idealistic beliefs that all too ostentatiously clash with the experience of the already war-weary pilots. Paxton's story is one that traces his evolution from patriotism (deriving from his initial ignorance of what air warfare entailed) to a stance that could be defined as cynical realism (deriving from his subsequent combat experience). He comes to the front believing that pilots are "the cavalry of the skies," which, as Robinson explains in the "Afterword" to *Goshawk Squadron*, was a term first used by Lloyd George for the "purposes of propaganda" (2005: 229). His desire to shoot down as many 'Huns' as soon as possible—considering the minimal amount of training he had received—must be viewed as naïve, to say the least, if not outright ridiculous: "he had flown eighteen hours solo, two of them of them in Quirks." He was appointed the leader of a group of five new BE2Cs to be flown to France only because "[he] was the tallest of the new pilots awaiting postings" (2001: 3). It is a historical fact that the greatest problem facing the RFC in the first years of the Great War was the limited number of adequately prepared instructors to train new pilots. Either "flying instructors simply lacked the teaching skills needed to impart their own accumulated knowledge in a coherent fashion to their eager pupils," or, worse still, "instructing was often used to give a rest to pilots who had completed a period of active service" (Steel and Hart, 1997: 84). The opening pages of the novel depict Paxton in an absurd situation when he is desperately lost in the skies over France. Though the flight across the English Channel should have taken no more than a few hours, Paxton has not only been flying for five days but, in the meantime, he also managed to 'lose' the other pilots he was supposed to be in charge of. Having lost all sense of direction, he begins to perform aerial acrobatics, only to lose his map and the sandbags serving to balance the plane when attempting to do a loop. He is spotted by other British planes and they lead him to the aerodrome. His bumpy landing results in the destruction of the machine he was supposed to have safely brought across for combat missions: "People watching said [the Quirk] bounced seven times before the tailskid touched, and four times after that, until a tyre burst and the machine skewed to a halt" (2001: 7).

Robinson is renowned for his taste for the ludicrous. Paxton's pomposity is fully laid bare when, following orders to practice his landings, he all too late realizes that pilots should not drink too much tea before going up in the air. It is with great detail that

Robinson describes Paxton's desperate struggle not to wet himself in the cockpit. He could have landed at one point at an aerodrome, but he noticed pilots playing cricket and it would have been too disgraceful to land and urinate in public view. Paxton thus braces himself for a fight—not with an enemy plane—but with his own bladder: "*You can do it*, Oliver, he told himself. […] *Not far now. Grin and bear it. Play the game*!" (2001: 21). There are almost seven pages devoted to a highly meticulous description of Paxton's physiological struggle, the ending, however, to be foreseen. The 'battle' is lost: "He was as wet as a baby. He felt like a baby. He felt a depth of shame and hopelessness he had not known since he was a child" (2001: 24). Wishing to redeem himself from all the humiliations that had met him, Paxton craves for a victory in the air. During one combat mission he is convinced he had managed to shoot down an enemy plane. As he is told by the pilots who flew with him, he not only did not score a hit, but with his "gunnery [being] pathetic," he might as well "have hit some of the men on the ground in the British gun pits" (2001: 128).

As the action of *War Story* is set in 1916, it is not surprising for the Battle of the Somme to be the focal point of the novel. The so-called Big Push that commenced July 1 has become the cornerstone of the futility myth, providing statistical evidence of trench warfare as pointless slaughter, "the worst day in in the history of British arms" (Brown, 2002: 92). "To visit the cemeteries of that haunted battlefield," Malcolm Brown wrote in *Somme*, "is to risk being overwhelmed by a feeling of grief" (2002: xxviii-xxix). In *The First World War*, John Keegan used the phrase "the holocaust of the Somme," adding that "there is nothing more poignant in British life than to visit the ribbon of cemeteries that marks the front line […], and to find, on gravestone after gravestone, the fresh wreath, […] the pinned poppy" (1999: 321). Robinson's view on the Battle of the Somme echoes that of Brown and Keegan. Rather than focus on the Battle itself, Robinson achieves the ironic effect by having his pilot protagonist drive over to witness a trial advance at a makeshift battlefield marked by tapes. Paxton is thrilled: "patriotism glowed in him like plum brandy," but the reader instantly recognizes the absurdity of the exercise, with waves of troops moving out into a ground where no one is firing at them, with the final 'breakthrough' achieved by means of a spectacular cavalry charge. Once the exercise 'push' is brought to an end, an announcement is made through the megaphone that "tea now will be served" (2001: 180). Yet even Paxton notices some disturbing details, wondering why the soldiers are ordered to walk at such slow pace, and astonished to see how much they have to carry with them apart from their weapons. As he is about to leave for the aerodrome, Paxton comes across one Private Watkins, a teenager serving in the Bradford Pals, and who is not particularly keen to participate in the real offensive to come: "Fucking trenches, fucking lousy food, fucking sergeant hates my fucking guts, fucking Fritz is going to blow me to fucking bits" (2001: 182-183). The Battle of the Somme becomes the turning point for Oliver Paxton. The pilots of the Hornet Squadron are pushed to their limits with the sudden increase of patrols. Many do not return, and Paxton feels each loss acutely. The novel ends with a symbolic scene that signifies Paxton's change from a pompous and naïve young pilot to a war-weary veteran. He looks at moths drawn to a lightbulb, frantically bumping against it, finally killed by the heat: "It was a gallant battle. Fought against overwhelming odds, a splendid example of heroism and devotion to duty, but in the end they made the supreme sacrifice" (2001:

340). Pilots are like the moths, as vulnerable and equally doomed. "Heroism," "duty," and sacrifice" are empty meaningless words.

Robinson consistently underscores his adherence to historical accuracy in his aviation fiction. Yet there are as many truths of war as there were soldiers who experienced it. An entirely different version of the Battle of the Somme from the perspective of the RFC emerges from Cecil Lewis's *Sagittarius Rising*. First, as "the hurricane bombardment" starts, Lewis recalls his excitement: "It was the greatest bombardment of the war, the greatest in the history of the world. […] Nothing could live under that rain of splintering steel. A whole nation was behind it […]" (2006: 103). Then "disappointment" comes: "from our point of view an entire failure," this assessment explained by the fact the RFC pilots had nothing to report on the advancement of the troops: "the truth was that at many points the attack had not gone according to plan" (105). However, already on July 2, Lewis records that the RFC "started a practice that was to become a habit during the next few months—going down low enough to see the men in the trenches with accuracy, and getting [the] reports this way" (105). In result, "we could see to what extent the great offensive had succeeded. [….] We returned elated. We had helped to win the war" (107). One must remember that this was a memoir published in 1936, in a time when 'disillusioned' war narratives were still at the height of their popularity. In other words, Lewis did not succumb to the dominant fashion of 'remembering' the war through the prism of the futility myth. Robinson states in the afterword to *War Story* that RFC pilots could not have been aware of what was happening on the ground beneath them: "they could see the entire battlefield, but even they could not see the tragedy" (2001: 344). Except that Lewis's recollection of his RFC's perspective of the Battle of the Somme is more in tune with what contemporary historians have to say, namely that the period between July and November "marked the point where [the RFC] came of age as a fighting service," not only perfecting their skills in "detailed photographic reconnaissance of the trench systems facing their forces," "harassing raids on the German billeting sectors," and "bombing raids on strategically significant railway junctions to disrupt the German movement of reserve divisions," but, most importantly, achieving "the supremacy of the air" (Hart, 2001: 222-223). As reported by German General Fritz von Below, "The beginnings and first weeks of the battle of the Somme were marked by a complete inferiority or our own air forces" (qtd. in Steel and Hart, 1997: 129). In the words of Peter Hart, "the RFC could, and did, look back on the Somme campaign with considerable pride. [….] Most of the […] RFC casualties suffered on the Western Front […] were over the Somme battlefields. These figures pale into insignificance compared to the crippling losses suffered by the infantry […]. In the tragic ledger of the Somme, the losses they suffered were set against the enormous value of their work. For the RFC at least it was a 'Somme success'" (Hart, 2001: 223).

Catharine Savage Brosman has aptly stated that "war narratives are inevitably shaped and colored by either affirmation or denial of a collective purpose of meaning that presides over the conflict" (1999: 65). In the afterword to *Goshawk Squadron*, Robinson admits it "angered some veterans of the RFC," as *War Story* and *Hornet's Sting* must have done also. He argues that "we all tend to forget the bad and remember only the good and it must be tempting for survivors to believe that all the dead were heroes and that in any case victory justified their sacrifice" (2005: 230). Yet, it is also a biased version when

one speaks only of the bad and forgets the good. In "The Prelude" to his war novel *Verdun* (1939), Jules Romains best expounds the difficulties of conveying the war experience, which—in order to be cognitively and ideologically all-comprehensive—requires the God-like "brain capable of envisaging the war as a whole," and the capability of embracing the nationally-determined "partial visions, their mutual bearing, their composition, perhaps their mutually contradictory contributions," as well as the mosaic of "the detail of the conflict, the ultimate elements" as experienced by individual bearers of their own particular 'truths' of war (2000: 35). Thus, when Robinson asserts "we know that much of the slaughter was pointless," and that "courage was wasted along with everything else" (2005: 230), he is (perhaps inadvertently) admitting to adopting a strictly ideological framework for his novels. In consequence, his characters and plot development appear as no more than aviation versions of trench warfare narratives written in the vein of Remarque. Do they offer a different perspective on the Great War? The answer must be—no.

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Great War Games: Notes on Collective Memory, the Adynaton, and Posthumanism

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ABSTRACT

This essay performs a narratological reading of 2014 video games *Valiant Hearts* and *Super Trench Attack* and the ways through which they memorialize the Great War. By close-reading the narrative techniques of these games, I argue that through their storytelling elements they memorialize the Great War by countering the narrative trope of the adynaton, often employed to manage the traumatic articulation of war narratives. Bathetic, pathetic, and chronotopic representations contribute to the affective economy on which these video games rely to memorialize the war, and hint at what posthumanist memorialization could mean for the remembrance of Great War.

Keywords: Great War, video games, collective memory, affect

Memories of the Great War have found particular ground in transmedia such as comic books and video games, largely because of these artistic means' range of expression and point of view (Kempshall, 2015). Whereas Great War novels and films have been extensively discussed in critical theory, this is not the case for war games, which have received little scholarly attention, albeit increasing in the last five years (Thomson, 2014; Werning 2015; Kempshall, 2015; Harrigan et al., 2016). Whether striving for accuracy or expanding upon mythological views of the Great War, combat-focused or centring on civilian suffering, war games set between 1914 and 1918 enable individual players to 'experience' world strife, not only by remembering key historical facts, but also by actively simulating war experience. If collective memory is defined by its ability to transport one who 'consumes' it, for lack of a better word, into a shared past, thus justifying its characterization by Jo McCormack as a metaphor (2010: 3), war video games may function as the means of this transportation. As historian George Lipsitz argued in 2001,

> Time, history, and memory become qualitatively different concepts in a world where electronic mass communication is possible. Instead of relating to the past through a shared sense of place or ancestry, consumers of electronic mass media can experience a common heritage with people

they have never seen; they can acquire memories of a past to which they have no geographic or biological connection (352).

Similar views echo Lipsitz's statement throughout the crucial decades of the 2000s and point to an augmentation of at least the historical aspects of collective memory through video gaming. Wulf Kantsteiner posits that video gaming provides alternative sides to the official, historically accepted collective memory (2007: 143) and Adam Chapman adds to this view by arguing that historical computer games are not merely rehashing a factual reality, but essentially infuse the present with a changed version of history (2013).

This change is noted on a human level as well: Kempshall (2015) argues that, not only are war games inevitably untrue to historical facts, but they also 'make us superhuman,' because of the repetitive virtual death and resurrection in a war game setting (x). This idea speaks to the gamer's post-humanity: the gamer's ontology changes as she uses technologically-enhanced means, both physically and mentally through contact with the gaming machine and the gamers' community, to access the past and inform her memory (Nayar, 2014: 3). My argument here is that the gamer's post-humanity results in an affective commemoration that goes beyond the cornerstone of Great War collective memory, namely the monument of the Unknown Soldier, which traditionally comments on the loss of words as well as the loss of lives (Wittman, 2011). In other words, affective expressions in Great War gaming move beyond the Unknown Soldier and, through what Roger Stahl terms 'authorial kinetics of war' (42), include the unknown gamer in the formation of collective memory.

1. How can Great War games impact collective memory?

By close reading the narrative structure and techniques of indie war games *Valiant Hearts* (*VH*, 2014) (see Fig. 1), and *Super Trench Attack!* (*STA*, 2014) (see Fig. 2), I argue that these Great War games function as live memorials by countering the trope of the adynaton, often evoked to describe the Great War, and also prevalent in war memorialization (McLoughlin 2011). Specifically, the tropes of affective repetition and virtual chronotopicity enable the player to negotiate her place and identity in the collective narrative.[1] While both games are different, with *VH* being a 6-hour cinematic PS4 game with a comic book aesthetic and easily solvable puzzles, featuring the lives of four individuals interrupted by war, and *STA* being a 7-hour comedic shooter PC game with the aesthetic sensitivities of a brutalist monument, the games both employ affect as a way to express traditionally hard-to-express war memories.
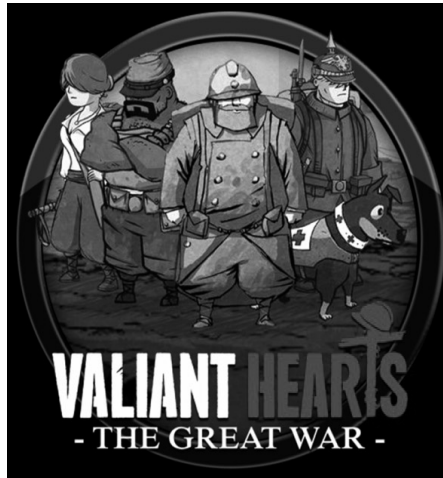
Figure 1: *Valiant Hearts*

Figure 2: *Super Trench Attack*

Both as a sign of the body's potentiality and as a site of 'forces of encounter' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 3), affect resonates with what takes place through the gaming experience: through gameplay, the gamer's body is inevitably affected by and reacts to a possible Great War narrative. Indeed, war gaming signals the body's potential to experience war narrative by proxy, as the player's motive participation is required for the narrative to develop. Considering that affective gameplay is determined by the player's physical movements, but also her sensations, bodily experience, and interactivity with the game content and design (Nørgärd, 2016: 90), and that affect works like an atmosphere that the player may carry with them for weeks (Karoff, 2013), it is reasonable to suggest that gaming influences the way that the player views an entire world system and that

game narrative and responses to that narrative may be conflated with facts that are part of the collective memory.

The narratives of *VH* and *STA* combine pathos and bathos in equal doses in order to trigger different affective responses that depict the realities of war in a way that circumvents the binary of words/loss of words. Such an example would be the use of language, or lack thereof, in *VH*: the little speaking that takes place in the story is the narrative voice over. The characters communicate through speech bubbles containing symbols, and through exaggerated gesticulation (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Effective communication in *VH*

Additionally, the game's most powerfully affective moments are the ones where there is an epic release. Paul Merchant's explanation that an epic is not about 'length or size, but weight' (2017: 94) takes into consideration the generational changes in the term: scenes like the epic cinematic moment of American volunteer Freddie tearing the enemy flag apart (Fig. 4) are particularly weighty in the world of gaming.
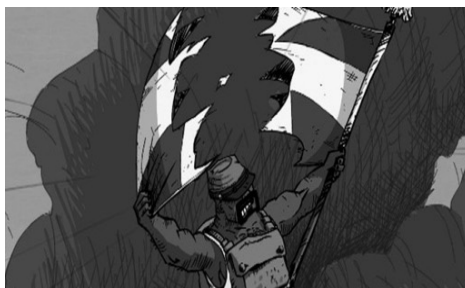
Figure 4: Pathos and epic release in *VH*

In that sense, *VH* stands in direct opposition to the sensory overload of mainstream first-person shooter war games such as *Battlefield 1* (2016): in this and other commercial war games, killing enemies produces gratification through sound, image, and winning points, but in *VH*, the reward is of affective and memorial essence. Equally but inversely, the image of epic heroism and pathos is directly contradicted in *STA*: whereas in VH the

heroes are self-righteous and driven by values, in *STA*, the main hero (bearing the player's name) is ridiculed and is often literally caught with his pants down (Fig. 5). Bathos is the main trope of *STA*, with awkward nudity and sexual innuendos interrupting the battle. Even the communication that takes place between the main character and his superiors is full of bathetic elements: the "hero" undermines every order he is given by responding in an ironic or sarcastic way, his words often placed in parentheses.

Figure 5: A bathetic moment in *STA*

It is this shift to affect that counters what Kate McLoughlin terms the trope of the 'adynaton' in war literature, namely the preoccupation of narrative with the ineffability of war. McLoughlin states that, as 'the mother of all diversionary tactics, adynaton not-writes about war by making not-writing its very subject' (152). The affective exaggeration (pathos and bathos) in both games distracts from language that directly describes war and questions linguistic necessity to form collective memory. If we consider that affect designates the extent to which a body is able to do something or not (Spinoza in Deleuze 49), then affectivity in war gaming counters the trope of the adynaton: etymologically, adynaton means not able, and thus affective images address this inability or adynamia. Affective production relies on a one-way repetitive practice in *VH* and *STA*, not only in terms of the player's repetitive movements, but also in terms of characters' behavioural patterns. Each character in *VH* is characterised by a repeated pattern. This becomes an almost ritualistic experience through which memory is performed and simultaneously informed. The most poignant example of this is found in *VH*, in Anna's story. Anna is a nurse who is looking for her father, a scientist who has been abducted by the German army. For the most part, her interaction with other characters is to save them (Fig. 6). These actions are repeated in various ways, and the fact that these are not at all hard puzzles to solve, once more points to the affective aspect of the game: it is not what you do or say that matters, it is what emotional effect it has. Similarly, *STA* deals with repetition in a bathetic way: speech bubbles containing phrases that point to the ennui-filled repetition of trench war and gaming alike ('What was I doing here again?' and 'Déjà Vu!') speak to the war memory as that which, having been discussed in abundance and yet not at all, warrants a different approach.

Figure 6: The player performs a series of repetitive actions within *VH*, so that Anna can save the bombed civilians and the narrative of the game can progress

Repetition is not the only trope that enables war gaming's affective scenes of collective memory; the latter is shored up through Bakhtinian chronotopes—in fact, the entire game is a series of chronotopes, both in its visual presentation, but also in its content. For Mikhail Bakhtin, through textual chronotopicity, time is experienced as 'palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins' (Bakhtin 9). In the same vein, virtual chronotopicity does not only provide a visual representation of collective memory events, but also invites the gamer's embodied participation and affective response. In *VH* the family- idyllic chronotope serves to briefly show what was before the war (Fig. 9), and what may be reconstituted after the war ends; in VH and STA, the chronotope of the threshold reflects the characters' moving in and out of doors, tunnels and windows in order to get to the next stage of history (Fig. 7); the Bakhtinian chronotope of the road becomes the chronotope of the trench (Fig. 8), where improbable and game-changing encounters take place, such as Freddie meeting and saving middle-aged captive Emile in VH, or STA's protagonist meeting his sidekick, Buddy (Fig. 10). In each case, the chronotopes are integral parts of each game, that help advance the storyline, and justify the character's/player's actions.
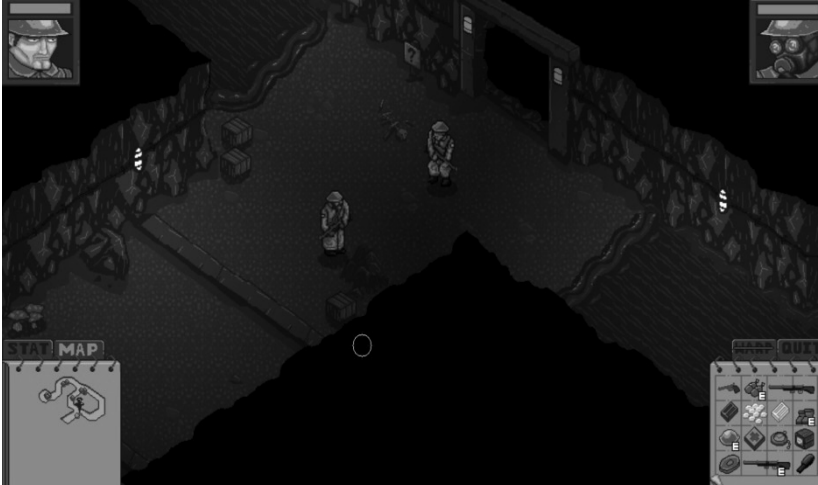
Figure 7: The chronotope of the threshold in *STA*

Figure 8: The chronotope of the trench   Figure 9: The idyllic chronotope

Figure 10: *STA*'s protagonist meeting Buddy in the trenches

VH and *STA* employ affective repetition and virtual chronotopicity to shape collective memory, thus entering the realm of posthumanism: 'becoming-posthuman […] is a process of redefining one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space: urban, social, psychic, ecological, planetary as it may be' (Braidotti, 2013: 193). In that way, war gaming may perform what traditional monuments of unknown soldiers fail to do, namely to trigger an affective response that rejects the ineffability of war experience, revisits historical facts, and revisualizes war memories. Even as a regular feature of game design, the constant revival of the characters in the game narrative and the fact that nothing is really lost if you lose ('That was close' is what *STA*'s protagonist articulates every time he is brought back to life, while in *VH*, every time one of the protagonists are hurt or close to dying, the player switches to a different character), speak to posthumanism's fluid identities. Although this 'disembodied immortality' has been criticised (Hayles, 2008: 5; Kempshall 2015), it can be seen as willingness to affectively bring to cognition the war tragedies that collective memory attests to. Both games reinforce the idea that war facts may be definite and grim, but the way to remember them does not have to be either. The universality of repetition and chronotopicity are called in *VH* and *STA* to produce an affective idiom that counters the trope of the adynaton in the representation of the Great War and introduces the collective memory to the age of posthumanism.

Notes

1. For a stimulating discussion on the relationship between ludology and narratology, see Henry Jenkins, 'Game Design as Narrative Architecture,' in *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, ed. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 118-129.

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Race, *Battlefield 1* and the White Mythic Space of the First World War

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ABSTRACT

The popular perception of the First World War has remained an inherently white mythic space in which white men fight against other white men and where minorities, when and if they are featured, are given an anonymous secondary role and are subject to the will and motivation of their white heroic leaders. This article will be considering the white mythic space of the First World War by focusing on the video game *Battlefield 1* (2016) and investigating the backlash by players on online message boards against the inclusion of soldiers of color in the game's multiplayer features. In the online discourse, these players diminish the role that minorities played in the First World War and although the presence of minorities in the historical First World War is to a minor extent acknowledged, their space in the video game is nonetheless denied. I argue that this backlash is based on a rejection of the inclusive collective memory as portrayed in *Battlefield 1*, supported by racist arguments against the backdrop of the white mythic space of the First World War and that their rejection of the presence of minorities in *Battlefield 1* can be constructed as a continuation of the denial of agency for soldiers of color by white individuals that took place during the First World War and the post-war period.

Keywords: Racism; First World War; Historical Memory; Collective Memory; Race

'It was just at dusk when they opened a terrific artillery fire on the wood. In five minutes, half our men were dead or wounded. Those who could, ran out, and among them was my brother Roy, carrying on his back a man thought to be wounded—it turned out he was dead—and then he too fell, killed by a shell that burst a little distance off and sent a small fragment of its casing into his heart. We buried him with the others next day, all wrapped up in blankets and placed in a field already established in anticipation for the battle, not far from where we had our camp. I cannot speak of how I felt. We were good friends and I was to be lonely for the rest of the war—lonely and bitter.'

(Manley, 1973: 8).

This account written after the war by a gunner in the Royal Field Artillery about the death of his brother in the days leading up to the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917 corresponds to many popular depictions of the First World War on the Western Front and the experiences of a British "Tommy". It all fits up to one point: most would assume that the gunner writing was a white man. That Roy, his brother, was white. Both men were in fact biracial, recognized as such by their comrades and prejudiced against throughout the conflict. Norman Washington Manley, whose account this is, would one day become Jamaica's first Prime Minister.

Norman and Roy Manley were not the only soldiers of color to fight and die on the Western Front, the Middle East, or other fronts in Europe and Asia. Soldiers of color from British India, the British West Indies, Bermuda, French West Africa, French North Africa, Madagascar, South Africa, Germany, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Siam, China, and Indochina all came to serve on or behind the frontlines of the Western Front to support the cause of the nation or empire that they volunteered for or were forcibly conscripted into (Winegard, 2014: 1–12; Costello, 2015: 67–89, 113–132; Fogarty, 2015: 109–129; Garton, 2015: 152–178; Guoqi 2015: 214–234). The largest number of soldiers of color served in the African theater of war where all the African colonies of Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Portugal, fought (Nasson, 2015: 130–151; Ribeiro de Meneses, 2015: 179–196, Hodges, 1978: 101–116, Strachan, 2004: 4–8).

This is a fact that has been acknowledged time and time again during the First World War centenary commemoration by western governments, organizations, museums, documentaries, popular and academic historians, to emphasize the role played by minorities and colonial soldiers during the war. Despite these efforts, the popular knowledge of the First World War as a *world war* is limited. In an international survey carried out by YouGov for the British Council in September 2013, an average 11 % of the participants were aware of the African involvement in the war in contrast with 82 % aware of the involvement of Western Europe (Lotten, 2014: 10). When participants in the UK were asked to name three things that came to mind when they thought about the First World War, the most common things mentioned were trenches, Battle of the Somme, gas, death, Germany, and mud (Lotten 2014: 6). This setting of the Western Front in the perception of the participants, a war of trenches, mud, and gas, is part of the pseudo-historical mythic space of the First World War. The popular image of the war has remained an inherently white mythic space where white men fight against other white men and where minorities, *if* they are included, are given an anonymous secondary role and are subject to the will and motivation of their white heroic leaders.

Richard Slotkin defines a mythic space as "a pseudo-historical (or pseudo-real) setting that is powerfully associated with stories and concerns rooted in the culture's myth/ideological tradition". (Slotkin, 1992: 234) A white mythic space erases non-white elements from the pseudo-historical setting and transforms it into a racially homogeneous space that is perceived as an authentic representation of the past.

I will now be considering the white mythic space of the First World War by focusing on the video game *Battlefield 1* (Electronic Arts, 2016) and analyzing the backlash by players of the game on online message boards against the inclusion of soldiers of color in the game's multiplayer feature. *Battlefield 1* (henceforth abridged as *BF1*) is a first-

person shooter that takes place in Europe and the Middle East between 1915 and 1918, with most of the game's single and multiplayer modes taking place in the last two years of the war. Before the game's release, the reactions to the game's cover art that depicts an African-American soldier would set the pattern for the rejection of the inclusion of soldiers of color as the game was released. Although a common argument made was that the United States did not enter the war until 1917, by which time many other nations had already been fighting for three years, a more common argument focused on the soldier's ethnicity. A representative thread can be found in the /r/gaming subreddit on Reddit in which a user creates a thread accusing *BF1* of "blackwashing" the First World War (BrinkerBreaker). The majority of the comments focus on the ethnicity of the soldier, agreeing with the sentiment of "blackwashing" and calling the inclusion of soldiers of color a historical inaccuracy as well as accusing the video game's publisher and developer, Electronic Arts and DICE, for supporting a political agenda through the inclusion of an African-American soldier. When one user tries to defend the fact that there were black Europeans during the First World War, the user is met with insults and rejection (Shaneo520). This is repeated throughout the thread. As a response to this backlash, the game's lead designer Daniel Berlin stated in an interview with GamesBeat that they purposely wanted to challenge preconceptions about the war and highlight diversity in the game (Dean Takashi). As we shall see, this goal would be met with more protests after the game's release.

The greatest controversy regarding inclusion appeared after the game's release in the online multiplayer feature. In the base version of the game, you can choose to play as different "classes" (assault, medic, support, scout), each with their own distinct weaponry and equipment, from six different nations (The British Empire, the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, the Kingdom of Italy, the Ottoman Empire and the United States, each with their own distinct soldier models. In three out of six factions (The British Empire, the German Empire and the United States), the scout class is represented by a soldier of African descent while the medic class in the British faction is represented by an Indian soldier. It is not implied in the game that the appearance of these classes is meant to represent an average soldier in the historical First World War. Even though players criticized the inclusion of minorities in general, the most contentious issue revolved around the inclusion of black men in German and British uniform.

The presence of men and women of African descent in Great Britain and Germany can be traced to before the 16th century. The history of British and German soldiers of African descent serving in Europe and the Middle East during the First World War remains an understudied area. The rise of transnational and transcultural perspectives has opened the door for historians to explore their stories in the context of the impact of colonialism and the legacy of slavery. Pioneering scholarship by David Killingray and most recently by Ray Costello has revealed much about the lives of black British soldiers, but a German equivalent has yet to be written.[1] There is no consensus on the number of black British and Afro-German soldiers who served in white regiments but their presence and involvement on the frontlines is indisputable.

One argument against inclusion evokes the East African theater of war as the reason for why there couldn't have been black men fighting for Britain and Germany in Europe (kingslayer8790; tjoppie02). This argument reinforces the mythic notion of the First

World War as a "white man's war", effectively separating the "white space" of the Western Front from the "black space" of Africa. Unlike France, Britain and Germany did not field any African regiments on the frontlines of the Western Front. Due to the blockade of Germany, they were unable to transport troops from Africa to Europe. Britain chose not to due to racial prejudice and the fear that allowing black men to kill white men would upset the racial hierarchy so important to the British Empire (Killingray, 1978: 421–436; Costello, 2015: 17–21). This meant that black soldiers from British colonies such as the British West India Regiment were not allowed to serve in combat in Europe, only serving as a labor force, although they were allowed to do so in the Middle East against an enemy considered less white than Europeans (Smith, 2004: 124–125). The argument overlooks the contribution made by black soldiers on both sides, some of which (as in the British case) were volunteers from Africa and the Caribbean who joined domiciled black British soldiers in otherwise all-white regiments (Costello, 2015: 67–89).

The largest amount of exclusionary arguments is aimed at the Afro-German scout. One user argues for example that Germany in the game "should not have black people" (terza712). Several other users argue that the inclusion "disrespect [sic] german culture" (ty15ler), is "historically inaccurate" (lucidstorm; Pan_Kalich) and that "[h]istory and the dead should be respected!" (bigstudy). A user who claims to have extensively studied WW1 states that "Black Africans did not serve where they are portrayed in the game" (MathewGurney) and that their inclusion is unrealistic. At the core of the arguments is the idea that Afro-Germans do not and should not have a place in the game because they are perceived as not belonging in Germany of the 1910s. The most repulsive rejections come from those who report the inclusion of Afro-Germans as an error in the game's programming (Hektiicz, TheophilKung). These arguments, all with strong racist undertones in the guise of "historical accuracy", echoes many of the contemporary wartime arguments against allowing black men to serve on the frontlines of Europe. Beyond upsetting the racial hierarchy (the modern argument being "upsetting the black-to-white ratio in the game"), black British recruits could sometimes be discharged on the condition of being black. Men of African descent were considered racially inferior and not fit to be soldiers in the view of the contemporary pseudo-scientific racism. This is made clear in one case where a biracial soldier had his ethnicity entered in their medical history report as a "slight defect" (Costello, 2015: 34–38). Furthermore, the indignation at seeing a black man in uniforms that they "don't belong in" mirrors the attitudes of southern men in the United States who stripped, assaulted, and lynched black men for wearing a "white" uniform (Davis, 2008: 477–491).

To disempower black soldiers, "colored interlopers" (James, 2007: 19), white soldiers demasculinized them. War was and is considered a masculine space and by demasculinizing black men by pushing them into a labor role, a lesser role away from the frontlines, they are blocked from military masculinity (James, 2007: 19). This is particularly evident with users who acknowledge the presence of Afro-Germans but demasculinize them by arguing that most were army musicians and therefore did not serve in a combat role (tjoppie02; Deathmatch Europe). This is untrue. Afro-German soldiers like Wilhelm Elo Sambo and Josef Mambo had both served as kettle drummers, but both saw action during the war and were injured in battle. Sambo served on the Western and

Eastern Fronts, and the Middle East where he was captured (Bechhaus-Gerst, 2013: 176). Mambo fought in East Prussia and in the battle of Verdun on the Western Front (Lewerenz, 2005: 120, 128).

In conclusion, the rejection of the inclusion of soldiers of color in *BF1* can be read as a continuation of the denial of agency and space for black men that was carried out during and after the First World War. Through this rejection, users separate the "intruding" black space in defense of the white mythic space that dominates their perception of the First World War. Despite the existing flaws in the representation of soldiers of color in the single player mode of *BF1*, the game integrates soldiers of color in the otherwise "white space" of the First World War in a way that few representations of the First World War have previously done. It is not enough to acknowledge their existence, the stories of soldiers of color need to be integrated into the established narrative. This is the only way to break down the white mythic space of the First World War.

Notes

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The Great War and the Use of Video Games as Historical and Educational Resources: A Conversation

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Iro Filippaki and Stefan Aguirre Quiroga exchange their views on the potentiality of video games as historical and educational resources in the study of the First World War.

Stefan (S): What kind of key historical facts are presented in these games and what impact do they have on the narrative (and therefore the creation of collective memory)?

Iro (I): Both games have different relationships with the facts of the Great War, strictly speaking. *STA* references the muddy landscape, the inexperience of soldiers, and the ambiguous role of doctors. True, it would be a bit of a stretch to read anything more in *STA*, as it is comedic shooter, but it is interesting to see that even the ridiculed aspects of the game rely on accepted collective memory. *VH* is different; it clearly has an educational purpose and the developers seemed to want to share a less discussed aspect of the Great War, as they have included collectible items and fact cards that, upon collection, pause the game and give factual information to the player. In both cases, for reasons that lie beyond narratology and enter the realm of game design, the game narrative is perhaps inevitably a mixture of collective "official" memory and fictional, highly stylized narration.

S: *VH/STA* are different from *BF1* in many aspects. Both *VH/STA* are comedic, highly stylized games in which the player is reminded by the aesthetic choices done by the game producers that they are indeed playing a video game. For example, *STA* has a great deal of "goofy" and fantasy elements such as the case of scimitar wielding monkeys attacking the player. *BF1* on the other hand tries to be as realistic as possible in its visual representation. In your opinion, how does this affect the creation of an affective memory? Does "realism" or attempts at realism makes it

easier for a gamer to "buy into" affective memory?

I: I view affective memory as irrelevant from realism when it comes to gaming. I think that gamers are attracted to "realistic" gameplay for entirely different reasons than they would be attracted to a stylized game, such as *STA* and *VH*. This is why I see affective memory as dependent on tropes rather than the realism of gameplay: *STA* and *VH* might not be realistic aesthetically, but because they are metafictional, the affective response that they invite is one tied to real values passed on through collective memory: nationalism, brotherhood, the absurdity of war, the inevitability of death, the importance of remembering.

S: An affective contract requires the gamer to consent to being represented by the character. What happens when the gamer rejects the character for reasons beyond the chronotopes? How does this affect memory?

I: This is another reason why *STA* and *VH* produce such strong affective responses: the player must to a certain extent identify with the character, otherwise the choices that must be made in the games will not make sense to the player. Case in point: the last scene of *VH* shows the death of Emile by execution. Emile is a French farmer who becomes a prisoner of war, and accidentally kills an officer after he commands the squad to charge, an attack which would lead to certain death. In this last bit of *VH*, the player must lead Emile to face the French firing squad to be executed; interestingly, the player must use the game's controls to literally take Emile to his inevitable death. If the player chooses not to do that, the game won't finish. At this point, the soundtrack, landscape, and general atmosphere of the game conspire to evoke a specific affective response—I nearly didn't finish the game because of the affective intensity, and this is something that keeps being brought up by the gaming community, too! It is clear then, that remembering a story that was sadly all too common in the Great War (more than 900 French soldiers were executed for treason between 1914 and 1918, for example) means that the player would carry the re-memory of that event as something that happened to them: it is like re-remembering, and adds another dimension to collective memory of facts that generations have not experienced first-hand.

I: I am interested in the relationship between power and memory. Considering that memory is somewhat becoming a commodity through First World War gaming, how do you think memory could be more inclusive?

S: We must first recognize that the dominant collective memory is used to exclude minority narratives not deemed to "fit into" that memory or that pose difficult or uncomfortable questions that might disturb the current state of that collective memory. By acknowledging soldiers of color and including them in a collective memory of the First World War, you must also acknowledge the European powers participation in colonialism and slavery. You must acknowledge painful truths about the past that involve the forced conscription of colonial soldiers to fight in Europe, the fact that the war resulted in no African, Middle Eastern or Asian colonies being freed but rather the switch of one colonial master with another and that the reason as to why some soldiers of African

descent in the British, German and American army desired to fight was to prove their masculinity and their rightful claim to be seen as an equal, something which they were ultimately denied before, during and after the war.

The agency of soldiers of color need to be reinstated. These soldiers need to be moved from the periphery, away from the notion of being an "Other" and be integrated in the dominant collective memory. In practical terms, it means not only acknowledging the existence of a soldier of color like British soldier Frank Dove, but also showing him driving a tank in the battle of Cambrai 1917 alongside a white crew. To do that requires an act of self-disempowerment on behalf of the dominant part where popular depictions and mythical historic icons are reshaped into something new and inclusive. To do all of this also requires looking beyond a national collective memory due to, as Mycock writes, "the complex transnational dynamics of First World War commemoration" and understand how other nations, former colonies in many cases, see their own place and meaning in the dominant narrative (Mycock 161).

I: The historical war seems to be claimed by different races and genders. Is there anything that differs in the fictional war of gaming? Does ownership of memory change?

S: In the cinematic single player campaign mode of *BF1*, called "War Stories", the ownership of memory change in terms of national memories (one story centers around an Italian soldier, another about an Australian soldier, etc.) and in one case, the male ownership of memory is challenged by having a Bedouin soldier being represented as woman during the Arab Revolt. Unfortunately, the white mythic space remains unchallenged in her story due to the involvement of the white heroic leader in the form of T.E. Lawrence, "Lawrence of Arabia", and the omnipresence of this white, male presence in the missions. This unfortunately recalls prior popular depictions of Arabs being dependent on the will and motivation of British officers during the Arab Revolt.

The memory and presence of soldiers of African descent in the single player is inconsistent. From the moment that the player looks at the cover of *BF1*, depicting an African-American soldier, the white ownership of the memory of the First World War is challenged. This same image welcomes the players as they reach the welcome screen. The first story in the single player mode partly deals with African-American soldiers in the segregated 369th Infantry Regiment, famously known as "The Harlem Hellfighters". All the other "War Stories" consist of several parts in which the main character is fleshed out and a narrative is followed. In the case of this story, there is no plot or main character to follow. It consists of one, short part. The only thing the player is told is that "you are on the frontline" and that you are "not expected to live". What follows is a series of segments as one African-American soldier is killed after another. Although a name is shown on a black screen after every death, the character of the soldiers you play as is never explored nor touched upon. The agency of these African-American soldiers dies with their bodies. This is a strong contrast with the other stories where all main characters are given a narrative and an agency. This follows the tradition of the white mythic space where soldiers of color are anonymous, their bodies disabled and their agencies denied. The ownership of memory, although challenged on the basis of gender, therefore remains white in the narrative portion of the game.

S: What I have come to realise through my own research of First World War games, is that affect (positive or negative) often contests with historical fact. Additionally, as per formalist Hayden White, history is a narrative just like any other. What is your response to that? Do you think that affect gains ground over fact because of the importance of commemoration? How are historical accuracy and game accuracy related? Could game inaccuracy reveal historical accuracies?

I: In my own research of what users have written in message boards, official and non-official, on the topic of inclusion in BF1 would conclude that affect does gain ground over fact. These users do not "buy into" the collective memory depicted by *BF1* since it goes against the white mythic space of the First World War and the notion of a "white man's war". These individuals therefore argue that it is disrespectful and insulting to include soldiers of color due to these preconceived ideas of what the historical First World War should look like. It is undeniable that these statements are based on white supremacist thinking. Statements that the inclusion is "anti-European propaganda" (zarthos), "a disservice to the europeans [sic] that gave their life [sic]" (HugeTrumpGuy), and that "[t]he justification for blacks and women has very little to do with historical accuracy" (KublaKharter) shows how grounded the affective defense of the white mythic space is in racism and misogyny.

   Furthermore, one question remains: Are those who defend the white mythic space of the First World War truly interested in historical accuracy? As I have shown, their arguments in regard to the presence of soldiers of color are historically incorrect. It's revealing that those who argue that the inclusion of soldiers of color is historically inaccurate do not point out the multitude of historical inaccuracies in uniforms, equipment, weapons, vehicles or in the overall narrative of the game. One particularly egregious inaccuracy is the widespread use of experimental and prototype weapons in the game, most of which were never used in the war, produced in small numbers or never passed the prototype stage. Yet this is not something that these users focus on and in some cases, their inclusion is defended. A representative example can be found in a comment where a user argues that including prototype submachine guns is immersive while including Afro-Germans is not (snakeheadinvade). This further strengthens the argument that the real reason behind the backlash against inclusion in *BF1* is not based on perceived historical inaccuracy but rather on an affective racist response in the guise of historical inaccuracy.

I: Where do you see posthumanism relating to today's memory?

S: Due to the complexity and variety of the memories of the First World War in the nations that fought it, I do not believe that posthumanism holds much relevance just yet. As I have shown, gamers in *BF1* do not negotiate their "place and identity in the collective memory" but instead defends their place and identity, their white mythic space, against intrusion from collective memories belonging to the "Other". If, as you say, that "Great War games may function as live memorials through which the collective memory […] [is] placed in the hands of the gamer", then I fear that this collective memory would remain a white mythic space. As I've previously pointed out, the gamer must accept the

collective memory offered by the game. If that does not happen then the gamer make the choice not to partake in shaping the game's collective memory, seeing the "real world" collective memory as more valid. This leaves open the possibility of the creation of different collective memories existing in one game which in turn would belong to separate spaces within the fictional war of the game. Furthermore, the multiplayer of *BF1* has little to no affective chronotopes that could bridge any gaps between these spaces. The possibility therefore of uniting different collective memories in a shared posthumanist collective memory seems unlikely at the present time.

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